

Moses 2

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[0 : 00] Seeking God's blessing, we'll turn to the New Testament, to the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 11, and verse 23, Hebrews 11 at verse 23.

Verse 23.

And they were not afraid of the king's commandment. Now, last time we saw how Jacob settled with his sons in the northeast of Egypt in the land known as the land of Goshen.

And there they prospered, and there they multiplied exceedingly. But we saw how as time passed, they began to compromise their faith and to adopt into their religion some of the practices of the Egyptian religions.

And because of that, the Lord came to chasten them. And he chastened them by bringing a new king into power who knew not Joseph.

[2 : 06] In other words, a king who was not sympathetic at all to Joseph or with the people of Israel. And we saw that that referred, in effect, to the new dynasty which came into Egypt around 1750 BC, the 18th dynasty, which was completely different to the 17th which came before it.

The 17th had been an open and understanding one, but the 18th dynasty was very closed and it was fiercely nationalistic. And they began to expel foreigners or else to treat them very harshly. No, God made that king to arise. He sets one up and he sets another down. And very often, God can discipline or chastise his own people by allowing those who are evil to rise up into power and to afflict even his own people.

We saw that happening very often in the Old Testament when Israel disobeyed God. He allowed the Philistines or the Midianites to gain the ascendancy over them.

And we should always see rulers rising up over us who have no respect to God as, in many respects, a chastisement or a trial for ourselves.

[3 : 21] This dynasty began with the first Pharaoh, a man called Amose I. And he began a kind of hostile policy towards the people of Israel.

And gradually you have edicts passed by the Pharaohs, which are increasingly harsh against the children of Israel. And we saw these last time.

First of all, they said, Exodus 1 verse 10, Come on and let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply. And it comes to pass when there falls out any war that they join our enemies and fight against us and so get them out of the land.

And so they set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. So that was the first step. They put the massive number of Israelites into slavery. And those expansionist, nationalistic pharaohs used those slaves to build these new and impressive treasure cities for themselves, called here Python and Rameses.

Now the second step when that didn't work was this, that Pharaoh issued a commandment that the midwives serving the Hebrew children would kill the male children as soon as they were born.

[4 : 38] But we read and we noticed last time how the midwives disobeyed Pharaoh and obeyed the king, the true king, who is God.

Even as the apostle said to the Sanhedrin, judge which is right for us to obey you or to obey God. Well, so the midwives obeyed God and disobeyed Pharaoh.

And the Lord blessed them for that. And the next strategy which Pharaoh employed was this, that as soon as any child was born, any son born, they would simply be cast into the river.

But every daughter born amongst the Hebrews would be saved alive. So that was an increasing strategy of oppression against the people of God until last of all, the children, the male children, were thrown into the river, the river Nile, as soon as they were born.

Now these things did their work in the hand of God and gradually the Israelites began to turn to God in prayer. And they began to repent and to seek the living God in their own lives.

[5 : 47] And in these marvelous words of Exodus 2, we're told that God heard them. And he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and Jacob. And he looked upon the children of Israel and he had respect unto them.

And so he sets the wheels in motion with a view to delivering his own people in bondage. And he does that by bringing a deliverer into the world, this man, Moses.

And like the Messiah, of whom he was a type, he was born himself in a low condition. Born in one of the slave huts to a man called Amram and his wife, Jochebed.

Now they were both Levites and they already had a family. They had a son called Aaron, who was at this time three years of age. And they had another girl who was considerably older by the name of Miriam.

Now Aaron was three years older than Moses and his life was not in danger. Obviously, we can tell from the whole narrative that his life was not in danger. So the edict had very recently been passed.

[7 : 00] In other words, things had just hit, as it were, rock bottom before Moses was born. The decree that every child should be cast into the river.

And I should just again remind you very briefly that that is a figure. The child being cast into the river is a figure really of Satan appearing to have the ascendancy over God.

Because here you have almost what looks like God's promise being made null and void. God had said, the seed of the woman shall crush the seed of the serpent.

But it looked at this point as though the seed of the serpent was crushing the seed of the woman.

All the male children into the river. Remember, the river was a god to the Egyptians.

