

# The Book of Exodus

## The Early Life of Moses

Text: Exodus 2:1-22

### Introduction:

1. The life of Moses divides into three sections of 40 years each.
  - a. For his first 40 years, Moses lived in Egypt.
  - b. For his next 40 years, Moses lived in Midian.
  - c. For his last 40 years, Moses led the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan.
2. The first 80 years of Moses' life are covered very briefly in Exodus 2.
3. Yet, there are important details to notice and lessons to be learned.

### I. The Birth of Moses (Exodus 2:1-2)

- A. This passage records the birth of Moses and details his lineage.
- B. Both the father and mother of Moses were of the tribe of Levi.
  1. A fuller lineage is given in Exodus 6:16-20.
  2. Moses' father was named Amram – meaning, “Exalted people.”
  3. His mother was named Jochebed – meaning, “Jehovah is glory.”
  4. Moses had an older brother, Aaron, and a sister, Miriam (cf. Numbers 26:59; 1 Chronicles 6:1-3; 23:12-14).
- C. When Moses was born, his parents hid him for three months to spare him from the death ordered by Pharaoh.
  1. Hebrews 11:23 teaches that they did this by faith.
  2. Furthermore, their faith in God kept them from fearing the threat of Egypt.
  3. Thus, for 3 months, Moses was brought up in his father's house (cf. Acts 7:20).

### II. The Adoption of Moses (Exodus 2:3-10)

- A. As Moses grew older, it became impossible to hide his existence (cf. Acts 7:19).
- B. Yet, his parents refused to kill him or to turn him over to the murderous Egyptians.
- C. Instead, they made an “ark of bulrushes” in which they placed their baby, floating him by the bank of the river.
  1. The word “ark” signifies a box or chest; in this case, much like a basket.
  2. The word “bulrush” refers to the papyrus plant, common in Egypt especially in the marshy land around the Nile River.
  3. The word “slime” probably refers to mud, also used to make bricks.
  4. The word “pitch” refers to a type of mineral tar or asphalt found in this part of the world, used to make vessels waterproof.
- D. Notice that Moses was not sent floating down the Nile in his tiny boat.
  1. Instead, he was placed safely at the bank of the river, where it would appear that he had drifted.
  2. Furthermore, his sister watched from a distance to see what would happen to him.
  3. Also, he was found at the place where the daughter of Pharaoh bathed – obviously made safe from the dangers of the river.
- E. When the daughter of Pharaoh saw the baby, she was moved with compassion and decided to adopt him as her own son.

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- F. Miriam, who had been watching these events, asked for permission to choose a Hebrew woman to serve as a nursemaid for the infant.
- G. Granted her request, she called Moses' own mother to care for her son.
  - 1. Thus, Moses' life was spared from the command of the Pharaoh.
  - 2. He would be raised in the house of Pharaoh, with all of the benefits of a child of the king (cf. Acts 7:21-22; Hebrews 11:24-26).
  - 3. Yet, he would be under the care of his mother long enough to be taught the true religion of Jehovah.
- H. Eventually, this would lead to an important choice faced by Moses.

## III. The Decision of Moses (Exodus 2:11-15)

- A. In the days of Israel's oppression, Moses made a life-changing decision.
  - 1. "When Moses was grown" indicates that he had reached adulthood; but this Hebrew word also means, "To become great or important; to do great things; to make powerful."
  - 2. Thus, it also refers to Moses' position among the Egyptians as the son of Pharaoh's daughter (cf. Acts 7:22)
  - 3. Moses was 40 years old at the time of this event (Acts 7:23).
- B. This decision was to go out from the court of Pharaoh unto his brethren.
  - 1. This does not refer to a simple walk from the palace to Goshen.
  - 2. Instead, it was a moral and spiritual decision (Hebrews 11:24-27).
  - 3. Moses chose to reject the wealth and power of Egypt and to align himself with his Hebrew kinsman – against Egypt.
- C. Thus, "he looked on their burdens."
  - 1. This means more than seeing the suffering of the Hebrews or becoming aware of their dire condition.
  - 2. It means, "To look upon with sympathy" or "to inspect, perceive, and consider."
  - 3. The New Testament word used is "visit," meaning, "To examine or look upon in order to help, benefit, or provide for" (Acts 7:23).
- D. When he saw an Egyptian beating one of his kinsman, Moses decided to retaliate and avenge this abuse.
  - 1. The word for 'smiting' means everything from "striking," "beating," or "wounding" to "slaughtering" or "killing."
  - 2. Since Moses is said to have sought vengeance, it is possible that the Egyptian killed the Hebrew.
- E. Whatever the extent of the Egyptian's abuse was, Moses killed the attacker and buried him in the sand.
  - 1. Notice that Moses did not act until he had "looked this way and that way" – still, his deed was known (obviously by God).
  - 2. Interestingly, Stephen reported that Moses did this because he thought the Hebrews would understand that God was going to use him to deliver them.
    - a. The Bible does not record how Moses had learned of his role in Israel's deliverance.
    - b. Stephen made the point that Moses was rejected by his people as their savior, even though God had chosen him for this purpose.
    - c. Yet, they had done the same thing with Jesus!

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3. It seems that Moses understood God's purpose, but not His means.
  4. God would deliver Israel by His strength and power – not by Moses leading a fighting force to conquer Egypt.
  5. Moses needed to learn faith and patience – which he would do over the next 40 years.
- F. When Moses found out that his deed was known throughout the land, he fled Egypt for Midian.

## IV. The Family of Moses

(Exodus 2:16-22)

- A. Upon arriving in Midian, Moses sat down by a well.
- B. The seven daughters of the priest of Midian came to that well to draw water for their father's flock.
  1. This priest of Midian is known as Reuel – “friend of God” (2:18), Raguel, and as Jethro – “excellency,” probably an official title (3:1).
  2. The language and description indicate that he was a priest of the one, true God.
- C. When other shepherds in the area tried to drive the daughters away, Moses defended them and made sure that their flocks were watered.
- D. When they reported to their father, he invited Moses to dwell with his family.
- E. One of his daughters, Zipporah, became the wife of Moses.
- F. They had two sons, Gershom – “stranger in a strange land” – and Eliezer – “God is my help” (Exodus 18:4).