

Special Focus Session

January 19, 2025

## TREASURING WHO GOD TREASURES

Exodus 1:16-17, 22–2:10

When I took Old Testament Survey in seminary, we spent an inordinate amount of time studying the books of Genesis and Exodus. When I asked him about it, the professor replied, “Genesis tells us the origin of everything. Exodus tells us about the journey from sin and defeat to salvation and victory. If you can understand Genesis and Exodus, the rest of the Bible will make sense.” I accepted his explanation at the time with wonder. I believe it now with conviction. Many people believe the whole concept of the Promised Land is all about heaven. But it isn’t! (will there be sin, and rebellion, and giants in heaven??). No...Exodus is about our journey from salvation into the victorious Christian life including all the challenges (and victories) we encounter along the way. The story of Exodus begins with salvation. In this case, it’s a physical deliverance from death. That threat of death was initiated by an Egyptian king who “knew not Joseph” (Ex 1:8). In this week’s lesson, we see how God used chosen people to ensure the survival of His chosen nation. Four personalities are presented.

**Ladies who deliver babies (1:16-17).** In the opening verses of the chapter, about 400 years had passed since Joseph moved his family of seventy into Egypt (v. 5). Verse 6 points out that the Hebrew nation had prospered, and their numbers multiplied so much that their Egyptians hosts ran out of hospitality. The result was the enslavement of God’s people. This was not enough to control their numbers, however (v. 12), so the king ordered that newborn Hebrew boys were to be eliminated. Egyptian midwives were assigned the awful task of murdering the male babies at birth. Verse 17 is a bright spot in an otherwise dark and sordid tale. These dear ladies distinguished themselves in three ways. First, they “feared God.” Whether this fear was the result of the Hebrews’ witness or their own moral beliefs, these otherwise pagan women understood the preciousness of human life, regardless of race, gender, or religion. Second, they “did not do” what they had been ordered to do. Third—and most importantly— “they let the boys live.” For reflection: *Take a moment and thank God for the dedicated men and women who took their oath and practice medicine to save the suffering and protect the innocent.*

**Parents who love babies (2:1-3).** Even in the hardest of times, loving couples bring children into the world. Here, in the midst of a tyrannical reign, Moses was born. It’s interesting that Moses’ mother Jochebed remarked on how beautiful a baby he was. Could any mother ever look at her newborn baby and not see his beauty? But it was not his beauty that saved baby Moses; it was his parents’ love. When he was too big (and too noisy) to hide any longer, they gambled on providence and placed him in a basket among the reeds that crowded the bank of the river. Whether the plan was to hide him longer or place him in a conspicuous spot is not known. That his sister followed at a distance tells us he was not simply abandoned to chance. Clearly, the survival of this baby boy was a priority for the family that brought him into the world. For reflection: *Take a moment and thank God for loving parents who do all they can to see their children safe, happy, healthy, and prosperous, even in very difficult times.*

**Siblings who watch out for babies (2:4).** Several weeks ago, our lessons mentioned sibling rivalry. And anyone with brothers or sisters knows about the tensions and squabbles that develop

among siblings. But there is a special bond that grows between siblings as well. Here, in a very classic sense, we see an older sister “baby sitting” her baby brother. Her presence along the riverbank would have been less conspicuous than an adult Hebrew, and her intervention with Pharaoh’s daughter (vv. 7, 8) shows both her ingenuity and her grit. For reflection: *Take a moment and thank God for loving brothers and sisters who go the extra mile to nurture and protect their siblings when parents can’t be around.*

**Strangers who pity babies (2:5-6).** While it’s hard to swallow, even Pharaoh’s daughter is a hero in this story. As a member of the royal family, she certainly would have known about Pharaoh’s decree and the risk she was taking in saving the life of a Hebrew male. Yet the baby’s crying spoke louder and reached deeper than her father’s mandate. And her taking a strange little Hebrew girl’s advice about a wetnurse makes this princess much more a woman than a ruler. When the baby was weaned by her “real” mom (v. 10), she was taken to, and raised by, her “adoptive” mom. In God’s great providence, the family would not only be preserved by this act but would one day would even be reunited. For reflection: *Take a moment and thank God for foster parents, adoptive parents, and other “strangers” who love children enough to take them in and raise them even when it is tough to do so.*