# 2024-2025 **EVANGELICAL** SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON **COMMENTARY**



#### SEVENTY-THIRD ANNUAL VOLUME

#### Based on the Pentecostal-Charismatic Bible Lesson Series

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	TABLE OF CONTENTS
	Introduction to the 2024-2025 Commentary
	Using the 2024-2025 Commentary
	Lesson Series (2020-2027)
E	ALL QUARTER LESSONS
	Introduction to Fall Quarter Lessons
	UNIT ONE THEME—KEY CHARACTERS IN EXODUS-DEUTERONOMY
	1. September 1, Pharaoh Persecutes Israel
	2. September 8, Another Pharaoh Opposes Israel
	3. September 15, Jethro: Moses' Counselor and Father-in-law
	4. September 22, Aaron: The First Priest of Israel
	5. September 29, Leaders Who Rebelled Against God
	6. October 6, Joshua's Spiritual Development for Leadership
	7. October 13, Balaam Cannot Curse Israel
	UNIT TWO THEME—GODLY WOMEN IN SCRIPTURE
	8. October 20, Sarah: Matriarch of Israel
	9. October 27, Deborah: Prophetess and Judge
	10. November 3, Naomi: Bereaved and Blessed
	11. November 10, Hannah: Devoted to God
	12. November 17, Mary: Humble Mother of Jesus
	13. November 24, Faithful Servants: Dorcas, Lydia, and Phoebe
	•
V	VINTER QUARTER LESSONS
	Introduction to Winter Quarter Lessons
	LINIT ONE THEME MAIOD MESSIANIC DRODUECIES
	UNIT ONE THEME—MAJOR MESSIANIC PROPHECIES
	1. December 1, Jesus' Ancestry and Priesthood
	3. December 15, The Promised Messiah
	4. December 22, The Incarnation (Christmas)
	5. December 29, Jesus, Joseph, and Jonah
	6. January 5, The Suffering Servant
	7. January 12, Events of Christ's Crucifixion and Suffering
	8. January 19, Christ, Resurrected and Triumphant
	, , .,
	UNIT TWO—DEALING WITH PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH (1 & 2 Corinthians
	9. January 26, God's Vision for the Church
	10. February 2, Confronting Sexual Immorality

11. February 9, Warnings Against Idolatry20012. February 16, Instructions on Giving20813. February 23, Problems With False Teachers216

9	SPRING QUARTER LESSONS	126
	Introduction to Spring Quarter Lessons	:24
	UNIT ONE THEME—MAJOR THEMES FROM MINOR PROPHETS  1. March 2, Prophetic Callings	225 235 244 253 262 270 279
	UNIT TWO THEME—LIFE AFTER DEATH  9. April 27, Afterlife in the Old Testament	304 312 320
5	SUMMER QUARTER LESSONS	
	Introduction to Summer Quarter Lessons	336
	UNIT ONE THEME—BOOK OF JOB  1. June 1, Job Loses Everything	346 353 361 369 377
	UNIT TWO THEME—EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS  8. July 20, Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica	401 409 416 425 432
	Scripture Texts Used in Lesson Exposition	<b>í</b> 47
	Acknowledgments	

#### **INTRODUCTION TO THE 2024-2025 COMMENTARY**

The *Evangelical Sunday School Lesson Commentary* contains 53 Bible studies based on outlines prepared by the Pentecostal-Charismatic Curriculum Commission. The lessons in this 2024-2025 volume comprise the fifth year of a seven-year series, which will be completed in August 2027. (The series is printed in full on page 9).

The 2024-2025 commentary is the product of a team of Christian scholars and writes working under the supervision of Pathway Press. The guiding theological principles of these materials are expressed in the following statement of faith:

- 1. WE BELIEVE the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- 2. WE BELIEVE that there is one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- 3. WE BELIEVE in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- 4. WE BELIEVE that for the salvation of lost and sinful men, personal reception of the Lord Jesus Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are absolutely essential.
- 5. WE BELIEVE in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose cleansing and indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
  - 6. WE BELIEVE in the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 7. WE BELIEVE in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost—they that are saved, unto the resurrection of life; and they that are lost, unto the resurrection of damnation.
  - 8. WE BELIEVE in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **USING THE 2024-202 COMMENTARY**

The *Evangelical Sunday School Lesson Commentary* for 2024-2025 is presented with the hope that it will become the student's weekly companion through the months ahead.

