

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian Church,  
10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS**

**LESSON 2**

**EXODUS**

**CHAPTER 2**

**INTRODUCTION**

It has been said that if God calls a person to serve Him, He will give the person the necessary ability and gifts to perform the work. God's choice of Moses to lead His people out of bondage in Egypt serves as an example. Before Moses could be used of God, he had to undergo a period of training, building and change. This prepared him for the work of overseeing and leading the multitude of Israelites out of Egypt. The chapter begins with the birth of Moses.<sup>1</sup> The events that happened and the decisions made, by the people involved, in response to the various situations offer valuable spiritual insights for us. The knowledge we glean about God in this chapter is most encouraging and comforting in the face of trials and tribulations.

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<sup>1</sup> If the year of the Exodus is 1445 B.C. Moses was born in the year 1525 B.C.(Exodus 7:7 And Moses *was* fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh).

**OUTLINE**

**A. MOSES WAS BORN (2:1-4)**

1. Moses was born to a Levite couple (1:1)
2. Moses' mother hid him for three months (1:2)
3. Moses was laid in a basket by the river. His sister watched over him from a short distance away (1:3, 4)

**B. MOSES WAS ADOPTED BY PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER (2:5-10)**

1. Pharaoh's daughter found Moses by the river bank (2:5)
2. Pharaoh's daughter had compassion on Moses (2:6)
3. Pharaoh's daughter called for a maid to nurse Moses (2:7-9)
4. Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses (2:10)

**C. MOSES TRIED TO HELP HIS BRETHREN BUT FAILED (2:11-14)**

1. Moses grew up and identified himself with the Hebrews (2:11)
2. Moses killed an Egyptian for smiting a Hebrew slave (2:12)
3. Moses tried to settle a dispute between two Hebrews. He was rudely challenged by one of them (2:13, 14)

**D. MOSES FLED TO THE LAND OF MIDIAN (2:15-22)**

1. Pharaoh heard about the murder and sought to kill Moses (2:15a)
2. Moses fled to the land of Midian (2:15b)
3. Moses protected the daughters of the priest of Midian against the shepherds (2:15b-17)
4. The priest's daughters reported the incident to their father, Reuel (2:18-19)
5. Reuel invited Moses to live with them and gave Moses his daughter Zipporah (2:20-22)

**E. GOD REMEMBERED HIS COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB (2:23-25)**

1. The tyrannical Pharaoh died (2:23a)
2. The Israelites called out to God because of their bondage (2:23b)
3. God heard their cry and remembered His covenant (2:24, 25)

**COMMENTARY**

**Daughters of Israel Play An Important and Useful Role**

Pharaoh's scheme to weaken all the Israelites by oppressing them failed. His secret command to kill the newborn male babies through the Hebrew midwives also failed. He then openly declared that every newborn Israelite male had to be thrown into the river.

Israel was under threat of being gradually exterminated from the face of the earth. This was the first recorded systematic attempt in history, but not the only one. Later, Haman the Agagite also tried to do the same. More recently, Hitler gassed six million Jews.

Moses was born at such a time. He had a brother who was then three years old and a sister. Would his parents obey Pharaoh and cast him into the river? Moses' mother did cast Moses into the river, but in a manner that saved his life. She hid him at home for three months. When she could not keep him any longer, she made a wicker basket from the papyrus plant, which grew abundantly in the marshlands of the Nile, and placed Moses in it. She did all these because of her strong faith in God (Hebrews 11:23).<sup>2</sup> Moses' sister kept watch from a little distance away (v.4).

An interesting and significant fact in this narrative is that the names of the people involved were not mentioned. They were named later in the book: Moses' father was Amram. His mother was Jochebed (6:20). His brother was Aaron (6:20; 7:7) and his sister was Miriam (15:20). Their identities were deliberately withheld at this point so as to direct all the attention on God, His actions and His control of the situation.

We have seen that God used those who are seemingly weak and

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<sup>2</sup> KJV 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.

powerless to carry out His plan and purpose. In the previous chapter, He used the two Hebrew midwives to outwit Pharaoh. Here, we see Moses' mother and sister risking their lives to protect and keep Moses.

### **God Sees and Cares for His People According to His Plan**

Moses was placed in a waterproof wicker basket and put in the river. His sister kept watch over him. The princess of Egypt saw the wicker basket when she went to bathe in the river. She sent her maids to fetch the basket. Just when she opened the wicker basket, Moses cried. The princess had compassion on the child. She was aware that the child was Hebrew and that he had been "cast" into the river. Moses' sister bravely came out of her hiding and made an innocent and brilliant suggestion to get a Hebrew nurse for the child. The princess instantly agreed. She adopted Moses and sent him to be nursed (by Moses' mother). Moses and his parents were now protected and provided for by the princess of Egypt!

How marvellous is God's providential plan and purpose. The many "coincidences" were not accidental. They paint a picture of God's faithfulness to His promises and God's love for His people. Although God was not mentioned, He is in control. He can be seen in the actions of the princess. She "came down," "sent" for the basket, "saw the child", heard the child "wept", "had compassion on him", provided for

the needs of the child, "drew him out of the water" and adopted him as "her son".

No man, not even the mighty Pharaoh, can stop or spoil God's design. In the New Testament, we see a parallel incident in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. King Herod wanted to kill the infant child Jesus. But his secret and wicked scheme failed. God intervened and thwarted his plan!

### **Does the End Justify the Means**

The years passed quickly. Moses was now a grown man<sup>3</sup>. He had matured. His mother had taught him well concerning the God of their forefathers and His promises. He saw the sufferings of his people. He chose to suffer with them rather than to live in opulent luxury in the court of Pharaoh. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

One day, he went down to see his "brethren" working in the fields. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. Moses killed the Egyptian and hid the body. He made sure that no one was around before he committed the murder. His action was premeditated.