It was their source of life and power and they worshipped it. I think I'm right in saying that they considered that the Nile had given birth to Pharaoh. I could be wrong in that. But in any case, it was a divinity for them.

[8 : 00] And so you have the seed of God, as it were, in the clutches of the evil one. But God is going to turn that round through the birth of this man, Moses.

And that reminds us that man's extremity is God's opportunity. And very often, at the very darkest moments, God brings salvation to pass.

It was quite clear from Acts chapter 7 and Stephen's speech that many of the people of Israel gave way to this decree. But how many mothers' hearts were torn by it when they saw their newborn sons taken away from them?

I'm sure there was probably a choice laid before them, either to give the sons or else the whole family would be destroyed. And the face of these things, they gave their sons. And they were cast into the river and drowned, one after another, as Satan appeared to have his day with the people of God.

But Amram and Jochebed did not do that. They did differently because, we read in the text, by faith, when Moses was born, he was hidden for three months by his parents.

[9 : 11] Because they saw he was a proper child, whatever that means, and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. Something moved Amram and Jochebed to act in a different way entirely to the rest of the children of Israel.

And notice, whatever they did, although it seems difficult from the verse at the moment to understand what they did, they did it all by faith. They did it all by faith.

It was by faith that they hid him. In other words, they were not following their inclination. It was not just that Jochebed saw that she had given birth to a son that was so attractive and so beautiful that she could not conceive of having that child lost.

It wasn't that. It was by faith that she did it. It was a response to a word from God, in other words. God spoke in her life, and God said something that caused her to risk life and limb and caused her to hide this child from the people of Egypt.

And it's worth noting that it mentions parents here in verse 23. By faith, Moses was hidden three months by his parents, plural.

[10 : 27] You would get the impression in Exodus 2 that it was all the work of the mother. Now, perhaps it was primarily. Perhaps God spoke to the mother, first of all, and to the father through the mother.

Just as he revealed the destiny of Esau and Jacob in Rebekah's womb, he revealed that to Rebekah herself. She got that message from him, and she gave it to Isaac.

Here, or in Exodus 2, it seems to be Jochebed, who receives a message from God, and she acts. She hides, and she puts the child out in the ark of bulrushes into the river. I think there's a reason for that. And the reason, again, goes back to the promise of Genesis, that the seed of the woman shall crush the head of the serpent.

God is indicating in all these acts that he has not forgotten his promise, that he is still working, and he'll bring it to pass. And if you remember, I'm not going over them again, but I traced quite a long line of examples down through the Old Testament, where women were used to crush the head of the seed of the serpent, until finally you have Christ doing so, completely and utterly upon the cross, where Satan bruises his heel.

[11 : 52] But with that bruised heel, he stamps and tramples upon the head of the serpent. He spoils principalities and powers. He defeats Satan, and he enters into the glorious rest of God.

And that is why you have the woman here, as it were, having the preeminence, because God probably spoke initially to her. Now we're told that they did it by faith.

Now, people sometimes speak of faith as being a leap in the dark. Well, you have to watch a kind of expression like that, because the one thing that's true about faith in the Bible is that it is rooted on something, firmly.

And it is rooted on God, God's word. It is rooted on a promise. Our faith is our response to the word which God has spoken.

Now, if you look at every example of faith in Hebrews 11 here, it speaks of the faith of Abraham, the faith of Noah, the faith of Enoch. If you look at them all, you'll find that the faith of these people was a response to something that God had said to them, or something that God had promised them.

[13 : 09] And I think it's no different here. This seems to be an exception, because you could say, well, what did God say exactly to Amram and to Jehoved?

Well, friends, I don't know that. But I assume from the rest of the chapter, and from the way these things are done, that God told them something. And that they would give birth.

I would imagine it was this, that she would give birth to the one who was going to deliver Israel. And that was the word which she received.

In other words, it wasn't just a matter of this being the fourth generation, and the deliverer must come, because that was the promise they were all cherishing. It was now the fourth generation, and it was time for the deliverance, according to Abraham, the word given to Abraham.

It wasn't just that. I think it was a specific thing, that God showed this woman and this man that a special child was to be born to them. And that seemed to be confirmed to them when they saw that he was, notice in the text, a proper child.

