

Bible Study Handout: The Birth and Preservation of Moses (Exodus 2)

The story of Moses' birth and preservation is one of the clearest examples of God's providence at work behind the scenes. In Exodus 2:1-25, we move from Pharaoh's cruel decree to the quiet faith of one Hebrew family. Amid fear, oppression, and uncertainty, God was already preparing a deliverer. Every act in this chapter—Jochebed's courage, Miriam's watchfulness, the compassion of Pharaoh's daughter—shows how God's plan unfolds through ordinary people who trust Him.

These verses also introduce one of Scripture's greatest patterns: Egypt as a picture of the world—a place of bondage, power, and self-reliance from which God calls His people to separate. As you study, notice how faith stands in contrast to fear, and how God's unseen hand guides every detail for His glory and His people's good.

The Birth of Moses (Exodus 2:1–2)

- Pharaoh had decreed that all Hebrew baby boys were to be thrown into the Nile (Exodus 1:22).
- Moses' parents, Amram and Jochebed (Exodus 6:20), defied Pharaoh's order by faith.
- Aaron was born three years before Moses (Exodus 7:7).
- “Goodly” = healthy, beautiful, and favored by God.
- They saw something special—God's hand on his life.

Supporting Verses:

- *Acts 7:20* – “Moses was... exceeding fair.”
- *Hebrews 11:23* – “By faith... they saw he was a proper child.”

Greek Word:

- *Asteios* (ἄστεϊος): “beautiful, well-formed, divinely favored.”
- Moses' parents discerned divine purpose, not just physical beauty.

Faith in Action (Exodus 2:3–4)

- Jochebed made a waterproof basket — a *miniature ark* (similar to Noah's).
- She placed it among the reeds along the Nile River.
- Miriam, Moses' sister, watched from a distance to see what would happen.
- “*To wit*” means “*to know*” or “*to find out*.”

Faith Lesson:

Sometimes faith means acting (Jochebed) and sometimes waiting and watching (Miriam).

God's providence is already at work, even when we can't see it.

God's Providence and Compassion (Exodus 2:5–10)

- Pharaoh's daughter discovers the basket (v.5).
- She opens it, sees the baby, and has compassion (v.6).
- Miriam steps forward and offers to find a nurse (v.7).
- Moses' own mother is chosen to nurse him—and is paid for it (v.8–9)!
- Later, Moses is adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and named *Moses*—"drawn out of water" (v.10).

Lessons:

- God used courageous women:
 - The midwives (Ex. 1:17)
 - Jochebed (faith)
 - Miriam (obedience)
 - Pharaoh's daughter (compassion)
- Pharaoh's plan failed—God turned the enemy's decree into His own plan of deliverance.

Moses' Training in Egypt

- Moses received Egypt's best education and training.
- Egypt, however, pictures the world system in Scripture:
 - **Bondage:** Exodus 20:2 – "House of bondage."
 - **Worldly power:** Isaiah 31:1 – trusting in human strength.
 - **Idolatry and pleasure:** Ezekiel 20:7–8.
 - **Leaving Egypt:** picture of salvation and separation.
 - **Desiring Egypt again:** a picture of backsliding (Hebrews 11:15–16).

Hebrews 11:24–25 – "By faith Moses... refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God."

Moses' Mistake and Flight to Midian (Exodus 2:11–15)

- Moses kills an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew (v.11–12).
- He thought his people would see him as their deliverer, but they didn't understand (Acts 7:24–25).
- The next day, a Hebrew questions his authority (v.13–14).
- Pharaoh hears and seeks to kill Moses, so he flees to Midian (v.15).

Lessons:

- Good intentions are not enough — they must align with **God's way** and **God's timing**.
- Moses tried to do the right thing the wrong way.

- Sometimes God puts us in the wilderness to teach humility and dependence (Proverbs 3:5–7).

Life in Midian (Exodus 2:16–22)

- Moses defends the daughters of Jethro (Reuel) at the well.
- He marries Zipporah (“*little bird*”).
- They have a son named Gershom, meaning “*a stranger there*.”
- Moses spends 40 years as a shepherd — learning patience, humility, and leadership in the desert.

Lesson: God often uses seasons of obscurity to prepare us for seasons of influence. Before Moses could lead a nation, he had to learn to lead sheep.

The Cry of God’s People (Exodus 2:23–25)

- God **heard** their cries and **remembered** His covenant.
- “Looked” (Hebrew *ra’ah*, רָאָה) means **to look with concern or with the intent to help**.
- “Had respect” (Hebrew *yada’*, יָדָע) means **to know intimately or personally**.
- God wasn’t unaware — He was waiting for the right moment to act.

Theme Shift:

- Chapter 1: Bondage and death
- Chapter 2: Deliverance and life

Faith Application: God Cares for Us

1 Peter 5:7 – “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.”

Notes:

- “Casting” means to throw off completely — like laying a heavy burden on someone stronger.
- God invites you to give Him every care, big or small.

Supporting Verse:

Hebrews 4:16 – “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace...”

Encouraging Quotes:

“Worry is a burden God never meant for you to bear. Faith is the act of rolling that burden from your shoulders onto His.” — *Corrie ten Boom*

"It is a blessed thing to cast your cares upon God. Leave your burden at the Lord's feet, and then rise and sing." — *Charles Spurgeon*

"The burdens of life are heavy only when we carry them alone. When Christ is our companion, even the heaviest load is light." — *A.W. Tozer*

Summary Thoughts

- God's providence is always at work — even in difficult circumstances.
- Faith means trusting God's unseen hand when you don't know the outcome.
- God hears, sees, remembers, and knows His people — and He cares for you personally.
- Deliverance always begins with God's compassion and our faithful obedience.

Bible Study Questions

1. How did Moses' parents demonstrate faith when Pharaoh commanded all Hebrew baby boys to be killed?
2. What does it mean that Moses was a "goodly" or "proper" child, and what did his parents see in him?
3. Why did Jochebed place Moses in a basket along the Nile River, and what does this teach us about trusting God?
4. What does Miriam's watchfulness in Exodus 2:4 reveal about faith that waits and watches?
5. How does Pharaoh's daughter's compassion show God's providence at work?
6. What can we learn from how God reunited Moses with his mother and even provided for her needs?
7. In what ways does Egypt represent the world in Scripture, and what does it mean for believers to come out of "*Egypt*"?
8. Why was Moses wrong to kill the Egyptian, and what lesson does this teach us about doing God's work in our own strength?
9. What was God teaching Moses during his 40 years in Midian?
10. What do Exodus 2:23–25 teach us about God's awareness, compassion, and timing when His people suffer?