

Zoom Bible Study

led by Mary Lowman

Growing Closer to God

The life of Moses

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Introduction

Hebrews 11 is called the Hall of Faith of great people of the faith. And here is what we learn about Moses in Hebrews 11:23-29:

By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵ He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

Genesis 46:27 says that 70 people of Jacob's family entered Egypt while Joseph was alive. At the time of the Exodus, it is conservatively estimated that 2,100,000 left Egypt.

Exodus 1:6 - 22 – Israel in Egypt – the heroism of two women

Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, ⁷ but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.

⁸ Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. ⁹ "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. ¹⁰ Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."

¹¹ So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. ¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites ¹³ and worked them ruthlessly. ¹⁴ They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

¹⁵ The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, ¹⁶ "When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." ¹⁷ The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. ¹⁸ Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?"

¹⁹ The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive."

²⁰ So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. ²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

²² Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."

Three and a half centuries have passed since Joseph died. Exodus 1:7 is the fulfillment of God's promise in Genesis 46:3.

Genesis 46:3: *"I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there."*

Exodus 1:7: *...but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.*

What were Pharaoh's options at this point?

- He could let the descendants of Joseph go – send them away to their country and be rid of them.
- He could make them into slaves.

All of this is predicted in **Genesis 15:13:**

Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there."

Three things are predicted in this verse:

1. The Israelites were to be strangers in a strange land.
2. They were to be servants – slaves.
3. They were to be afflicted.

Who were these two midwives, Shiphrah and Puah?

What would have happened if these two women had feared Pharaoh more than God?

When he couldn't get the midwives to do his dirty work, Pharaoh ordered that every Jewish boy must be thrown into the Nile.

Exodus chapter 2 – The birth of Moses

Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman,² and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months.³ But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile.⁴ His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

⁵Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it.⁶ She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

⁷Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

⁸"Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother.⁹ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him.¹⁰ When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."

Moses Flees to Midian

¹¹One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people.¹² Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.¹³ The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, "Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?"

¹⁴The man said, "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and thought, "What I did must have become known."

¹⁵When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well.¹⁶ Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came

to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock. ¹⁷ Some shepherds came along and drove them away, but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock.

¹⁸ When the girls returned to Reuel their father, he asked them, "Why have you returned so early today?"

¹⁹ They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock."

²⁰ "And where is he?" Reuel asked his daughters. "Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat."

²¹ Moses agreed to stay with the man, who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. ²² Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, saying, "I have become a foreigner in a foreign land."

²³ During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. ²⁴ God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. ²⁵ So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

Moses is writing about his own birth in the first two verses, and he does so modestly. All he tells us about his parents is that they are Levites. Later we learn their names – Amram and Jochebed.

Jochebed is no wimpy woman. This is a time for action, and God gives her wisdom to know what to do. She is a brilliant illustration of the connection which should always exist between the diligent use of means and a pious trust in God's providence.

Jochebed must have known that the princess went to this spot to bathe on some regular basis. Then Miriam moved in at just the right time. Then when Moses is weaned and older, Pharaoh's daughter adopts him as her own, and Moses becomes the grandson of Pharaoh! What a plan!

Moses' Attempt to Help His People

Acts 7:22: *Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.*

How did Moses know the truth about the God of his people?

Why do you think Moses decided to defend his people and kill the Egyptian?

Moses had no legal authority to do what he did. Exodus 2:12 says, *Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.* What do you think he was thinking?

Overnight Moses goes from being a hero for his people to being a murderer fleeing for his life. Why would Pharaoh want to kill Moses – his grandson?

This man who was powerful in speech and action is humbled as he becomes a shepherd and lives this simple life with these shepherd people. But God is not through with Moses. And God is not through with his children.