

"A Proper Child"

Exodus 2:1-10

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When it seemed that the trials of the Israelites had reached an almost unbearable cruelty, God began to work His work of grace and mercy. The nation of Egypt had become a most inhospitable place for them. They were placed under complete slavery to the Egyptians. They did public works and were treated most severely. The death sentence had been passed upon every male child born, for they were commanded to cast their infant boys into the river as soon as they were born; the girls were to be saved to serve as slaves to the Egyptians. They had become the total property of the Egyptian state and had nothing left of their own. Not only this, but the decree of Pharaoh was to the people of Egypt; everyone of them was given the order and liberty of casting the newborn males of Israel into the river, making every Egyptian the executioner of the will of Pharaoh.

You remember: God had set Himself to do two things: to get his people out of Egypt, and to get Egypt out of His people. The former was far easier than the latter. The sons of Israel were not godly and righteous people, as we read from the history of the twelve sons of Jacob. They had sold Joseph into Egypt, and their personal lives were filled with all manner of cruelty and wickedness. We can assume that much wickedness and idolatry could be found in the Israelites during those many years in Egypt, for it still was clinging to them during their wanderings in the wilderness and after their settling in the land of Canaan. Even after the crucifixion of Christ and His resurrection, the martyr Stephen would say to the men of Jerusalem, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." Ac 7:51 The chastening and discipline of Israel began in their bondage in Egypt under their cruel taskmasters even before they came under the training of the law of Moses.

So that brings us to the marvelous events surrounding the birth of Moses. Two things are here; the feeble and flickering light of faith; and the weakness and fears of the flesh. Both of these things you and I also know all too well.

I. The birth of Moses: Exodus 1:1-10. I will not rehash the events for they are very clear from Moses' account written many years after the events.

A. The flickering light of faith. Let us note several things.

1. Aaron would have been about three; sister Miriam a few years older. Aaron might very well have been spared by the midwives, but now a much harsher sentence is upon the Israelites.

2. The parents of the three children, Amram and Jochebed were both of the tribe of Levi, and both recognized that there was something special about Moses. "Goodly child" "proper child" "well favored" "beautiful." The words can mean simply that he was a beautiful baby, or they might imply something different--coming from an impulse of faith.

3. Under this impulse, whether natural or supernatural, they hid Moses for three months, for every Egyptian would have been a threat to his life. How terrible the conditions under which God's people must live their lives! Who would not have given over to despair and the abasement of morals and manner of life when hope is in this way destroyed and people are treated as little more than animals? Some of the Israelites must have had their baby boys destroyed, either by their own hand or by the hands of their enemies, the Egyptians, for Moses' mother and father acted as though the threat was a real one.

4. We can see here the conception of a plan with little likelihood of success. His mother knew where Pharaoh's daughter and her servants bathed at the river and where they walked, and the plan was conceived along with this knowledge. Moses would be placed in a little boat prepared for him with reeds, mud, and pitch, and he would be placed where the daughter of Pharaoh would find him. Miriam would watch to see what happened. The likelihood would be that he would be drowned by the Egyptians, either by a passerby or by the princess herself or her maidens, but maybe something else would occur. Miriam would watch--what a heavy burden placed upon one so young--small little girl.

5. Heb 11:23 "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." Their faith was strong enough for them to dare to disobey the king's command.

6. Credit is given to Jochebed, Moses mother, for the plan of hiding and then building the little ark that saved his life. Certainly both fear and faith operated in her; fear that her child would be slain and faith that God may honor her plan to save him.

7. Miriam did her work well. The baby was found, the princess recognized it as a Hebrew child and would have known immediately why he was there, she is moved with compassion as Moses was crying. Miriam offered to find a nurse for him--she knew where one could be found--I do not think that the princess was an idiot and when Jochebed was brought, the princess offered to pay her for nursing the child. So the whole affair ended on a most happy note: Moses saved, adopted by the Princess, nursed by

his mother who was paid for it, brought up as heir to the throne of Egypt, education in all the learning and understanding of Egypt

B. The weakness of the flesh.

1. It is almost always possible to find the weakness of the flesh when we see the strength of faith. It is true here. It is funny that much ado is made over the deceit of the midwives, but little said about the weakness of Amram and Jochebed.