Quarterly unit themes for the 2024-2025 volume are as follows:

- Fall Quarter—Unit One: "Key Characters in Exodus Through Deuteronomy"; Unit Two: "Godly Women in Scripture"
- Winter Quarter—Unit One: "Major Messianic Prophecies"; Unit Two: "Dealing With Problems in the Church (1 and 2 Corinthians)"
- Spring Quarter—Unit One: "Major Themes From Minor Prophets"; Unit Two: "Life After Death"
- Summer Quarter—Unit One: "Book of Job"; Unit Two: "Epistles to the Thessalonians"

CENTRAL TRUTH and FOCUS: The Central Truth states the single unifying principle of the lesson. The Focus describes the overall lesson goal.

GOLDEN TEXT: A key Scripture verse reflects the Central Truth's message.

EVANGELISM EMPHASIS: This statement suggests how the lesson relates to the message of salvation.

INTRODUCTION: Each week's lesson features a one-page introduction that sets the stage for the lesson.

EXPOSITION and LESSON OUTLINE: The heart of this commentary is the exposition of the Scripture passages, organized in outline form.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: Each part of the lesson addresses specific Bible verses. Some or all of those verses are printed in the commentary, depending on their length.

QUOTATIONS and ILLUSTRATIONS: Each section of every lesson contains an illustration or saying the teacher can use in connecting the lesson to daily living.

QUESTIONS: These are printed throughout the lesson to help students explore the Scripture text and how it speaks to believers today.

CONCLUSION: Each lesson ends with a brief conclusion that makes a summarizing statement.

DAILY DEVOTIONS: Daily Bible readings are included for readers to use in their personal devotions throughout the week.