[14 : 19] Now, that word, as you have it in Exodus 2, means a beautiful child. It has to do with the child's appearance, with the child's countenance, his face.

And Stephen tells us in Acts 7 and verse 20 that this child was beautiful to God. Beautiful to God. So there was something in the very child's features that seemed to seal the promise to the parents. So much so that they said, it is not a vision or a dream that we have received merely. It is not a figment of our imagination that has told us that a deliverer is to be born into our family.

Because when we look at the face of this child, we can tell that God has marked him out and set him apart for a great destiny, not just for himself, but for ourselves as a people.

And it was because they saw that he was a proper child that they hid him three months. Notice the connection. By faith, Moses was hidden three months by his parents because they saw he was a beautiful child.

[15 : 37] So that outward symbol was just that to them. It was an outward symbol of God's work, of God's power, and of an inner reality that God was going to use this man to deliver themselves and to deliver their people from bondage.

Now you know that in the scripture sometimes outward beauty is used to symbolize inward beauty. For example, David, we're told, was of a ruddy countenance.

He was of a very beautiful and healthful appearance. And that was a symbol of his heart being cleaned before God. And there are other examples also.

And you have it here. His beauty symbolizes that God was with him and that God had a purpose for him. And so God is almost saying, or he is saying really to that couple, here is the Redeemer.

Take the signs of this child's beauty as the word that I am with him and that I will raise him up to give deliverance unto Israel. Now, the faith that we are required to have ourselves is similar in this respect.

[16:51] In this respect. But God asks us or requires us to believe also in one who was born a Redeemer. He asks us to believe or he requires or commands us to believe that Jesus of Nazareth, born in the stable, laid in a manger, himself, a child of beauty, is the Redeemer of God's elect.

That he is the chosen one, the Messiah. That is what we are to believe. not in a birth future, but in a birth past, a birth been. And we are commanded to believe that his life was given as a ransom for many.

And we are commanded to believe that if we but believe him and lay hold on him and trust in him, that he will lead us out of our bondage. He will deliver us from our sin and misery and he will bring us into a land flowing with milk and honey.

He will bring us into Cain and Abel, into paradise. Because that, essentially, is what Amram and Jochebed believed with respect to this little boy that they had born into the world.

And believe you me, my friends, it looked a million miles away. One after another, they heard the cries around them as children were thrown into the river. There was the great Thutmose I, probably, sitting upon the throne with the might and power of Egypt at his command.

[18:15] And there they were, maybe a host, maybe many of them, but slaves, good for nothing, building treasure cities. But she believes that this little child in her hand is going to lead two million plus people out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, that he's going to lead them out across the Red Sea, he's going to take them into the promised land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob so long ago.

She believed that. And you, my friend, are to believe it also with respect to a greater than Moses. You are to believe that Christ was sent into this world for that precise purpose and that if you betrusted in that man, Jesus of Nazareth, you shall be saved and you shall be brought into the kingdom of heaven also.

That is what you are required to believe. And they believed it. They believed it. And how do we know they did? By what they did.

Show me faith by works. We can show you Amram and Jacob's faith by what they did. First of all, they took this child and they hid it for three months until they could hide the child no longer.

Now, I wonder if that means this. Obviously, there was something about that three-month period that was different to the period that followed it.

[19:41] Something about it that meant that they could more easily hide the child. Now, I know this is not everyone's experience but it may be the case that most people have children and they're conscious of them for the first few months of being quieter or more easily quietened than they are later on.

Now, again, I know that many people do not have that experience but some do. Perhaps for the first three months in some cases certainly a child can drink a lot and can sleep a lot and perhaps certainly the Lord caused it to be that way with respect to Moses, this child.

For three months she was able to quieten him. She was able to hide his existence. But of course, after three months he would cry louder. He would become more restless.

He would be more easily seen and more easily discovered. and so that was no use. She couldn't hide him in her little hut anymore and something had to be done.

And what she did at four months of age was this. She took papyrus weeds from the bank of the river and she made a narc with them or a chest of bulrushes.