2. Amram is almost completely absent from any of these events. Where was the father, the protector and the defender of his family? Probably out working as a slave, that's where. It is one thing to have authority; it is another to have power. They are not the same thing. A traffic policeman may have the authority to signal the tractor/trailer rig to not enter the intersection, but if the driver ignores him, the policeman will have no power to stop the rig and he better get out of the way. Here, though the power of the mother was very small, she had more actual opportunity than Amram did who was no doubt working from sunup to sundown. He probably died in Egypt before the Exodus.

3. But isn't it a terrible thing to expose your baby to such a risk; to place him in the rushes by the river? How can you expect God to take care of him? Yes, if God chooses, he could send down fire and brimstone; he could destroy Egypt. People should do what they have faith given to them to do. Jochebed could build an ark and devise a plan. I wonder how many other mothers had plans that did not avail to save their sons. What a horrible time to be alive in Egypt if you were an Israelite. Would their faith fail, even as their plans failed, and their sons were drowned. Horrible. It was not natural for Jochebed to do what she did, but these were most unnatural times; she did what she had to do, what her faith said to do. And God blessed her. But He does not treat everyone the same. There were many other mothers, perhaps, who lost their children.

4. It would be eighty years more, before the deliverance from Egypt. How many men died under the terrible labor and bondage; how many families were torn with grief over the death of their newborn sons; the scripture is silent.

5. Redemption does not come without great cost. Just as Moses was born and saved in the midst of the slaughter of many other babies; in the same way the Lord Jesus was saved amidst the slaughter of the babies of Judea at the order of the king. It was not Egypt alone that suffered during the Exodus; Israel also endured much.

6. God is holy. His holiness requires Him to bring judgment and wrath

upon the ungodly; but also to chasten, sometimes with great bitterness, the sins of His people, in order to prepare them for holiness and blessing.

7. Eighty long years would pass before Moses would appear from exile to the court of Pharaoh. These things would be a distant memory by then, preserved only in the oral transmission in Egypt and Israel. History speculates that Moses' adopted mother, the Princess, was married to her half-brother, and gained the throne when he died, ruling for some twenty years before she died and her son, Moses' step-brother reigned.

II. Application.

A. God is not in a hurry. He has many things in His agenda, which is hidden from us. The world moves according to His timetable which is set from eternity. Jesus Christ would not come for centuries and centuries. Moses must grow up, be trained in the learning of Egypt, go through his own training by God, and at 80 years of age, come to deliver the people of God in a wonderful historical parable, arranged by God to be an example and training for us, for whom all these things were done, according to 1Cor. 10.

B. The Princess called him Moses. The name means "drawn out" or "a son." How marvelous is the richness of this name:

1. He was drawn out of the reeds along the riverbank.

2. He was the son of Jochebed and Amram, and now become the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

3. He is called of God to bring God's adopted Son out of Egypt; and in a figure to bring the Son of God out of Egypt, who was encased by promise within Israel as we saw last week from the prophet Hosea. God would draw His Son out of Egypt.

4. Moses would be a figure of the Son of God. De 18:15 "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;" When the delegation came from the Jews to ask John the Baptist about his work, they asked him if he was "that prophet" that would come, referring to Moses' prophecy. Moses, the son taken from the river, and commissioned to lead Israel out of Egypt, is a figure of the Son of God, who came from heaven to deliver His people from their sins and take us to our inheritance with Him forever.

C. But all these things take place according to God's timetable. They will come according to His promise in His good time. Until then:

1. We are to confess His name and keep His commandments.
2. We are to endure hardship and trials, for this is the lot of God's people.
3. We are to patiently wait and do the works of faith, whatever they might be.
4. We are to do good to all men, especially the household of faith, live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for the Lord Jesus for He is our exceeding great reward.

Amen and Amen
God bless you.