Pentecostal-Charismatic Bible Lesson Series (2020-2027)		
Pentecostal-Charismatic Bible Lesson Series (2020-202		_
Pentecostal-Charismatic Bible Lesson Series (2020-20)	Į	
Pentecostal-Charismatic Bible Lesson Series (2020-2		
Pentecostal-Charismatic Bible Lesson Series (2020-	(	
Pentecostal-Charismatic Bible Lesson Series (2020		1
Pentecostal-Charismatic Bible Lesson Series (20	(	
Pentecostal-Charismatic Bible Lesson Series (		Ç
Pentecostal-Charismatic Bible Lesson Serie	(	Y
entecostal-Charismatic Bible Lesson	•	erie
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Summer 2021  1 • Great Prayers of the Bible 2 • Defending of Faith in a Secular Society	Summer 2022 1 • Acts of the Apostles (Part 1, chs. 1—12) 2 • Worship in the Psalms	Summer 2023  1 • Acts of the Apostles (Part 2, chs. 13—28) 2 • The Life and Writings of Solomon	Summer 2024  1 • Timothy, Titus, Philemon 2 • Non-Davidic Psalms	Summer 2025 $1 \bullet \text{Job}$ $2 \bullet 1 \& 2 \text{ Thessalonians}$	Summer 2026  1 • Work and Rest 2 • Letter to the Galatians 3 • Bible Lessons From Animals	Summer 2027 1 • Stories of Worship 2 • Christ in the Book of Revelation
Spring 2021  1 • Scriptures Difficult to Understand 2 • Letters From Peter and Jude	Spring 2022  1 • Christian Discipleship 2 • Jeremiah and Ezekiel	Spring 2023  1 • The Book of James 2 • How to Study the Bible	<b>Spring 2024</b> 1 • 1, 2, 3 John 2 • Fruit of the Spirit	Spring 2025 1 • Major Themes From the Minor Prophets 2 • Life After Death	Spring 2026  1 • Sermon on the Mount 2 • Book of Daniel	Spring 2027  1 • Questions From the Bible 2 • Gifts of the Spirit
Winter 2020-21 1 • Book of Isaiah 2 • The Gospel by Mark	Winter 2021-22 1 • The Gospel by Luke 2 • The Supernatural Realm	Winter 2022-23  1 • Celebrating Advent 2 • Building Strong Families 3 • Truths From the Tabernacle	Winter 2023-24  1 • The Gospel by Matthew 2 • The Church	Winter 2024-25  1 • Messianic Prophecies in the Old Testament 2 • Dealing With Problems in the Church (1 & 2 Corinthians)	Winter 2025-26  1 • The Gospel by John 2 • Parents and Children	Winter 2026-27 1 • Hymns in the New Testament 2 • Christian Perspective of the Ten Commandments
Fall 2020  1 • Story of the Old Testament 2 • Story of the New Testament	Fall 2021  1 • Creation in the Whole Bible 2 • Letter to the Ephesians	Fall 2022  1 • Early Human History (Genesis 1—11)  2 • Christ in the Book of Hebrews	Fall 2023  1 • Early Jewish History (Genesis 12—50)  2 • The Bible and Today's Issues	Fall 2024  1 • Exodus Through Deuteronomy 2 • Godly Women in Scripture	Fall 2025  1 • Joshua and Judges 2 • Letters to Philippians and Colossians	Fall 2026  1 • History of Israel and Judah 2 • Letter to the Romans
	Winter 2020-21 1 • Book of Isaiah 2 • The Gospel by Mark 2 • Letters From Peter and Jude	Winter 2020-21  1 • Book of Isaiah  2 • The Gospel by Mark  Winter 2021-22  1 • The Gospel by Luke  2 • The Supernatural Realm  2 • Letters From Peter and Jude  Spring 2022  1 • The Supernatural Realm  2 • Jeremiah and Ezekiel	Winter 2020-21  1 • Book of Isaiah  2 • The Gospel by Mark  Winter 2021-22  1 • The Supernatural Realm  Winter 2022-23  1 • Celebrating Advent  2 • Building Strong Families  2 • How to Study the Bible  3 • Truths From the Tabernacle	Winter 2020-21  1 • Book of Isaiah  2 • The Gospel by Mark  Winter 2021-22  1 • The Gospel by Luke  2 • The Supernatural Realm  Winter 2022-23  1 • The Book of James  2 • Building Strong Families  3 • Truths From the Tabernacle  Winter 2023-24  1 • The Gospel by Marthew  2 • How to Study the Bible  Spring 2024  1 • The Gospel by Marthew  2 • How to Study the Bible  Spring 2024  1 • The Gospel by Marthew  2 • How to Study the Bible  Spring 2024  1 • The Gospel by Marthew  2 • Fruit of the Spirit	Winter 2020-21  1 • Book of Isaiah  2 • The Gospel by Mark  Winter 2021-22  1 • The Gospel by Luke  2 • The Supernatural Realm  Winter 2022-23  1 • Celebrating Advent  2 • Building Strong Families  3 • Truths From the Tabernacle  Winter 2023-24  1 • The Gospel by Marthew  2 • The Church  Winter 2024-25  1 • Messianic Prophecies in the Old  Testament  2 • Dealing With Problems in the Church  Prophets  2 • Life After Death  1 • Rospel Baile  Spring 2024  1 • Major Themes From the Minor  Prophets  2 • Life After Death  1 • Spring 2025  Spring 2025  1 • Messianic Prophecies in the Old  Testament  2 • Life After Death  1 • K2 Corinthians)	Winter 2020-21  1 • Book of Isaiah  2 • The Gospel by Mark  2 • The Gospel by Luke  2 • The Supernatural Realm  Winter 2022-23  1 • Celebrating Advent  2 • Building Strong Families  3 • Truths From the Tabernade  Winter 2024-25  1 • Messianic Prophecies in the Old  Testament  2 • Dealing With Problems in the Church  (1 & 2 Corinthians)  Winter 2025-26  1 • The Gospel by Luke  2 • Dealing With Problems in the Church  (1 & 2 Corinthians)  Spring 2024  1 • Major Themes From the Minor  Prophets  2 • Life After Death  (1 & 2 Corinthians)  Spring 2025  1 • Major Themes From the Minor  Prophets  2 • Life After Death  (1 & 2 Corinthians)  Spring 2026  1 • Sermon on the Mount  2 • Book of Daniel

### Introduction to Fall Quarter

Lessons 1-7, "Key Characters in Exodus Through Deuteronomy," focus on two Pharaohs, Jethro, Aaron, Joshua, Balaam, and leaders who rebelled against God.