[21:00] And it's important to understand it as a chest. I'll come back to that later. She made an arc or a chest of bulrushes or papyrus reeds and she pitched it herself and her husband inside and outside with bitumen.

That was to make it watertight, to seal the arc, to seal the little chest so that no water could come into it. And then she lovingly laid the three month old child inside that arc and she put the lid on it because we're told that there was a lid on this chest.

She shut the arc. She sealed it and she put it out into the river. Now again I cannot help but feel that this woman was not acting on her own initiative in this respect.

That when it tells us that they did this by faith I think it tells us that she received a message from the Lord that this was what she should do with the child. She was conscious of the child becoming

perhaps more difficult to hide.

She was aware of it and she turned to the Lord and she turned in her extremity and said what will I do? And perhaps at night in a vision or a word came to her something that said make an arc pitch it within and without lay the child in it and send it out to the river.

[22 : 30] I say it is of God and not of herself because who would think of doing such a thing? After all the last place in Egypt that you would have sent your child to save it was the river Nile.

The very place where one after another of these children were being drowned by the decree of Pharaoh. It's as though she was playing into Pharaoh's hands with the whole thing.

Send the child down to the river inside an ark and set it out there. But she believes it is of God. She recognizes it as his word and she lays everything out upon it and she does it by faith.

Because notice in the text by faith Moses when he was born was hidden three months by his parents because they saw he was a beautiful child and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

Now this is where faith comes in or shall we say this is where the hardship or the obedience of faith comes in. After all when it says that they weren't afraid of the king's commandment what does that mean?

[23 : 42] Well I think it means this that if the child was found what do you think the result would be? Well I would suspect that anyone found guilty of violating the king's commandment would perhaps lose their own life and perhaps the life of their own family.

Pharaoh would not spare in this matter. He was determined that the male seed would be obliterated. Notice the devil get rid of the male seed obliterated. you lose yourself and you lose your husband.

She keeps the child because she just believes that they will all be saved through that child and that is faith. And when she puts this child into the Nile she doesn't just put it into a hostile river in Egypt but she puts it on the bosom of God and she lays it on his providential care and his mercy as the God of heaven and earth who is able to protect and to keep and to bless who has the heart of the king and shall we say the heart of the king's daughter in his hand and he can turn it whatsoever way he will.

And it's in that spirit that Jochebed says yes Lord I will send him out into the river Nile and she does it. And is that not what our own faith requires too?

God says believe in my son. Believe in him as the savior who will lead you to the land of milk and honey. To the land of rest and to the land of promise.

[25 : 29] And as well as saying that he says to you forsake your mother or your father. Be willing to relinquish. Be willing to step out in obedience.

Knowing that it might cost you and that the path will be hard. Knowing that there will be testings and trials and temptations but you must believe and go out doing that.

And my friend anyone in whom the spirit of God is working will take that step and will begin to follow Christ come what may. Nothing can stop that person in whom God is working and bringing them to Christ.

Nothing. Not one single power. That is what we mean by irresistible grace. Irresistible. It will conquer all your objections. It will conquer all your fears.

I'm not saying you won't have them. I'm just saying it will conquer them. It will conquer them and cause you to triumph in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now friends, I think the act has an even deeper significance than that.

[26 : 34] And we see the deeper significance of it in this way. First of all, this word arc is only used one other time in the scriptures.

And that's for the arc which Noah made. Now you would think there were two very different types of vessels. For example, one is 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.

And the other is just a tiny little box which could take a little baby. The same word is used for both. And you notice they're both pitched on the inside and on the outside.

They're both pitched, I should say, to protect them from the water around them because they must both go into the water. And then again, there's this.

They are both in the shape of a chest or even more accurately, in the shape of a coffin. And I think once we get that, we're close to understanding the relationship between them.

[27 : 46] If you look at the dimensions of Noah's ark, it was in effect a chest. A chest that was sealed and shut by God.

A massive chest containing the germ of a new world that was going to pass through fiery waters and was going to repopulate a new heaven and a new earth, a new creation.

That was one ark. Here's this other ark. The word seems to come, ark, it seems to come from the Egyptian word for a chest.