We observe that the opposition to Pharaoh now took on new significance. From a non-violent resistance, it had developed into a violent one involving killing.

Moses' killing of the Egyptian received mixed responses. Some felt

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<sup>3</sup> KJV Acts 7:23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

that it was justified because he saved one of his people. Others applauded his awareness of the afflictions and persecution of his people, but saw no justification for murder. The incident illustrates an important point regarding the character of Moses. He had a strong sense of justice. He was courageous. He was decisive -- however we do not condone his actions.

The next day when he tried to act as a peacemaker between two Hebrew slaves, he was criticised and rudely challenged — “who made thee a prince and a judge over us” (v.14). The Hebrew slave accused Moses of trying to kill him too. Moses was completely stunned. He had been rejected by his own kinsmen. He knew that Pharaoh would put him to death. He feared for his life. So he fled.

Like us, Moses was human. He was not always the brave and heroic figure. This is a lesson for us. God uses us in spite of our weaknesses and failures<sup>4</sup>.

### **Need for Retreat and Reflection**

Moses fled from Egypt to the land of Midian. He went to a well. One can understand why he stopped at a well. He had travelled quite a distance through the desert and must have been tired and thirsty. In those days, wells were places for shepherds, the village folks, travellers and newcomers to gather and meet people.

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<sup>4</sup> KJV Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

An interesting incident happened. When the seven daughters of the “priest of Midian”, whose name is Reuel/ Jethro (18:1), came to the well with their flocks, they were driven away by other shepherds. Once again, Moses displayed his sense of justice. He helped the women and watered their flock. His deed was greatly appreciated by their father. Moses was warmly welcomed into their home. Reuel even gave Zipporah, his daughter, to Moses in marriage. The ironical twist in this incident is the rude rejection of Moses by his own people and the glad reception of him by a family of non-Israelites!

Moses fled Egypt because he feared for his life. In the land where he was a total stranger, he found a family who provided for his needs. How gracious and great is the Lord God. Moses named his first son Gershom. The name reveals that he felt lonely and restless, a stranger in a strange land. In his heart, he still felt for his people and their sufferings. His personal sense of justice, love and concern for his people is indeed commendable. But that was not sufficient for him to lead them. He needed God's guidance. The championing of the Israelites must be done in God's way. Now, God had to prepare the man whom He had raised to lead His people out of Egypt. Moses' flight to Midian was the first step.

### **God Remembers**

In the meantime, while Moses was in Midian, things were happening in

Egypt. The king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned and cried out because of their bondage. God “heard” the cries of His people. This does not mean that God was hard of hearing. It intimates that God listened and responded to their cries.

God “remembered” the covenant promises that He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This does not mean that God had temporarily lost his memory and had just regained it. It denotes that the “fullness of time” had come for God to fulfil His covenant promise (Genesis 15:16).

God “looked” upon the Israelites. This means that He looked upon them with kindness and pity.

God “had respect” for them. The word is “to know” (Hebrew, *yada*). It expresses an intimate knowledge that goes beyond mere head knowledge. It means that God knew the conditions of His chosen people. He felt for them, understood them and had compassion on them.

The four words “heard”, “remembered”, “looked” and “had respect” describe God’s personal involvement and concern for His chosen people. So whether the Israelites had pleased or displeased God is not the issue here. Instead, the issue is God’s timing and His faithfulness to His word, His decrees and His will despite man’s unfaithfulness. The “delay” of His actions was for a necessary purpose.

## SUMMARY

Afflictions and sufferings in life are inevitable. They affect both Christians and non-believers. As Christians, we can take comfort that God is not unconcerned. He hears our cries. He remembers His promises. He sees and has compassion on us. He can feel our sufferings and afflictions. He will act in His time and His timing is always the best. If His intervention seems delayed, He has a purpose.

God works in wonderful and marvellous ways. Look at how He protected and provided for Moses and his family. If we live in the will of God, there is no need to fear. We need to learn to trust God implicitly. Many times, the problems that we face are a direct result of our foolishness and disobedience.

Finally just as “in the process of time, ... the king of Egypt died”, the final curtain will drop and the glory of this world will come to a grinding halt. Then the Lord Jesus Christ will appear and His kingdom will reign forever. The Lord our God be praised!

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION  
QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**MONDAY:** Exodus 2:1-4; Acts 7:17-21;  
Hebrews 11:23; 2Timothy 1:5

**TUESDAY:** Exodus 2:5-10; Acts 7:22-  
29; Nahum 1:7

**WEDNESDAY:** Exodus 2:11-14;  
Hebrews 11:24-27; Proverbs 3:27;  
Galatians 6:9-10

**THURSDAY:** Exodus 2:15-22; Proverbs  
22:6, 15; Deuteronomy 6:4-9

**FRIDAY:** Exodus 2:23-25; Psalm 37:1-  
9; 1Peter 5:7

**Discussion Questions**

1. What do you think were the anxieties  
that Moses' family went through  
before and after his birth?

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2. What lessons can we learn from the  
conduct of Moses' parents?

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3. What can we learn about God in the  
episode of Moses' adoption by the  
Egyptian princess?

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4. How can we apply this knowledge of  
God (from question 3) in our lives?

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5. What does the phrase, "when Moses was grown" mean?

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6. How would you assess Moses' act of killing the Egyptian?

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7. What are the three important decisions made by Moses in Exodus 2:15-22? How do you evaluate them?

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8. With reference to Exodus 2: 23-24, why did God permit His people to suffer?

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9. Which part of this chapter is personally significant to you?

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10. What is an appropriate title for this chapter?

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