MOSES: THE FORMATIVE YEARS

Exodus 2:1-25
Moses: The Formative Years

Commentary

By

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Text:

Exodus 2:1-25,

1. A man from the household of Levi married a woman who was a descendant of Levi.
2. The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a healthy child, she hid him for three months.
3. But when she was no longer able to hide him, she took a papyrus basket for him and sealed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and set it among the reeds along the edge of the Nile.
4. His sister stationed herself at a distance to find out what would happen to him.
5. Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself by the Nile, while her attendants were walking alongside the river, and she saw the basket among the reeds. She sent one of her attendants, took it,
6. opened it, and saw the child—a boy, crying!—and she felt compassion for him and said, “This is one of the Hebrews’ children.”
7. Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get a nursing woman for you from the Hebrews, so that she may nurse the child for you?”
8. Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Yes, do so.” So the young girl went and got the child’s mother.
9. Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed him.
10. When the child grew older she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, “Because I drew him from the water.”
11. In those days, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and observed their hard labor, and he saw an Egyptian man attacking a Hebrew man, one of his own people. 12. He looked this way and that and saw that no one was there, and then he attacked the Egyptian and concealed the body in the sand.
13. When he went out the next day, there were two Hebrew men fighting. So he said to the one who was in the wrong, “Why are you attacking your fellow Hebrew?”
14. The man replied, “Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Are you planning to kill me like you killed that Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid, thinking, “Surely what I did has become known.”
15. When Pharaoh heard about this event, he sought to kill Moses. So Moses fled from Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, and he settled by a certain well.
16. Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and began to draw water and fill the troughs in order to water their father’s flock.
17. When some shepherds came and drove them away, Moses came up and defended them and then watered their flock.
18. So when they came home to their father Reuel, he asked, “Why have you come home so early today?”
19. They said, “An Egyptian man rescued us from the shepherds, and he actually drew water for us and watered the flock!”
20. He said to his daughters, “So where is he? Why in the world did you leave the man? Call him, so that he may eat a meal with us.”
21. Moses agreed to stay with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage.
22. When she bore a son, Moses named him Gershom, for he said, “I have become a resident foreigner in a foreign land.”
23. During that long period of time the king of Egypt died, and the Israelites groaned because of the slave labor. They cried out, and their desperate cry because of their slave labor went up to God.
24. God heard their groaning, God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob,
25. God saw the Israelites, and God understood. . . (NET)

Introduction:
I. God has chosen Moses to fulfill his promise (covenant) to the people of Israel.

A. Exodus 3:10-11, So now go, and I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.” Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, or that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” (NET)

B. Genesis 15:13, Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign country. They will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. (NET)

C. 1 Chronicles 16:16, the promise he made to Abraham, the promise he made by oath to Isaac! (NET)

II. By His will,

A. He delivered Moses from infanticide.

B. Kept him safe in the royal Egyptian court.

C. Moses remained true to God in heart, mind and spirit.

III. In our culture today, do you sometimes find it difficult to remain steadfast to God? Imagine Moses being faithful to God while being brought up in an environment of idolatry and false gods! Our culture constantly bombards us with
idolatry and false gods from television, movies, internet, and advertising.

A. 1 Chronicles 10:14, He did not seek the Lord’s guidance, so the Lord killed him and transferred the kingdom to David son of Jesse. (NET)

B. Exodus 20:3, “You shall have no other gods before me. (NET)

C. Deuteronomy 5:7, You must not have any other gods besides me. (NET)

D. Exodus 20:5-6, You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, responding to the transgression of fathers by dealing with children to the third and fourth generations of those who reject me, and showing covenant faithfulness to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. (NET)

E. Exodus 32:7-8, The Lord spoke to Moses: “Go quickly, descend, because your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have acted corruptly. They have quickly turned aside from the way that I commanded them—they have made for themselves a molten calf and have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt.’” (NET)
IV. Moses did not write down any of his experiences of growing up as a member of Pharaoh’s family.

A. This is significant. The focus is on God and his plan, and how he guides Moses.

V. God places people where He needs them to accomplish his plan. He knows what the outcome will be. Jochebed, Miriam, baby Moses and Pharaoh’s daughter all came together by design.

VI. Forty (40) years later in Midian, Moses helped seven (7) sisters water their father’s sheep. This led to Moses marrying Zipporah, one of the daughters, and working as a shepherd for his father-in-law. This was not happenstance, but the unfolding of God’s plan.