The expositions were written by Victor Morris, a native of Richmond, Virginia. Much of his ministerial career has been as either a pastor or associate pastor for Church of God congregations in Virginia and Pennsylvania. Currently, he serves as chaplain for Advancing Native Missions—an interdenominational missions agency focusing on worldwide indigenous ministry. He is also the discipleship pastor for the Church of God in Crozet, Virginia, where he lives with Sue, his wife of forty-five years.

"Godly Women in Scripture" (lessons 8-13) tell the stories of Sarah, Deborah, Naomi, and Hannah from the Old Testament; and Mary, Dorcas, Lydia, and Phoebe from the New Testament.

The lessons were written by Jerald Daffe (B.A., M.A., D.Min.), who earned his degrees from Northwest Bible College, Wheaton College Graduate School, and Western Conservative Baptist Seminary. An ordained minister in the Church of God, Dr. Daffe served in pastoral ministry for ten years and was a faculty member at Northwest Bible College and Lee University for over forty years. Dr. Daffe received the Excellence in Advising Award at Lee University. His newest book is *Hearing God's Call and Doing His Will*.

## Unit Theme: Key Characters in Exodus Through Deuteronomy September 1, 2024 (Lesson 1)

### PHARAOH PERSECUTES ISRAEL

- 1. Midwives Oppose Pharaoh's Evil Command (Exodus 1:15-22)
- 2. Pharaoh Seeks Moses' Life (Exodus 2:5-15)
- 3. Israel Cries Out to God (Exodus 2:23-25)

**Central Truth:** Recognize God's favor on His people and respond with obedience to Him.

**Focus:** Examine Pharaoh's persecution of Israel and gain an appreciation for ways God guards His people.

**Evangelism Emphasis:** God's people are witnesses of the one true God.

**Golden Text:** "It came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage" (Exodus 2:23).

We begin a study of the watershed event in the history of the nation of Israel—the exodus from Egypt and the period immediately following. The Lord had told Abraham that his descendants would be enslaved in Egypt and then delivered (Gen. 15:13-14). This prophecy was fulfilled generations later. Israel suffered under bondage for four hundred years and then experienced the marvelous, miraculous deliverance of the Exodus. During this period, lasting for several decades, we see the rise of some of the key figures in Israelite history—Moses, Aaron, and Joshua. Through the Exodus, God demonstrated His love for His specially chosen people. Despite their tendency to wander spiritually, complain about their circumstances, and rebel against spiritual authority, God never gave up on them.

The deliverance God brought about through the Exodus greatly impacted the minds and hearts of the children of Israel. They would always look back to this event as their beginning as a nation and the inauguration of their covenant relationship with God. Even today, Jewish people look back to the Exodus as the most significant incident in their history. It is remembered in song, commemorated in poetry, celebrated yearly in the Passover meal, and studied as an event of momentous historical and spiritual importance. It has been said that without the Exodus, Israel has no history. We cannot minimize the significance of this study.

#### 1. MIDWIVES OPPOSE PHARAOH'S EVIL COMMAND

#### **A.** The First Murderous Order (Exodus 1:15-17)

<sup>15</sup> And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: <sup>16</sup> And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. <sup>17</sup> But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.

The background of the Exodus story began centuries before the event itself. The closing chapters of Genesis tell how God used Joseph and a widespread famine to relocate the sons of Israel from Canaan to Egypt (chs. 39-47). Once in Egypt, the children of Israel settled in the land, grew in numbers, and became very prosperous (Ex. 1:7). However, they were viewed with scorn by the Egyptians, who called them the *Habiru*, meaning "dusty ones." In other words, they were seen as a dirty people. They were shepherds, an occupation despised by the people of Egypt (see Gen. 46:33-34). Furthermore, their increased population became a threat to the Egyptian people (Ex. 1:8-10). As a result, the king of Egypt, called the Pharaoh, enslaved the Israelites and turned them into laborers—forcing them to work on his building projects (v. 11). Despite their enslavement and the harsh treatment they received, the blessings of God rested on the Israelites, and they continued to grow in population (vv. 12-14).

