

## Exodus Chapter Two

Read **Exodus 2:1-4** – Birth of Moses

**v.1** “AND THERE WENT A MAN OF THE HOUSE OF LEVI, AND TOOK *to wife* A DAUGHTER OF LEVI.”

When we look at the lineage of Moses, even though some 300 years have passed since the death of Joseph, we find that Moses is not that many generations removed from Levi. First we see in **Exodus 6:16** that Levi lived 130 years. So since Joseph was 110 we can see that Levi may have even been still living when Joseph died. Then we can see from **Exodus 6:18** that Kohath, the grandfather of Moses lived another 133 years and that Amram, the father of Moses was one of Kohath’s oldest son.

“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.” **Exodus 6:20**

**v.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.

Moses was not their first child. Miriam was old enough to be given the responsibility of looking after him and Aaron was three years older than Moses (**Exodus 7:7**). It was obvious to his mother that Moses was a special child. Moses records that “SHE SAW” that he was a “GOODLY” child; the NKJV translates this verse that he was a beautiful child. Stephan describes him this way in his sermon in Jerusalem:

**Acts 7:20** “IN WHICH TIME MOSES WAS BORN, AND WAS EXCEEDING FAIR, AND NOURISHED UP IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE THREE MONTHS:”

The other thing that we see from this verse is that Jochebed was a God fearing woman and she hid her new son for three months. The Hebrew writer tells us that her actions were as the result of her faith in God:

**Hebrews 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.”

**v.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.”

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When the mother of Moses could no longer hide him from prying eyes she made him an ark or basket of bulrushes. Commentators tell us that this was a variety of papyrus used extensively by the Egyptians for light weight boats as well as the other uses that we think of more often such as for writing material. They also observe that it is no longer found in Lower Egypt; possibly, as is true of other species, because it was depleted by over use. It is still found in the upper Nile.

She daubed it with slime probably the same kind of mud that they used to make bricks and then pitch or bitumen, commonly used in Egypt to seal boats.

Then she placed in on the river "IN THE FLAGS". This was another variety of papyrus that was shorter and smaller than that used for the ark itself. It was called sufi in Egyptian or suph in Hebrew.

**v.4** "AND HIS SISTER STOOD AFAR OFF, TO WIT WHAT WOULD BE DONE TO HIM."

Though this sister is not named in these early chapters of Exodus we know her name from **Exodus 15:20** and various other references and then she is named in the numbering of the tribe of Levi in:

**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."

Read **Exodus 2:5-10** – Moses Early Years

**v.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."

The Baker Book House commentary gives a good argument regarding the location of this occurrence. They place it at or near the city of Zoan, the capital of the Hyksos people when they ruled Egypt that had been captured by the new Pharaoh of Egypt in about the third year of his reign. It is located on the Tanitic branch of the Nile in the delta, where the crocodiles don't come, where there is little, if any, current and it also borders the land of Goshen where Israel lived.

The word "herself" has been added to this verse by the translators. But since the daughter of Pharaoh would probably not be doing laundry it is a valid assumption that she came to wash herself or even to swim. Secular records tell us that it was a common practice in ancient Egypt for the women to bathe or swim in the Nile.

**v.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."

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Baker in his commentary states that the compassion that the daughter of Pharaoh felt toward this small child is not something that would be unexpected, even though she recognized him as a Hebrew. Even though her father had ordered all male Hebrew children to be destroyed. He states that "the Egyptians regarded such tenderness as a condition of acceptance on the day of reckoning." In other words the Egyptians believed in the judgment and a life after judgment as is taught in scripture. They also believed that their conduct in this life determined their place in the hereafter.

How would she have been so sure that this child was Hebrew? Because though it was a trouble to the early church as a part of the Mosaic Covenant; circumcision was commanded by God of Abraham and all of his descendants. (**Genesis 17:10**).

