

Bi121 Old Testament

Lesson Bi121- 18 The Birth of Moses (Ex 1-2)

The birth of a child is most often a special event, celebrated joyfully by the parents and family. In this story the parents of a fine baby boy had a difficult decision to make. For the first three months of his life, his parents hid him inside their home. His very life was threatened. But God had a great big plan in store for this tiny Israelite baby—a plan no one could have imagined!

Remember that the descendants of Jacob were called Israelites, because God changed Jacob's name to Israel. The number of Israelites continued to increase for 400 years in Egypt until they became a great people. This was the beginning of the fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars. The Israelites were treated well until a new Pharaoh came to power who did not know about Joseph. This new Pharaoh began to fear the Israelites because their number was continuing to grow. He was afraid they might join Egypt's enemies in case war broke out.

His first plan to control them was to oppress the people as slaves. He forced them to make bricks and then build him new cities. Still, the Israelites multiplied in number. Then the Egyptians beat them, increased their workload, made them pump water with their feet, and work in the fields. But still their numbers grew.

Pharaoh then thought of a new plan. He told the Hebrew midwives, "When you help an Israelite woman give birth, kill all the baby boys as soon as they are born. Only the baby girls will be allowed to live."

The midwives, however, feared God more than they feared the king of Egypt, so they allowed the boys to live as well as the girls. They told Pharaoh, "The Hebrew women are much stronger than Egyptian women. They deliver their own children before we arrive." God blessed these midwives by giving them families of their own—because they refused to kill the baby boys.

The Israelite population continued to increase in number, so Pharaoh issued another decree. "Let every newborn Hebrew boy be thrown into the Nile River." During this time of persecution, a son was born to one of the Hebrew families of the tribe of Levi. Luke writes that this child was "fair in the sight of God" (Acts 7:20). His parents "saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict" (Heb 11:23). His mother hid him for three months, but it became more difficult with each passing week to keep the child hidden from the authorities.

Finally she came up with a plan to save her son. She made a basket out of reeds and lined it with pitch so it would be waterproof. Early one morning, when no one was around, she placed the child inside the basket. Instead of throwing it, she lovingly placed it in the Nile River, safe among the reeds near the shore. The boy's sister Miriam watched anxiously

nearby to see what would happen to her little baby brother.

Later that morning Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to bathe. She saw the basket floating among the reeds and sent her servant to get it. When she opened the basket, the baby started to cry and she felt sorry for him. She said, "This must be one of the Hebrew children."

Immediately Miriam came out of her hiding place and spoke up. "Do you want me to go find a Hebrew mother who can nurse the baby for you?"

"Yes, go find someone, and quickly."

So Miriam left and brought the baby's mother to Pharaoh's daughter. She tenderly handed over the baby, saying, "Take this baby and nurse him for me and I will pay you." Several years later, when the boy was weaned, his mother brought him back to Pharaoh's daughter. He became her adopted son, with all the privileges and education of the palace. She called him Moses, meaning "pulled out," because she said, "I pulled him out of the water."

Thus God used the midwives, the Hebrew mothers, Moses' sister and mother, and even Pharaoh's own daughter to thwart the ruler's plan to destroy the people of God.

This story is **important** because it shows that God did not forget his promises to the Israelites, and that God often chooses to work through unlikely people to accomplish His purposes. Sometimes these most important people are women.

The main **truth** of this story is that God will accomplish His purposes in His time, even in the middle of the persecution of His chosen people.

To **review** this lesson, answer these questions.

1. Why did Pharaoh mistreat the Israelites?
 - A. [Pause for 6 seconds.] If you said, "Pharaoh feared the Israelites and their growing numbers," you are correct.
2. What was Pharaoh's final solution to the problem of Israelite growth?
 - A. [Pause for 6 seconds.] If you said, "Let every newborn Hebrew boy be thrown into the Nile," you are correct.
3. What did Pharaoh's daughter name the child?
 - A. [Pause for 6 seconds.] If you said, "She named him Moses because she had pulled him out of the water," you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to the story at least three times. As you hear the story each time, imagine how it happened; see the events in your mind. Then tell the story in your own words as you remember it. Then listen to the story again and retell it until you feel sure you are repeating the circumstances and actions correctly. You should spend at least 45 minutes in learning the story. You may need to have someone check that you are telling the story correctly. Tell this story to someone who has never heard it before. Discuss with them how often God chooses people whom others might not choose, simply because they are willing to follow

Him. Do you know anyone like that? Make sure the women in your family and among your friends know that they are important to God.