In response to the increasing number of Israelites, Pharaoh acted with tyrannical cruelty. He ordered the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, to kill all male newborns (vv. 15-16). This measure would ensure the eventual depletion of the Hebrew population. Since there were so many Israelites, it is unlikely these two women were the only midwives. Probably, they were highly regarded leaders of the many midwives in charge of delivering Hebrew babies. The king told these midwives to watch when women sat on "the stools." This literally refers to two stones, which were commonly used for women to sit on when giving birth.

For the midwives, this mandate was abhorrent. They were responsible to bring life into the world, not destroy it. Yet, theirs was a very dangerous position. These were Hebrew women, but they lived in a pagan society. In ancient Egypt, the Pharaoh was viewed as a divine being. He supposedly was the living embodiment of the god Horus; son of Osiris, god of the underworld. What Pharaoh said was divine law. To resist him was not only civil disobedience, it was also sacrilege of the highest order. Although these midwives did not follow the religion of Egypt, they lived next door to those who did. Yet, these were Godfearing women. At the risk of their lives, they disobeyed the king and saved the newborn male children of Israel.

For Pharaoh, this edict was a political and social action. He saw it as preserving Egyptian society and culture. Yet, we look back on this event with far clearer vision. We know that ever since the Garden of Eden, the people of God

had been expecting the coming of a Deliverer (Gen. 3:15). And ever since Eden, Satan had been attempting to thwart God's plan. Pharaoh's desire to eradicate the children of Israel was diabolical. Throughout history, Satan made many efforts to destroy the family line that eventually led to the coming of the Messiah. Here we see one of these attempts—slay all the Hebrews, and destroy the possibility of the Savior being born.

• According to verse 17, what motivated the Hebrew midwives to disobey Pharaoh's decree? What principle should we learn from their example?

#### **B.** The Second Murderous Order (Exodus 1:18-22)

<sup>18</sup> And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? <sup>19</sup> And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. <sup>20</sup> Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. <sup>21</sup> And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses. <sup>22</sup> And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

Pharaoh took note of the disobedience of the midwives. He called them to appear before him, likely with great anger. He demanded to know why boys were surviving among the Hebrews. The midwives gave this excuse—the Hebrew women are strong and deliver on their own. At first glance, this appears to be untrue since the midwives were actively allowing the newborn boys to live. Yet, it was probably not entirely false. The midwives claimed the Hebrew women were more "lively," or "vigorous," than Egyptian women. The implication is they were hardy and stronger than the delicate women of Egypt. In ancient times, both Hebrew and Arab women were known for delivering children by themselves. The rabbis interpreted the words of the midwives as indicating Hebrew women were strong and knowledgeable in this area and did not need help in delivering their young.

It is not recorded how Pharaoh responded to this. He could not have been happy. Indeed, he acted to bypass the midwives and issued orders to the people that they were all responsible to destroy all newborn Hebrew males. They were to preserve their daughters but cast their sons into the Nile River. Again, we understand the satanic nature of this mandate. Thankfully, this order was disobeyed by faithful Hebrews.

Pharaoh was undoubtedly furious with the midwives. But they feared God and acted in obedience to His ways. As a result, the Lord blessed and rewarded them. Verse 21 says, God "made them houses." In other words, the Lord established their family households and ensured a legacy for them. The midwives were honored by God, and most likely esteemed by the people. It is interesting

to consider their names in this regard. *Shiphrah* means "beauty," and *Puah* means "splendor," indicating the favor and blessings of God on their lives.