**v.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?"

We can see God's special providence at work here. Moses was born of a Levitical family. They feared God more than they feared the Pharaoh of Egypt. They protected their son to the extent that they could, possibly even with their own lives in jeopardy. They put him in a place where they really did not know whether he would be protected or not. He is found by the one person in the kingdom that could provide for him the education and training that God needed his representative to have. Now Miriam, who was perhaps not that much older than Moses, has the presence of mind to ask Pharaoh's daughter if she would like for her to find a nurse for the child.

**v.8** "AND PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER SAID TO HER, GO. AND THE MAID WENT AND CALLED THE CHILD'S MOTHER."

Pharaoh's daughter tells Miriam to go and do as she has suggested so she goes and gets her mother.

**v.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 WOMEN TOOK THE CHILD, AND NURSED IT."

So the mother of Moses is chosen by Pharaoh's daughter to care for and nurse Moses and not only that she pays her wages to do so. In effect having Moses own mother to serve as his nurse maid.

**v.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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So when Moses had grown to the age where that could be accomplished, Jochebed takes him to the daughter of Pharaoh to be raised as her son. Stephen testifies in his sermon”

**Acts 7:21-22** “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.”

Again we see from the record provided by Stephan that Moses was a man specially prepared for his work by the providence of God. He is raised as the grandson of the most powerful ruler on earth at that time. He was schooled “IN ALL THE WISDOM OF THE EGYPTIANS” which was considerable. He was “MIGHTY IN WORDS AND IN DEEDS”. Without any doubt in my mind, there was the possibility that as the grandson of Pharaoh he could have become a ruler of Egypt in due time. But that was not God’s plan for Moses.

Read **Exodus 2:11-20** – Exile to Midian

**v.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.”

Moses says in his record that he went out among his brethren, Stephen, as directed by the Holy Spirit gives us some of the details behind his decision.

**Acts 7:23** “AND WHEN HE WAS FULL FORTY YEARS OLD, IT CAME INTO HIS HEART TO VISIT HIS BRETHREN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.”

The man who was mistreating the Hebrew worker was undoubtedly one of the overseers of the Hebrew’s forced labor. When I read this I think of some of the stories that I have read about that actions of some of the plantation overseers during the time of slavery in this country. The nature of man had changed very little during the passing of time in between. The Baker House commentary says that what the Egyptian used to “SMITE” the Hebrew was a scourge, a word that we’re very familiar with considering we just finished a study of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. They go on to say that this scourge was made of a tough but pliant wood very similar to our hickory.

**v.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.”

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We see from the context that Moses makes a conscience decision. First he looks all around to see if anyone will see him and then he kills the Egyptian overseer and buries him in the sand. Considering the situation was his action justified? No. We don't know the details of God plan to remove his people from Egyptian bondage but we do see that his chosen leader probably needs more preparation before he is ready to accept that responsibility.

**v.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?"

What does the wisdom of God have to say about strife? Many things but let's look at two examples from the Proverbs:

**Proverbs 3:30** "STRIVE NOT WITH A MAN WITHOUT CAUSE, IF HE HAVE DONE THEE NO HARM."

And then later calls such men who do strive among themselves meddling fools.

**Proverbs 20:3** "*It is* AN HONOUR FOR A MAN TO CEASE FROM STRIFE: BUT EVERY FOOL WILL BE MEDDLING."

So Moses finds two Hebrews striving among themselves and we're told that they had come to blows.

**v.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."

The reaction of the Hebrew, the one who was providing whatever physical punishment was being administered, was to challenge Moses. Who are you? Who made you a judge over us? Obviously the Hebrew that Moses had rescued the day before had made his actions known. Adam Clarke, in his commentary, contends that Moses already knew that he was to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. I haven't read anything to support that but two things are obvious. First of all these Hebrews are not yet ready to follow Moses anywhere. If Moses did know God's plan and was trying to help God, then we have another example that teaches us that when we try to "help" God without his instruction, when it is not time to do so, we are doomed to failure.

Now Moses is afraid and has good reason to fear because Pharaoh cannot let this deed go unpunished, even when one of the family is involved.

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**v.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.”