And you'll notice that in Exodus 2 and verse 6 we're told that when Pharaoh's daughter found it, she opened the lid of it. Now that's significant because I think I mentioned this not too long ago.

You often find this ark pictured in a book as well as a little basket and you've got blankets on the top and you can see the child's head as he's lying there. Now that is obviously wrong because there was no indication as to what this was until Pharaoh's daughter opened the lid which was itself sealed.

[28 : 56] And only when she opened the lid did she see the face of the child. It was like opening in many respects a coffin of someone dead given over to the Nile.

But yet out of that chest God brings life and what a life he brings. It is a redeemer he brings out. He brings out the one who will save Israel and bring them out of bondage.

Out of Egypt have I called my son. man. What does that remind you of? Does it not remind you of the Christ? Do both arks not remind us of the Lord Jesus Christ?

In the sense that they both go into the water and they are both carrying the germ of a new world and they are both as it were going into the other side and bringing life with them inside the ark which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Does it not tell us that the redeemer before he redeems must himself be as it were almost lost?

That he must be cast in the teeth of the Nile or if you like that he must fight powers and principalities until he is swallowed by Satan?

[30 : 10] That he must appear entombed and dead and lost? How would that look to the Israelites? Imagine if they had heard or if Jochebed had revealed the secret of her heart and said this child is the one who will save us.

And if they all waited with expectation and three months later they saw her putting him in this chest and sealing him and putting him out in the river what would they think of the thing? Their hopes would be destroyed and they would mock Jochebed.

Not so because God would have the redeemer die as it were before he will live and before he will bring them into glory. And that is what this ark teaches us that God will bring victory out of the jaws of defeat itself.

And that is what you find working itself out in the rest of that chapter in Exodus. For example let us say you begin there. Look how black it looks. He is inside a chest.

The deliverer is in a coffin and all is lost. But his sister is busy. She takes a position somewhere where she can watch the ark and see what happens to it.

[31 : 22] that is God's providence for one. I am sure that girl is not just standing. I am sure she is praying. She loves her brother and she watches over him too and she is praying.

And the prayers of herself and of her mother and father are answered when along comes Pharaoh's daughter. Now that may not at first look like an answer but she comes along with her servant girls because she is going to wash.

She is going to bathe in the river. And when she is bathing she sees this chest and she asks one of her maidens to go over and to fetch it.

She goes over and she brings it back and she opens the lid. And then marvelously look again at God's providence. As soon as she opens the lid the babe wept.

Wept. There will probably be a cloth there which tells her it is and it is a Hebrew because Exodus 1 or Exodus 2 6 tells us that she says this is one of the Hebrews children.

[32 : 29] Or perhaps it was the fact that the child was circumcised which would not be true of any Egyptian child. she recognised a Hebrew child. But at that moment the child wept and we're told that she had compassion upon him.

And the Lord knit the heart of that young daughter of Pharaoh to that child that was lying there in that chest. And at that moment Miriam recognises that in many respects her own time has come and she steps forward.

Wherever she was she runs out and she meets Pharaoh's daughter and she's got this proposition to make to her. She said shall I go and call a nurse amongst the Hebrew woman that she will nurse the child for you?

And Pharaoh's daughter immediately thinks that that is a good idea and she said go. So of course Miriam goes back to her own house. She goes into her own mother and says my brother is found Pharaoh's daughter desires that you come and raise the child and that you nurse it.

And when she goes to Pharaoh's daughter Pharaoh's daughter says to Jochebed take this child for me nurse it for me and I will give you your wages.

[33 : 55] And the woman took the child and she nursed it. She took the child and she nursed it. And you can see the work of the Lord there the way he's overruling the powers of darkness.

Not only does the child end back in the arms of its mother but the state that's trying to destroy it is paying her wages for looking after the one that's going to destroy themselves.

That is what I mean by the serpent. Bruising the heel not realising that in the act of bruising the heel the very foot is coming down on its own head. That is the work of God.

And here you have Pharaoh paying a woman to raise the child who will destroy himself. That is the work of the Lord. Now the last thing that's remarkable is this.

When Jochebed has weaned the child now that's quite a few years it is probably referring to perhaps six or seven years of age. She brings the child back to Pharaoh's daughter.

