Exodus 2:1-3:12

Exodus 1 lists the names of the sons of Israel (Jacob), who had seventy children. The Israelites multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them. A new king arose who thought the Israelites were more numerous and powerful than the Egyptians. He decided to deal shrewdly with them and appointed taskmasters, who oppressed the Israelites with forced labor. They built the cities of Pithom and Rameses. The more the Israelites were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread. The king told the midwives, Shiphrah and Puah to put male Hebrew babies to death. But they feared God and did not do it and told the king that the Hebrew women were not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife can get there. God dealt well with the midwives and gave them families. Pharaoh commanded all his people to cast every son who is born to the Hebrews into the Nile.

**Exodus 2:1-4**

Levite parents have a son, who the mother hides for three months. She places him in a papyrus basket sealed with bitumen and pitch, then among the reeds of the Nile. His sister stands at a distance to see what would happen.

**Bitumen** is a sticky, black, viscous or semi-solid form of petroleum. Pitch is refined bitumen. When combined and heated they make a water-tight seal.

 *Where is the father in all of this?*

 *Why hide the child for only three months?*

 *What did the mother expect to accomplish by her actions?*

 *Why did the sister watch and not the mother?*

**Exodus 2:5-10**

Pharaoh’s daughter comes to bathe, sees the basket and sends her maid for it. She takes pity on the crying Hebrew child. His sister (of marriageable age) offers to get a Hebrew woman to nurse him and brings her mother. Pharaoh’s daughter tells the mother to nurse the child and she will give her her wages. The child grows up, the mother takes him to Pharaoh’s daughter, who takes him as her son and names him Moses because she drew him out of the water.

Note: Hebrew is “Mosheh” and drew out of is “Mashah”.

 *What made Pharaoh’s daughter so curious?*

*Why would she save a Hebrew child?*

*How old do you think the boy was before the mother took him to Pharaoh’s daughter?*

*Why did she give him a Hebrew name?*

*What did Pharaoh think of all this?*

**Exodus 2:11-15a**

Moses grows up, goes to see his people, sees the forced labor and an Egyptian beating a Hebrew kinsfolk. Moses looks around, sees no one, kills the Egyptian and buries him in the sand. Moses goes out the next day and sees two Hebrews fighting and confronts the one who was in the wrong. He responds, “Who made you ruler and judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Moses was afraid. Pharaoh hears and decides to kill Moses.

 *What does this tell us about Moses? See Acts 7:23 after you answer.*

 *What does it tell us about the relationship between Moses and the Hebrews?*

 *What does it tell us about the relationship between Moses and Pharaoh?*

**Exodus 2:15b-22**

Moses flees from Pharaoh, settles in Midian, and sits down by a well. The seven daughters of the Midian priest come to draw water and water their father’s flock. Shepherds drive them away. Moses stands up, comes to their defense and waters their flock. Their father, Reuel, asks, “How is it that you have come back so soon today?” They say that an Egyptian helped them against the shepherds. Reuel asks, “Where is he? Why did you leave the man? Invite him to break bread.” Moses agrees to stay, Reuel gives him Zipporah in marriage and she bears Gershom (a stranger there), for Moses said, “I have been an alien residing in a foreign land.”

Note: To “break bread” with someone was to be treated as a family member.

*What does it mean that he “settled in” Midian?*

*Did Reuel have any sons? If so, where were they in all of this?*

*How did the daughters know that Moses was an Egyptian?*

*What is your opinion of Reuel’s questions about Moses?*

*What does Moses mean by the name that he gave his son?*

*What does this chapter tell us about Moses’ character and personality?*

**Exodus 2:24-25**

The king of Egypt dies after a long time. The Israelites groan under their slavery, and their cries for help rise up to God, who hears their groaning, remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and takes notice of the Israelites.

 *What took God 400 years to take notice of their plight?*

 *Why does God suddenly remember his covenant?*

**Exodus 3:1-6**

Moses leads Jethro’s flock beyond the wilderness to Horeb (Heb. “waste” or “desolate”), the mountain of God. The angel of the Lord is in a bush that is blazing but not consumed. Moses says, “I must turn aside and look at this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up.” The LORD (YHWH) sees that Moses has turned aside and calls his name twice out of the bush. Moses responds, “Here I am.” God says, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” Elohim is the God of his father, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses hides his face, for he is afraid to look at God.

Note: Josephus says Sinai was the tallest mountain and people were afraid to go there because it was considered to be the mountain of God.

 *Why is Reuel now called Jethro? (He is Jether in Exod. 4:18 and Hobab in Num. 10:29.)*

 *Why is Moses now acting as shepherd to the flock?*

*What is your opinion of Moses statement about the burning bush?*

*What do you think of the conversation between God and Moses?*

*Why was it important for Moses to remove his sandals?*

*Why does God describe himself as being the God of Moses’ father?*

*What does Moses hiding his face tell us about him?*

**Exodus 3:7-12**

The Lord says that he has observed the misery of His people, heard their cry on account of the taskmasters, and knows their suffering. He has come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, to a land that is good, broad, and flowing with milk and honey. It is presently the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. God says, “So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.” But Moses says, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” God responds, “I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you; when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.”

Note: The rabbis teach that milk refers to goat’s milk and the honey is date juice. It is imagery for a fertile, productive land. It was the descriptive title for Canaan in ancient documents.

 *What does he mean by a land flowing with milk and honey?*

 *What feelings are generated when God calls the Israelites, “his people”?*

 *How is Moses feeling about himself?*

 *How was Moses feeling about God’s plan?*

 *How helpful was it for God to say that he would be with Moses?*

*What do you think of the “sign” that God gives to Moses?*

**Next Week is Ash Wednesday – No Class**

**March 4 we are doing the Lenten supper – Check with Glee Thomson**

**March 11, class resumes immediately after the Lenten supper/service**