

Moses (1)
Exodus 2:1-15

1 And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took *to wife* a daughter of Levi. **2** And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he *was a goodly child*, she hid him three months. **3** And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid *it* in the flags by the river's brink. **4** And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. **5** And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash *herself* at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. **6** And when she had opened *it*, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This *is one* of the Hebrews' children. **7** Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? **8** And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. **9** And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give *thee* thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. **10** And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water. **11** And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. **12** And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that *there was* no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. **13** And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? **14** And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. **15** Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

OUTLINE

- (1) On the Ark (v1-8)**
- (2) In the Palace (v9-14)**
- (3) On the Run (v15)**

INTRODUCTION

God choose beforehand, determine in advance in eternity past, whom He will save to bear the name of His Son upon the earth. What a great privilege it is to be called into faith and to live the life of faith.

Moses was one such character in the Bible. He was God's man to lead Israel's exodus out of Egypt. Israel will be freed from the grievous bondage of slavery!

The three stages of this man's life is summarized well in by Stephen and in Hebrews 11's hall of faith in three periods of 40 years – from his birth as a prince in Egypt, as a shepherd in the wilderness and as Israel's leader for the exodus out of Egypt:

Hebrews 11:23-29 *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.*

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the

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pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

This was the first of the three great epochs of Jewish history where God wrought great miracles to manifest His presence to the known world. It was to jolt the people of the world to the knowledge of the living and true God. This is the record of the enactment of God's redemption plan.

Lionel Carson, Professor of Classics at New York University wrote in the Time-Life History Series – Great Ages of Man on Ancient Egypt wrote, introducing Moses as the historical figure featured in ancient Egyptian history:

“Antiquity, vast and richly textured, cloaks the land of Egypt. In the dimness of prehistory, more than 10,000 years ago, man began to settle in the long valley ribboned by the Nile. Sustained by the life-giving water, the land prospered and, in the fourth millennium before Christ, burst into splendour under the first of the pharaohs. And in splendour outstanding in the ancient world, it flourished for 27 centuries.

Egypt was ancient even to the ancients. It was a great nation ... about 900 years before the Israelites followed Moses out of bondage. It flourished when tribesmen still dwelt in huts about the Tiber. It was viewed by Greeks and Romans of 2,000 years ago in somewhat the same way as the ruins of Greece and Rome are viewed by modern man.

The great Greek historian Herodotus made grand tour of Egypt in the fifth century B.C. and wrote of “wonders more than in number than those of any other land and works it has to show beyond expression great”.¹

This period of God's manifest presence began quietly on the bank of the Nile River.

We recall Pharaoh's decree in chapter 1 to kill all the male babies of the Hebrews. The mid-wives feared God and did not obey Pharaoh's decree, they feared God rather than men! God rewarded their courage to do the will of God.

Chapter 2 gives the first 80 years of Moses' life from his birth to the time when he was on the run from Pharaoh for killing an Egyptian smiting an Israelites.

(1) On the Ark (v1-10)

1 And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. 2 And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.

Ancient Egypt was an arid waster of desert extending thousands of square miles, left man almost nowhere to live but along a thin strip of land watered by the Nile. As the river flowed from south to north, from the steep cliffs near Aswan to the Delta beyond Cairo, the verdant strip on each bank varied greatly. In some places, it spread over no more than a mile; in other places, it covered about 13 miles. In the Delta, a triangular

¹ Lionel Casson, Ancient Egypt, Time-Life Books Inc., 1966, 11.

network of river branches, fertile fields, vineyards and orchards some 150 miles in width – but even this is a mere strand set against the vast desert beyond. To the peasants in the fields, the forbidding, inhospitable expanse of sand and rock that reached up to the very edge of their villages was a fearful place, lonely and threatening. The desert was considered as the home of the dead, a place for burial. Only in the Nile could they sense continuity of life.²

In fact, it is for this reason that Jacob and his family came to Egypt with God's blessing and guidance to escape the great famine that plagued the region many generations back. Israel had settled down nicely in Egypt. Goshen was allotted to them by the Pharaoh who appointed Joseph as Prime Minister. Because of the fertility of the land, the peace and security from Joseph, the Hebrews grew to a great multitude.

And their peace and security gave way to hard bondage and slavery when a new Pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph. Although the Hebrews were still enjoying the prosperity of the peace and land, gradually, their peace and security were threatened. The decree to kill the Hebrew babies was the beginning of what we said "anti-semitism", the hatred toward the Jews that result in their genocide.

It is in this backdrop that a baby was born that was to be the deliverer of Israel. While the hardship and oppression grew, God was not unmindful of the plight of His people. How can they be saved from their cruel taskmasters?

God prepared the man Moses and our text tells us his life story.

He belonged to the house of Levi. His parents' name not mentioned in our text. But we know that his father was Amram and mother Jochebed, both from the tribe of Levi.

Exodus 6:18, 20 *And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel: and the years of the life of Kohath were an hundred thirty and three years... 20 And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years.*

Numbers 26:59 *And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister.*

3 And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.

An ark was made from the reed at the bank of the River Nile as a cradle for Moses to escape Pharaoh's deadly decree to kill male babies. This word "ark" means box or chest, the same word used for Noah's Ark. The 'bulrushes' are the papyrus reeds that the Egyptians used for the construction of large vessels that sail the Nile.

The baby in the ark was left to float downstream among the flags that provided the baby with some form of camouflage.

His sister Miriam, Moses' only sister, was following the ark to look afar to its safety.

² Ibid., 38-39.

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4 And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. 5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. 6 And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

It is most timely that Pharaoh's daughter was there at the river bank she spotted the ark and saw the baby. This is the interesting 'twist' in the story that Moses would be reared in the enemy's household. It is the most dangerous and yet the safest place. We see that our safety is of God.

How is it that Pharaoh's daughter would take a liking for this baby and be willing to take care of this Hebrew baby.

7 Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? 8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. 9 And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. 10 And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

We see God working in quiet, mysterious ways, by a thousand 'coincidence' to know out His will. How could Pharaoh's daughter have known that this child that she will named is God's appointed servant deliver the Hebrews out of slavery.

She must have thought that an innocent baby can't be any harm. But our text tells us that she had compassion on the baby. Indeed, God touched her heart to save this male child. This was how Moses became a prince in Egypt, reared in the Egyptian palace.

(2) In the Palace (v11-14)

The in-between story, the unsaid portion of Moses' life in the palace was recorded in **Acts 7:20-22** *In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.*

How could Moses remember his root as a child of the Hebrews when he was brought up in the palace of Egypt?

This was God's providence where his mother was given wages to raise him in the things of God from a young age before he entered the palace. His mother was able to teach him enough for him to not forsake his own people. We do not underestimate the power of prayer and instruction from a tender age to impact a person's life in adulthood.

8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. 9 And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. 10 And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

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Moses' name was given by Pharaoh's daughter. He became her son and he was brought up in the royal house. Moses enjoyed the privileges and best education available in his time in Egypt. Yet, his heart was with God's people.

Hebrews 11:24 ***By faith Moses***, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

To be continued...