[35 : 07] And when Pharaoh's daughter gets the child for the second time we're told that it's then that she names him or it seems to be then anyway. We're told that the child grew and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son.

And she called his name Moses because I drew him out of the water. She called his name Moses because I drew him out of the water.

Now this was a strange name for Pharaoh's daughter to give the child. When I spoke of the Pharaohs of this dynasty the 18th most of them have names that have Moses in them.

Amos and so on. And the word seems to have to do with water. It seems to have to do with water. And if that is so then she names the child something to do with water and perhaps something to do with one of their own gods or goddesses.

[36 : 24] But the remarkable thing is this. That that very name which she gave him has another meaning in Hebrew which means just drawn out.

Drawn out. It appears that her reason for naming the child or the name which she gave him functions as a kind of pun. It has a similar meaning in Egyptian to what it has in Hebrew.

She names it perhaps with one thing in view but strictly speaking God is working so that the Hebrew idea comes into prominence drawn out of the water.

Now what she is giving the prominence to really is the water. The fact that he came out of water. But where the prominence lies in Moshe the Hebrew form of it is in drawing out or pulling out because he was pulled out of water.

Now God is even superintending the name of this child because his name is going to become so significant in this respect. Not only was he as a child drawn out of water because what he is going to do is this.

[37 : 36] He is going to draw a whole people out of water. And this comes to pass at the Red Sea many years afterwards when Moses has long gone and come back the second time.

And when he leads them out on the night of the Passover they stand at the Red Sea. And there they are told to stand still and see the power of God. And the seas part and become tremendous walls on either side.

And over two million people of Israel pass through the water that time. And when the Egyptians try to go past the cloud of God stands there. It terrifies them.

They try to turn around the wheels come off the chariots and the water begins to cascade back down over them. But Moses drew the people out of the water. As Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10 they were baptized into Moses under the cloud and in the sea.

Baptized unto Moses. He took them out of the water. That water symbolized the power that was keeping them back. that water of the Red Sea bounded them in the land of the lost of the damned and the dead.

[38 : 48] And when those waters parted they went through unto the outside into liberty and freedom drawn out of the water. What a name this man was given.

And God is working in absolutely all these things. And is that not an encouragement to yourself? When things look absolutely bleak God is working in all these bleak looking things and bringing his own purposes to pass.

God is not frustrated. You can be and I can be but God is not frustrated. He is not at a loss because of something that has happened. He doesn't have to modify his plan.

He works it out. He doesn't have to change according to circumstances. He just lets it go on as he ordained it whatsoever cometh to pass. And he causes the powers of darkness to suffer defeat in the process.

You can put it this way. In Exodus itself, first of all in chapter 1 and verse 10, you have the wisdom of the world. Or perhaps even in verse 22, the last verse of chapter 1, this is the wisdom of the world.

[39 : 59] This is Satan doing his best. Every son that is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive. And the wisdom of God is in chapter 2 and verse 10.

The child grew, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she called him Moses, she said, because I threw him out of the water. just at the very pinnacle of their power, God has turned it all to himself.

So in effect, Pharaoh will educate, he will nurse, he will pay for, and he will look after the one who is going to destroy his own power.

That's what the psalmist means when he says that the wise are caught in their own craftiness, and that they are sunk and caught in the net which they have prepared for others.

All the Lord knows how to deliver his own, to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust for punishment in the day of judgment.

[41 : 10] Now, that then is the seed of the woman being prepared, and God willing, next time we'll look at how Moses grows up, and an important decision that he has to make in his own life.

May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, we acknowledge that we are in thine hand, as clay in the hand of the potter, and that thou art at work, even in the hard and bitter circumstances of this life.

Help us, Lord, never to lose our faith in the power of God to do wonderful things. And even when we feel that the power of darkness itself is rising against us and appears in the ascendancy, nonetheless, at the very moment of its triumph, thou will show thyself in might and in power.

Thou will show thy right arm, and thou will show us thy salvation. Give us the faith of Amram and of Joabed, which will not fear the commandment of the king, but which will strike out and go out in faith, believing in God and in his power.

For Christ's seek. Amen.