

## EXODUS 2:1-25

### INTRODUCTION

Last time we left the passage with Pharaoh having commanded his people to throw every newborn boy into the river Nile. The aim was to destroy the Israelites and wipe them out. Behind these human actions as we saw last week was Satan, his aim was not only to wipe out the Israelites but in doing so to thwart God's plan of a coming redeemer through the line of these Israelites. The question being raised by the author of Exodus is what is God going to do about it in response? This brings us to chapter 2.

### 1. GOD RAISES UP A DELIVERER FOR HIS PEOPLE

In chapter 2 the scene moves from Pharaoh and murderous plot to a simple home of a godly Hebrew family. A man of the house of Levi married to a Levite woman and from this marriage a son is born. Now on the face of it there was nothing unusual about that, but as we follow the story through this son will be preserved from Pharaoh's edict and will grow up and be the means used by God to deliver Israel from the slavery of the Egyptians.

We are not told the names of the parents at this stage we have to wait until 6:20 to find out that their names are Amram and Jochebed. Now this couple loved God we read in Hebrews 11:23 that they acted in faith. Now it is significant that Moses was born a Levite. The tribe of Levi was later set apart at Mount Sinai for the particular work of attending to the tabernacle. To the Hebrew reader this background indicated that Moses was being set apart by God for his special service just as his tribe later would be set apart.

Now Moses was not an only child, he had a sister Miriam (2:4) and an older brother Aaron (7:7), but it is with Moses that our story focuses for God is raising him up as the deliverer for his people. But Moses' parents had a problem what were they going to do with him, he was a boy and the edict said all Hebrew boys must be thrown into the river Nile.

Well his Parents came up with a clever plan. They hid him for the first three months, but this action was based on faith, they feared God not Pharaoh and put their trust in him even though they knew if caught their own lives were at risk (Hebrews 11:23). But as Moses grew this created another problem, for the older he became the more movement he would gain and the noisier he would become. So at the age of three months they had to do something with Moses, for it was now very difficult to hide him successfully.

So an unusual plan was devised, they hid him in the last place the Egyptians would look, in the river Nile itself. If you wanted to stop your baby son from being thrown into the Nile you would normally hide him well away from the river. But Moses' parents hide him in the river. They placed him in a basket and placed him among the reeds in the river. The reeds would give the baby shelter from the hot sun and keep the little basket in one place.

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word used for "basket" is the word used for "ark" in the Noah story. Noah and his family were inside the ark and were saved from death and here Moses is inside his ark and is saved from death as a result. In the same way all who are in Christ are saved from eternal death. But Moses' parents didn't abandon him they sent his sister to see what would happen and presumable to look after his needs when no one was around.

They all had faith in God, he had put this plan into their hearts, they somehow knew that Moses was no ordinary child that God had a special purpose for him (Hebrews 11:23), but his parents did not know how God was going to save Moses now. So Moses sister Miriam kept here distanced

and watched. She probably couldn't believe her eyes when she saw what happened next. One day Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to bathe.

She notices the little basket and sends her slave girl to get it. She opened it and discovered it was a Hebrew baby boy, he was crying and she felt sorry for him.

Miriam acted quickly in the situation came forward and suggested that a Hebrew mother could nurse the baby for her. Moses needed a Mother's milk and there were plenty of Hebrew Mothers whose baby had been taken from them and killed whose breast would have been full of milk. But Miriam knew what she was doing and when the Princess accepted her offer she got her Mother and of course Moses' Mother to take care of him.

The Princess even paid her for doing so (is this the first case of child benefit)? Moses Mother raised him probably to between the age of 3 and 5 and then handed him over to Pharaoh's daughter. In such a household Moses enjoyed the privileges and education of a prince of Egypt.

Now let us break into the story and try to apply the story so far. There are two main lessons that I want to draw out.

a) When things seem to be going disastrously wrong, God is working quietly and unseen in the background. This struck me this week very forcefully. It appears as if things couldn't get worst for the people of God. The new Pharaoh didn't know about Joseph, he opposes the Israelites and is ruthless to them. He sets them to work as slaves, he then tries to get the midwives to kill every newborn baby and when that fails he tells his fellow Egyptian citizens to throw every newborn boy into the Nile. Now we must realise that in their culture Pharaoh was not just the king and ruler but he was like a god, his word was final disobedience led to severe consequences.

What could God's people do, things could not get worst it appears that soon the whole nation will be wiped from the face of the earth. A good question that may well have been in the minds of the Israelites is what is God doing in this situation. Well God is at work quietly and unseen but he is preparing a deliverer for his people. No one knew about it, except probably Moses family, but God is at work and in 40 years time everyone will see what God is doing (Acts 7:23)

Now this is a lesson that we find also in the book of Samuel. In chapter two of 1 Samuel we read about the corruption of Eli's sons who abused their position of priests for their own gain. They were even guilty of gross immorality. What was God doing in that situation? In chapter 3 we have the call and preparation of Samuel as God's instrument and deliverer. What is God doing in pagan Britain and increasingly becoming more pagan? It seems that evil and Satan has the upper hand. Morals in our nations have declined at an incredible rate; the church is declining and becoming increasingly less relevant to our affluent society. Although we may not always know what God is doing we can be sure that he is working quietly and in unseen ways in our society. Who knows but perhaps another Wesley or Whitfield was born today a child who will become a man and one day will be greatly used by God.