#### God Alone

Blessed is the man who stands before the cruelest king and fears only his God.
—Calvin Miller

#### 2. PHARAOH SEEKS MOSES' LIFE

#### **A. Moses' Life Spared** (Exodus 2:5-10)

<sup>5</sup> And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. <sup>6</sup> And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. <sup>7</sup> Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? <sup>8</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. <sup>9</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the women took the child, and nursed it. <sup>10</sup> And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

Now we are introduced to one of the Bible's greatest figures—Moses. The story begins with a woman of the tribe of Levi giving birth to a boy. Despite Pharaoh's order, whether assisted by a midwife or delivering him by herself, she chose to save the child. She hid him as best she could for three months (vv. 1-2).

Moses here recorded his own birth. He didn't give many details about his early life. After all, he was reckoned the world's humblest man (Num. 23:15). At this point, he did not even mention his parents' names—Amram and Jochebed (Ex. 6:20). He did record he was a "goodly child" (2:2), meaning a "beautiful" baby (Heb. 11:23 NKJV), considered a sign of divine favor.

Soon Jochebed found it impossible to continue to hide him; she decided to entrust him into God's hands. She made a "papyrus basket" (Ex. 2:3 NIV). *Papyrus* was a type of reed that grew along the Nile River. The Egyptians used it to construct boats (Isa. 18:2), as well as for making paper. Jochebed coated the basket with tar, making it watertight. She set it afloat among the reeds growing along the riverbank. Jochebed trusted God would care for her baby, yet she also took practical measures. She sent her daughter, Miriam, to see what would happen to the child.

We now see the sovereign hand of God at work. Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe in the river. The Egyptians highly prized cleanliness, so this was not unusual. In addition, the Nile was considered sacred, so bathing in it was also a religious exercise. While bathing, she saw this basket among the reeds and sent a

servant to retrieve it. The small papyrus box apparently had a lid on it, for verse 6 says she "opened it." Inside she saw the child, who immediately began weeping. The cries of this beautiful child touched her heart. A child being set adrift in such a manner was odd, which is probably the reason she recognized this must be a Hebrew baby, with this extreme measure done to save its life.

In some way, she indicated a desire to keep the child. This was a courageous act, considering her father's mandate to kill all Hebrew boys. Miriam, watching the scene, stepped forward and offered to find a wet nurse for the baby. Pharaoh's daughter readily agreed. What transpired next demonstrates God's providential care and a bit of humorous irony. Miriam returned to her mother, who was brought before Pharaoh's daughter and instructed to nurse and care for the child. The princess even offered to pay Jochebed for this service! We can imagine that Jochebed quietly rejoiced (and the Lord smiled) at this arrangement.

After the child was weaned and began to grow, he came to live with Pharaoh's daughter. She named him *Moses*—an Egyptian name meaning "is born," and derived from a verb meaning "to draw forth." The princess alluded to this when she said she "drew him out of the water" (Ex. 2:10). Pharaoh's daughter then raised Moses as her own son, a royal prince of Egypt (see Acts 7:21-22; Heb. 11:24-26).

#### **Soft Pillow**

When you go through a trial, the sovereignty of God is the pillow upon which you lay your head.—Charles Spurgeon

#### **B.** Moses' Life Preserved (Exodus 2:11-15)

<sup>11</sup> And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. <sup>12</sup> And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. <sup>13</sup> And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? <sup>14</sup> And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. <sup>15</sup> Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

Though raised in the royal household, Moses matured to become a passionate defender of the Hebrews. How Moses realized his heritage, we do not know for sure. Perhaps he maintained contact with Jochebed, despite being raised by Pharaoh's daughter. If so, he may have heard about God's word to Abraham (Gen. 15:13-14), passed down from generation to generation. We do know that he studied in Egypt's great schools and libraries (Acts 7:22). Perhaps there, he

read about Joseph and the history of Israel. Either way, by the time he was forty years old, he clearly identified himself as a Hebrew.

Consequently, when he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave, fury arose within him. Making sure he was not seen, he killed the Egyptian. This incident occurred as he was observing the oppression ("burdens") of the Hebrews (Ex. 2:11). Some suggest Moses may already have sensed God's call to be Israel's deliverer—with this act being his mission's beginning. However, it was neither God's time nor the means for Israel's deliverance.