A. 2 Kings 19:25a, Certainly you must have heard! Long ago I worked it out, In ancient times I planned it; and now I am bringing it to pass. (NET)

B. God knows the future.

1. Genesis 15:13, Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign country. They will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. (NET)

2. Exodus 4:21, The Lord said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you
do before Pharaoh all the wonders I have put under your control. But I will harden his heart and he will not let the people go. (NET)

3. Isaiah 14:27, Indeed, the Lord who commands armies has a plan, and who can possibly frustrate it? His hand is ready to strike, and who can possibly stop it? (NET)

4. Isaiah 42:9, Look, my earlier predictive oracles have come to pass; now I announce new events. Before they begin to occur, I reveal them to you.” (NET)

5. Isaiah 46:9-10, Remember what I accomplished in antiquity! Truly I am God, I have no peer; I am God, and there is none like me, who announces the end from the beginning and reveals beforehand what has not yet occurred, who says, ‘My plan will be realized, I will accomplish what I desire,’ (NET)

C. Where has God placed you? Do you recognize what God expects from you?

1. Psalm 46:10, He says, “Stop your striving and recognize that I am God! I will be exalted over the nations! I will be exalted over the earth!” (NET)
2. Deuteronomy 6:4-6, Listen, Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You must love the Lord your God with your whole mind, your whole being, and all your strength. (NET)

3. Genesis 45:5-8, Now, do not be upset and do not be angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me ahead of you to preserve life! For these past two years there has been famine in the land and for five more years there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. God sent me ahead of you to preserve you on the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now, it is not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me an adviser to Pharaoh, lord over all his household, and ruler over all the land of Egypt. (NET)

4. 1 Samuel 3:8-10, Then the Lord called Samuel a third time. So he got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me!” Eli then realized that it was the Lord who was calling the boy. So Eli said to Samuel, “Go back and lie down. When he calls you, say, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” So Samuel went back and lay down in his place. Then the Lord came and stood nearby, calling as he had previously done, “Samuel! Samuel!” Samuel replied,
“Speak, for your servant is listening!” (NET)

5. Isaiah 6:8, I heard the voice of the sovereign master say, “Whom will I send? Who will go on our behalf?” I answered, “Here I am, send me!” (NET)

VII. Chapter two concludes the first forty (40) years of Moses’ life in Egypt. Now he leaves Egypt to start his forty (40) years in the desert. This was God’s plan to develop Moses in the harshness of the wilderness and to familiarize him with this region so he could lead the Israelites to the Promised Land.

A. There are many remarkable coincidences regarding the use of the number forty (40) in the Bible.

1. Genesis 7:12, And the rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. (NET)

2. Genesis 8:6, At the end of forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the ark. (NET)

3. Deuteronomy 25:3, The judge may sentence him to forty blows, but no more. If he is struck with more than these, you might view your fellow Israelite with contempt. (NET)
4. Exodus 24:18, Moses went into the cloud when he went up the mountain, and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights. (NET)

5. Exodus 16:35, Now the Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was inhabited; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. (NET)

6. Acts 1:3, To the same apostles also, after his suffering, he presented himself alive with many convincing proofs. He was seen by them over a forty-day period and spoke about matters concerning the kingdom of God. (NET)

7. Matthew 4:1-2, Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After he fasted forty days and forty nights he was famished. (NET)

8. Mark 1:13, He was in the wilderness forty days, enduring temptations from Satan. He was with wild animals, and angels were ministering to his needs. (NET)

9. Luke 4:2, where for forty days he endured temptations from the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were completed, he was famished. (NET)
Commentary:

Exodus 2:1-2, A man from the household of Levi married a woman who was a descendant of Levi. The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a healthy child, she hid him for three months. (NET)

I. Birth of Moses.

   A. Mother and father both of Levite descent.

      1. Father was Amram.

         a. Exodus 6:20, Amram married his father’s sister Jochebed, and she bore him Aaron and Moses. (The length of Amram’s life was 137 years.) (NET)


         c. Exodus 2:1, A man from the household of Levi married a woman who was a descendant of Levi. (NET)

      2. Mother was Jochebed.
a. Exodus 6:20, Amram married his father’s sister Jochebed, and she bore him Aaron and Moses. (The length of Amram’s life was 137 years.) (NET)

B. Mother gave birth to a male child.

1. She hid him at home for the first three (3) months in defiance of Pharaoh’s orders.

2. Then she hid the child in a basket in the Nile River.

3. Watched over by Miriam, Moses’ sister.


C. Pharaoh’s daughter finds the basket with baby.

1. Miriam offers to find a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby.

a. “... If thou wilt order one of the Hebrew women to be brought, perhaps it may admit the breast of one of its own nation.” Josephus – Antiquities, 2.9.5.226.