Even now God might well be calling someone into the ministry that will be a great leader among God's people. Perhaps there is someone who at this moment of time is gaining an excellent education, which one-day will be used in scholarship that will challenge the scholars of our land. Even now a young child could be being taught the things of God, being groomed by God to serve him within our nation. Maybe even now there is a future godly Prime Minister who will lead this nation back to God.

This is a great encouragement to us for just because we cannot see what God is doing does not mean that he is not doing anything, God is always at work carrying out his plan and purpose for our nation, church and world. We might one day see exactly what God was doing in 2009 in

Britain. We must also learn this lesson when it comes to evangelism and prayer as well. We may not see any tangible evidence from our evangelism or we may not see any proof that God is answering our prayers but we need to be careful that we do not conclude that God is doing nothing. Who knows but perhaps God is working in people's hearts through one of our means of evangelism, He is doing it quietly and unseen which one day we might see the results off.

God may even now be at work bringing about answers to our prayers, he may even now be preparing someone who will be that answer to that particular prayer. He may be working out circumstances at this moment that will lead to answering your prayer. It was forty years before the Israelites could really see what God had been doing all the years that the Israelites were in slavery, but they could be sure that God was not idle and doing nothing he was working out his purposes for his people.

So God is not doing nothing, He is at work, quietly and in unseen ways but he is working out His will and purposes for his church in Britain today.

**b) God is working out his providence in this situation.** Although all the people in this situation are acting independently and making their own decisions yet behind all that is going on is God's providence at work. What do we mean by the word providence? When I use that word I mean that God is working out his purposes in the everyday events of life. He is the director of life; he causes the events in this story to happen for his own purposes and to fulfil his will. The best way to show you what I mean is to give you examples from the story itself.

First of all God put it into the minds of Moses' parents to hide their son in the river Nile, of all the places where Moses could have been placed in the Nile and of all the places where the Princess could have bathed it just happened that the Princess and Moses were brought together. Not by chance or luck but by the providence of our sovereign God. Of all the people who could have found baby Moses it was a Princess who felt sorry for him.

It could have so easily have been Princess who wanted to carry out Pharaoh's wishes or any other member of the Egyptian public, but in God's providence it was a princess who felt sorry for him.

As a result Moses received the best education anyone could have received in Egypt. Being in Pharaoh's household he would have been taught, reading writing and Mathematics. Music along with many physical and sporting activities would also have been on the curriculum. He could not have had any better education than the one he received and all because of a chance meeting with Pharaoh's daughter? Not quite but because of the providence of God. Then again it just so happened that the Princess agreed to the suggestion of Moses' sister to have a Hebrew woman nurse him. This was all God's providence so that Moses could not only have a good formal education in Pharaoh's household but by being nursed by his real Mother meant that he would receive a godly upbringing were he would be taught the ways of God.

All of this was needed if Moses was going to lead the people of God well. Now all of the decisions made in this story were made by real people who were able to think and make independent decisions. But behind the decision-making was God who was working through his providence to fulfil his own purpose. It's not that Moses parents and Pharaoh's daughter had no choice in the matter, that they were just pawns in God's great game of chess, they did have choices, they made real decisions which carried real consequences but behind every human decision is God carrying out his providence and bringing about His will and purposes.

Now this doctrine is very practical, for Moses parents it meant that when they placed him in the river Nile they obviously had thought about the various things that could happen and their consequences but they also had to trust God that he would work out his providence in their lives and in the life of little Moses.

We are to make responsible decisions, which are thought out, but having made those decisions we are then to trust God and his providence. Let me give you an example, let's say you have thought it through and you decide that you should move jobs. You pray about it and look the newspapers and see a job that you think suits you fine. You then prepare well for the interview and answer the questions to the best of your ability; from the human perspective there is no reason why you should not get that job.

Finally you simply trust God that through his providence he will bring about his will for your life, and fulfil his purposes upon this earth. That, my dear friend, is the practical outworking of God's providence.

This doctrine is a great comfort to all true believers. Moses parents could place Moses in the basket in the Nile and not worry because they knew that God is in control and works out his purposes through his providences. They simply had to trust God. In the same way we can trust God, he is in control he works behind everything that happens in our life, there are no accidents or chance events or luck, God is at working causing the various circumstances in our lives to fulfil his purposes. Therefore unemployment or illness, or disability or uncertainty or family dilemma's has nothing to do with chance but with God working his purposes out in our everyday life. Let me encourage you to simply trust God with the small things of life as well as the large events of life. God is at work in and through them all for his glory and our ultimate good.

Another application of the outworking of the providence of God in our lives is that we can be thankful for everything that happens to us. We can be thankful for every blessing and benefit that makes our life such a joy and for every unpleasant circumstance that comes into our lives. For through it all God is in control working out his will for us. Moses and his parents could be thankful to God for being accepted into the household of Pharaoh and receiving all the benefits that it brought into Moses' life.

So let us learn to trust God with a thankful heart and look at the providences that affect our lives and then let's live humbly and reverently before our great Sovereign and all gloriously God.

Amen