So Moses flees to Midian, the land immediately east of Egypt the boundaries of which are not precisely known. The area called the “land of Midian” or “land of Jethro” by Arab peoples today includes the Sinai peninsula up to the land that was given to Moab. Midian was a son of Abraham:

**Genesis 25:1-2** “THEN AGAIN ABRAHAM TOOK A WIFE, AND HER NAME *was* KETURAH. AND SHE BARE HIM ZIMRAN, AND JOKSHAN, AND MEDAN, AND MIDIAN, AND ISHBAK, AND SHUAH.”

So most commentators are comfortable with the idea that Moses’ wife was another descendant of Abraham through his wife Keturah. At least one contends, however, that this is not in harmony with:

**Numbers 12:1** “AND MIRIAM AND AARON SPAKE AGAINST MOSES BECAUSE OF THE ETHIOPIAN WOMAN WHOM HE HAD MARRIED: FOR HE HAD MARRIED AN ETHIOPIAN WOMAN.”

The American Standard and the English Standard translations use the word “CUSHITE” to describe Moses’ wife in this verse instead of Ethiopian. When we go to secular sources regarding the wife of Moses we find a variety of explanations, most of them without references to support their conjecture. One of the more plausible is that the people of Midian were a dark skinned people and Kushite is a generic term used to describe dark-skinned people.

**v.16** “NOW THE PRIEST OF MIDIAN HAD SEVEN DAUGHTERS: AND THEY CAME AND DREW *water*, AND FILLED THE TROUGHS TO WATER THEIR FATHER’S FLOCK.”

The daughters of the “PRIEST” of Midian served as shepherdesses, tending their father’s flocks. This was common practice and absolutely necessary where the children in the family were daughters rather than sons. We find in Genesis 29 a very similar account of Jacob meeting Rachel at the well of Haran.

The other thing that we see about the father of these women is that he was a priest of God. After Israel had been rescued from Egypt by God, he meets them in the Sinai Wilderness. Part of this account confirms his priesthood:

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**Exodus 18:12** “AND JETHRO, MOSES' FATHER IN LAW, TOOK A BURNT OFFERING AND SACRIFICES FOR GOD: AND AARON CAME, AND ALL THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL, TO EAT BREAD WITH MOSES' FATHER IN LAW BEFORE GOD.”

**v.17** “AND THE SHEPHERDS CAME AND DROVE THEM AWAY: BUT MOSES STOOD UP AND HELPED THEM, AND WATERED THEIR FLOCK.”

The ways of the world aren't much different today that they were then. The daughters of Jethro drew water for their animals and the other herdsmen take advantage of their labor. They use the water that the girls have drawn to water their own flocks rather than waiting and drawing water for their own.

**v.18** “AND WHEN THEY CAME TO REUEL THEIR FATHER, HE SAID, HOW *is it that* YE ARE COME SO SOON TO DAY?”

The name of the father, i.e. the priest of the Midianites, is rendered Reuel, here; Raguel in

**Numbers 10:29** “AND MOSES SAID UNTO HOBAB, THE SON OF RAGUEL THE MIDIANITE, MOSES' FATHER IN LAW, WE ARE JOURNEYING UNTO THE PLACE OF WHICH THE **LORD** SAID, I WILL GIVE IT YOU: COME THOU WITH US, AND WE WILL DO THEE GOOD: FOR THE **LORD** HATH SPOKEN GOOD CONCERNING ISRAEL.”

and Jethro in **Exodus 3:1**. There is controversy and disagreement among scholars as a result. The name Reuel, or Raguel means “friend of God” and was fairly common among the Hebrews and the Edomites, both descendants of Isaac. The name Jethro seems to more likely to be a title rather than a proper name as it means “excellency” and could be a political designation for the man who was a prince and priest of Midian.

His daughters are home early and he wants to know why. Obviously he was aware of the harassment they were taking from other shepherds.

