

Life Lesson 22
The Birth of Moses
Text: Exodus 2

Introduction

The sound of weeping echoed through all the land of Egypt. The children of Israel were crying because the Egyptians were treating them so cruelly. They had made the Israelites slaves and forced them to work hard building treasure cities for the Pharaoh. Worst of all, Pharaoh had given the order for the soldiers to throw all the baby boys born to the Israelites in the river.

The children of Israel cried out to God and asked Him to send a deliverer. God heard. He had mercy on His people, and prepared a way to set them free.

The Story

Amram and Jochabed had a little daughter, about ten years old, and a three-year-old son named Aaron. God sent another little boy to their family. He was a fine, strong, boy. How horrible to have him thrown in the river and drowned! Yet, if they didn't obey Pharaoh and turn him in to the soldiers, the rest of the family might be punished. They decided to risk it. They hid the little baby for as long as they could.

It must have been very difficult for them. It's not easy to keep a baby quiet all the time. They must have constantly feared that someone would hear him and tell the soldiers.

Finally, the baby had grown so much, and was so hard to keep quiet they could no longer risk hiding him. Jochabed made a special little basket and coated it with pitch (tar) so that it wouldn't sink. She wrapped up her baby and put him in the basket. She took him down to the river and set the little boat to sail in the tall grass, or bulrushes.

"You stay here and keep an eye on the baby," she told Miriam.

How hard it must have been for her to go off and leave her little child there in the water! Perhaps there were snakes. Maybe a wild animal would get him. Maybe a big wave would tip him over and cause him to drown. Maybe a soldier would hear him and come to kill him. She might never see him again.

Miriam faithfully stood by and watched her little brother. Then someone came--someone very important. It was the princess, the daughter of the Pharaoh. She was coming down to the river to go swimming.

"What's that over there in the bulrushes?" she asked her servants. "Go over and get it for me."

The servant girl brought it to her. She opened it up to find the last thing she expected--a baby. Just then the little baby opened his eyes and began to cry.

Pharaoh's daughter felt sorry for the baby.

"It must be one of the Israelite children that my father has ordered to be killed," she said.

"I'll just take this little one home with me and keep it."

"Would you like me to find a lady to take care of the baby for you?" Miriam asked her.

"I know a lady who can feed him and take care of him until he's big enough to come and live with you in the palace."

"Yes," the princess replied. "Go find her for me."

Miriam ran off and brought back her mother.

"Take this child and take care of him for me," the princess told Jochabed. "I will pay you for your trouble."

What a wonderful arrangement! Now the baby was safe--and he would be raised as a prince in the palace.

When the baby was big enough, he went to the palace to live with his new mother, the princess. She named him "Moses." "Moses" means "drawn out." She named him "Moses" because she drew him out of the water.

Moses grew up as an Egyptian prince. He had a wonderful education and every advantage a boy could have at that time. He needed that training in reading and writing since God gave him the important job of writing down the first five books of the Bible.

The Bible doesn't tell us much about his life as a prince. According to history, though, he was a famous soldier and a great orator (public speaker).

But, he never forgot his family and his true people. One day when he was a grown man he saw an Egyptian beating one of the Israelites. It made him angry!

He looked around but didn't see anyone. He killed the Egyptian quickly and hid him in the sand.

The very next day he saw two Israelites in a fight.

"Why are you fighting your brother?" he asked the one who started the fight.

"Who made you a prince and a judge over us?" the man sneered. "Do you plan to kill me like you did that Egyptian?"

That scared Moses, because he saw that someone had seen him kill the Egyptian. Soon everyone would know--including the Pharaoh.

Sure enough, when Pharaoh heard about it he was angry! Moses took off and went to the land of Midian to hide.

How discouraging things must have looked for Moses. He was spared from an early death, and given all the education and training he needed to be a leader and deliverer of his people. Yet, now, before he could do anything to help them, he was an outcast. He was forced

to live in the desert in fear of his life.

God hadn't forgotten Moses. The most important part of his training was just beginning. Moses had to learn to be humble, and to trust completely in God--not in himself at all.

The Life Lesson

This was a hard lesson for Moses--and sometimes those lessons are hard for us too. But you need to remember that just as God was watching over Moses and preparing him for a special service for God, so God is watching over you. He has a special plan for your life. The things that happen to you aren't just accidents, they are part of God's special plan.

Review Questions

Why were the Israelites so unhappy in Egypt?

Because the Egyptians treated them as slaves and killed their baby boys.

Who were Moses' parents?

Amram and Jochebed

Who were Moses' sister and brother?

Miriam and Aaron

How long did Moses' parents keep him hidden?

Three months.

What did Moses' mother make for him?

A basket boat.

Who watched over Moses in the river?

His sister Miriam.

Who found baby Moses in the river?

Pharaoh's daughter.

What did she decide to do with the baby?

She decided to adopt him.

What did Miriam offer to the princess?

She offered to get someone to take care of the baby.

Who took care of baby Moses until he was big enough to live in the palace?

His mother, Jochebed.

Why did Moses have to run away and hide in the wilderness?

Because he killed an Egyptian and was afraid someone would find out.