b. The wet nurse Miriam brought was Jochebed, the child’s mother.
2. The child was weaned and brought to Pharaoh’s daughter.

   a. This indicates the child was between three (3) and four (4) years of age. “. . . The context suggests that it refers to the time he was weaned and before he was named. Perhaps indicating he was three (3) or four (4) years old.”

   i. Exodus 2:10, When the child grew older she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, “Because I drew him from the water.” (NET)

3. Named Moses by Pharaoh’s daughter.


   b. “. . . The Egyptians call water by the name Mou and such as are saved out of it by Eses. So by putting these two words together they imposed this name upon him. . . Josephus Antiquities – 2.9.6.228

III. Moses Flees to Midian.
A. Moses, now an adult, observes an Egyptian attacking a Hebrew man, and, attempting to save him, kills the Egyptian.

1. Acts 7:23-24, But when he was about forty years old, it entered his mind to visit his fellow countrymen the Israelites. When he saw one of them being hurt unfairly, Moses came to his defense and avenged the person who was mistreated by striking down the Egyptian. (NET)

B. The next day Moses encounters two (2) Hebrew men fighting and intercedes.

1. Exodus 2:14, The man replied, “Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Are you planning to kill me like you killed that Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid, thinking, “Surely what I did has become known.” (NET)

2. Acts 7:25-29, He thought his own people would understand that God was delivering them through him, but they did not understand. The next day Moses saw two men fighting, and tried to make peace between them, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers; why are you hurting one another?’ But the man who was unfairly hurting his neighbor pushed Moses aside, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and judge over us? You
don’t want to kill me the way you killed the Egyptian yesterday, do you?’ When the man said this, Moses fled and became a foreigner in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons. (NET)

3. Moses’ first attempt as a deliverer failed.

a. “. . . Though conscious of his power, he failed because the people were not ready for leadership and neither was Moses. . . .” Hally’s Bible Handbook, Exodus 2, pg. 134.

C. Moses flees Egypt and goes to Midian. There he settles by a well.

1. Genesis 29:2-3, He saw in the field a well with three flocks of sheep lying beside it, because the flocks were watered from that well. Now a large stone covered the mouth of the well. When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone off the mouth of the well and water the sheep. Then they would put the stone back in its place over the well’s mouth. (NET)

2. Midian is located on the Eastern shore of the Gulf of Akaba.

D. Seven (7) daughters of Reuel bring their father’s sheep to be watered. Other shepherds drive them
away. Moses defends the seven and waters their sheep.

1. Genesis 29:10, When Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his uncle Laban, and the sheep of his uncle Laban, he went over and rolled the stone off the mouth of the well and watered the sheep of his uncle Laban. (NET)

E. Moses is given Zipporah in marriage by Reuel.

III. God’s people continue to suffer in bondage.

A. God hears. God remembers.

1. Psalms 105:8-9, He always remembers his covenantal decree, the promise he made to a thousand generations—the promise he made to Abraham, the promise he made by oath to Isaac! (NET)

2. Psalms 106:8, Yet he delivered them for the sake of his reputation, that he might reveal his power. (NET)

3. Psalms 106:44-46, Yet he took notice of their distress, when he heard their cry for help. He remembered his covenant with them, and relented because of his great loyal love. He caused all their conquerors to have pity on them. (NET)
4. Isaiah 63:9, Through all that they suffered, he suffered too. The messenger sent from his very presence delivered them. In his love and mercy he protected them; he lifted them up and carried them throughout ancient times. (NET)

5. Hosea 11:1, When Israel was a young man, I loved him like a son, and I summoned my son out of Egypt. (NET)

6. Genesis 50:20, As for you, you meant to harm me, but God intended it for a good purpose, so he could preserve the lives of many people, as you can see this day. (NET)

7. Exodus 3:7-8, The Lord said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt. I have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. I have come down to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land to a land that is both good and spacious, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the region of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. (NET)

Conclusion:

I. God has a plan for each of us. God has given us his inspired book of instructions to follow for a life that is
pleasing to him. It is up to each of us to read, understand and follow his instructions.

A. Proverbs 3:5-6, Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. Acknowledge him in all your ways, and he will make your paths straight. (NET)

B. Proverbs 3:13-14, Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who obtains understanding. For her benefit is more profitable than silver, and her gain is better than gold. (NET)

C. Psalm 33:11, The Lord’s decisions stand forever; his plans abide throughout the ages. (NET)

D. Genesis 21:1-2, The Lord visited Sarah just as he had said he would and did for Sarah what he had promised. So Sarah became pregnant and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the appointed time that God had told him. (NET)

E. Genesis 15:13, Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign country. They will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. (NET)
II. God may use us in ways that are not, at first, apparent to us.