**v.19** “AND THEY SAID, AN EGYPTIAN DELIVERED US OUT OF THE HAND OF THE SHEPHERDS, AND ALSO DREW *water* ENOUGH FOR US, AND WATERED THE FLOCK.”

The girls, not knowing who Moses was, identify him as an Egyptian; probably from both his dress and his language. He not only protected them from the other shepherds, he drew water for them and helped them water their flocks.

**v.20** “AND HE SAID UNTO HIS DAUGHTERS, AND WHERE *is* HE? WHY *is it that* YE HAVE LEFT THE MAN? CALL HIM, THAT HE MAY EAT BREAD.”

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The father wants to know where Moses is. He is disappointed that his daughters did not offer this man his hospitality. Of course, it probably should be expected that young ladies would be somewhat shy about inviting a strange man to their home.

Read **Exodus 2:21-25** – Moses Marries Zipporah

**v.21** “AND MOSES WAS CONTENT TO DWELL WITH THE MAN: AND HE GAVE MOSES ZIPPORAH HIS DAUGHTER.”

Moses and Reuel apparently found many things in common. Reuel was a prince among his people and a priest of the Most High God. He would not have been too far removed in terms of generations from their common ancestor, Abraham. We're not told, but there may have been the same sort of arrangement as Jacob made with Laban for the hand of Leah, if so the scripture doesn't record it. We are told that Moses was given the daughter of Reuel, named Zipporah to be his wife.

Abul Farajius, apparently a Syrian historian who lived before Christ, calls Zipporah: “Saphura the black, daughter of Rewel the Midianite, the son of Dedan, the son of Abraham by his wife Keturah.” If this is true then we could understand why the children of Israel would call her an Ethiopian. She was a dark-skinned person.

**v.22** “AND SHE BARE *him* A SON, AND HE CALLED HIS NAME GERSHOM: FOR HE SAID, I HAVE BEEN A STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND.”

Zipporah bears Moses a son. He is named Gershom. The prefix, Ger is a term common in both Hebrew and Egyptian and means a “sojourner”. The suffix shom is a Coptic i.e. Egyptian term that translates “a foreign or strange land.” Literally the boy's name translates in to English as “a sojourner in a strange land.”

**v.23** “AND IT CAME TO PASS IN PROCESS OF TIME, THAT THE KING OF EGYPT DIED: AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SIGHED BY REASON OF THE BONDAGE, AND THEY CRIED, AND THEIR CRY CAME UP UNTO GOD BY REASON OF THE BONDAGE.”

The Pharoah that “knew not Joseph” has died but most historians seem to agree that he was probably succeeded by his son. Stephen gives us the time of this transition:

**Acts 7:29** “AND WHEN FORTY YEARS WERE EXPIRED, THERE APPEARED TO HIM IN THE WILDERNESS OF MOUNT SINA AN ANGEL OF THE LORD IN A FLAME OF FIRE IN A BUSH.”

But the condition of the Hebrews does not change. They are oppressed as before, perhaps even more harshly. God is hearing them. He tells Moses:



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**Exodus 3:7** “AND THE LORD SAID, I HAVE SURELY SEEN THE AFFLICTION OF MY PEOPLE WHICH **are** IN EGYPT, AND HAVE HEARD THEIR CRY BY REASON OF THEIR TASKMASTERS; FOR I KNOW THEIR SORROWS;”

**v.24** “AND GOD HEARD THEIR GROANING, AND GOD REMEMBERED HIS COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, WITH ISAAC, AND WITH JACOB.”

God remembered his promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the promise to give the land in which he sojourned to his children.

**Genesis 15:18** “IN THE SAME DAY THE **LORD** MADE A COVENANT WITH ABRAM, SAYING, UNTO THY SEED HAVE I GIVEN THIS LAND, FROM THE RIVER OF EGYPT UNTO THE GREAT RIVER, THE RIVER EUPHRATES:”

God “KNEW” them, God approved of them; therefore when their cries went up to him because of their slavery and the general condition under which they were expected to work and live. Their cry came up before him and he heard their groaning.