A. “God brings you to places, among people, and in certain conditions to accomplish a definite purpose through the intercession of the spirit in you.” Oswald Chambers, Myutmost For His Highest: Daily Devotional, November 7.

B. God may alter or change your “assignment.”

1. “Are you on the eve of change? Accept it. Don’t resist it. Change is not only a part of life. Change is a necessary part of God’s strategy. To use us to change the world, He alters our assignments.” Max Lucado, Fearless: Imagine Your Life Without Fear.

2. Hebrews 10:7, “Then I said, ‘Here I am: I have come—it is written of me in the scroll of the book—to do your will, O God.’”


III. God uses trials and tribulations to strengthen us for our task ahead.

A. 1 Peter 1:6-7, “This brings you great joy, although you may have to suffer for a short time in various trials. Such trials show the proven
character of your faith, which is much more valuable than gold—gold that is tested by fire, even though it is passing away—and will bring praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (NET)

B. James 1:2-4, My brothers and sisters, consider it nothing but joy when you fall into all sorts of trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect effect, so that you will be perfect and complete, not deficient in anything. (NET)

IV. How do we handle trials?

A. Run from them – as Jonah did?

1. Jonah 1:1-17, The Lord said to Jonah son of Amittai, “Go immediately to Nineveh, that large capital city, and announce judgment against its people because their wickedness has come to my attention.” Instead, Jonah immediately headed off to Tarshish to escape from the commission of the Lord. He traveled to Joppa and found a merchant ship heading to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went aboard it to go with them to Tarshish far away from the Lord. But the Lord hurled a powerful wind on the sea. Such a violent tempest arose on the sea that the ship threatened to break up! The sailors were so afraid that each cried out to
his own god and they flung the ship’s cargo overboard to make the ship lighter. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold below deck, had lain down, and was sound asleep. The ship’s captain approached him and said, “What are you doing asleep? Get up! Cry out to your god! Perhaps your god might take notice of us so that we might not die!” The sailors said to one another, “Come on, let’s cast lots to find out whose fault it is that this disaster has overtaken us.” So they cast lots, and Jonah was singled out. They said to him, “Tell us, whose fault is it that this disaster has overtaken us? What’s your occupation? Where do you come from? What’s your country? And who are your people?” He said to them, “I am a Hebrew! And I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” Hearing this, the men became even more afraid and said to him, “What have you done?” (The men said this because they knew that he was trying to escape from the Lord, because he had previously told them.) Because the storm was growing worse and worse, they said to him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?” He said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea to make the sea quiet down, because I know it’s my fault you are in this severe storm.” Instead, they tried to row back to land, but they were not able to do so.
because the storm kept growing worse and worse. So they cried out to the Lord, “Oh, please, Lord, don’t let us die on account of this man! Don’t hold us guilty of shedding innocent blood. After all, you, Lord, have done just as you pleased.” So they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped raging. The men feared the Lord greatly, and earnestly vowed to offer lavish sacrifices to the Lord. The Lord sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

B. Realize that God does not test us without reason.

1. Job 1:20-22, Then Job got up and tore his robe. He shaved his head, and then he threw himself down with his face to the ground. He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will return there. The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. May the name of the Lord be blessed!” In all this Job did not sin, nor did he charge God with moral impropriety. (NET)

C. In the end faithfulness to God will prevail.

1. Job 42:10, So the Lord restored what Job had lost after he prayed for his friends, and the Lord doubled all that had belonged to Job. (NET)
D. Moses was being groomed for the plan that God had for him. He was preparing Moses for the trials that lay ahead in the next forty (40) years.
QUESTIONS

Exodus 2:1-25

1. What was the bloodline of Moses’ parents? __________
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________________________________________________________________________
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2. How is this significant in God’s ultimate plan? ______
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3. How did Pharaoh’s daughter know immediately the baby they discovered was Hebrew? _______________________
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4. How was Miriam able to help rescue baby Moses? ____
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________________________________________________________________________
5. What incident revealed to Moses that the murder he had committed was no longer a secret? ___________________

6. How long was Moses in Egypt before fleeing to Midian? ___________________

7. What was the occupation of Reuel, Moses’ father-in-law. ___________________

8. What did Reuel own that shows he probably was a well-to-do man? ___________________
9. Was the daily life for the Israelites any better? Worse?

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10. What did God do? __________________________________

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