Although Moses thought no one had seen what happened, some of his brethren had. The next day he tried to prevent two Hebrews from fighting. They confronted him about the previous day's event. They also questioned his authority to judge them: "Who made you ruler and judge over us?" (v. 14 NIV). How ironic that forty years later (Acts 7:28-30), Moses would indeed become their leader! But for now, he was a marked man, and fear entered his heart. This was justified, for when Pharaoh discovered Moses' crime, he attempted to have him killed. Moses fled for his life. He traveled hundreds of miles and settled in the land of Midian.

• In verse 12, why did Moses look "this way and that way," and then what made him fearful (v. 14)?

#### 3. ISRAEL CRIES OUT TO GOD

#### **A.** God's People Groan (Exodus 2:23)

<sup>23</sup> And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

Moses is now in Midian. He wanted a new life. He may have tried to forget the Israelites and their suffering in Egypt, but we know God did not forget His people.

Exodus 2:23 says the king of Egypt died. But the death of Pharaoh and the reign of a new king brought no relief to the Hebrew people. They were still slaves, forced to do hard labor. They still worked on the building projects the new Pharaoh would envision. They toiled, making bricks of mud and straw, allowing them to dry in the sun. They had to be transported to the building site and lifted into position. It took thousands of bricks for just one building. Life was hard, and it was exhausting.

At the same time, they suffered the derision and scorn of their Egyptian masters. The "dusty ones" were mocked, beaten, and held in contempt. Their days were long stretches of miserable existence. So, they cried out to God. And, in their bondage and misery, the Lord heard them. After all, the Lord declares He is a "refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble" (Ps. 9:9).

• What happened "in the process of time" (v. 23 NKJV), and how should this encourage us?

#### **B.** God Remembers His People (Exodus 2:24-25)

<sup>24</sup> And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. <sup>25</sup> And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

The cries of God's people did not go unnoticed. The Lord heard them and had compassion on them. Of course, the Lord knew they would come to this point in their history. He had planned for this all along.

The text says God responded for two reasons. First, He "heard their groaning." In God's divine compassion, He cared about their suffering. It was not because of their goodness. They did not deserve God's favor, as would become evident over the next forty years. God's compassion was primarily grounded in His own nature, not their condition. Yet, because God is love itself, He acts in mercy and compassion toward His people. Indeed, the Scriptures teach us that God involves Himself in the suffering of Israel. "In all their affliction, he was afflicted" (Isa. 63:9). What a lesson for us! We do not deserve the loving compassion of God. Yet, He pours it out upon us because of who He is, not who we are.

The second reason for God's response was His promises and "covenant" with the patriarchs (Ex. 2:24). This is the first time the word *covenant* is mentioned in Exodus. It is a common theme in the Book of Genesis. In Genesis 12:2-3, the Lord entered into a binding covenant with Abraham and promised blessing on his descendants. He also told Abraham about the future bondage of his descendants and that He would deliver them (15:13-14). Exodus 2:24 links these covenant promises with God's concern for Israel's suffering and slavery. "For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant" (Ps. 105:42). God is always faithful to His word (Jer. 1:12). What He has said, He will do.

Exodus 2:25 says the Lord "looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them" (NIV). He did not just glance their way; He was aware of their plight and cared about them. This reminds us of when the Lord "remembered Noah" (Gen. 8:1). The idea is that God turned His attention to the situation and began to act in their behalf. Psalm 34:15 declares, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry."

This entire incident reminds us of a larger truth. Every human being on earth was in bondage, enslaved to sin and death (John 8:34). But just like the children of Israel bound in Egypt, God took notice of our condition and turned His attention to our suffering. He himself became involved in our lives. God took on the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7) and suffered with us and for us. In all our affliction, He was afflicted. As Hebrews 2:14-15 says: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the

same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

We can thank God that, like the children of Israel, God had compassion on us in our bondage. He provided a Deliverer, and we can experience our own exodus from sin's slavery into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

#### **God Cares**

When the cartoon character Hobbes asks his little friend, Calvin, "Do you think there's a God?" Calvin ponders momentarily. Then, he replies, "Well, somebody's out to get me!"

With all the worries and troubles of life, we may sometimes feel like Calvin. But God does care for us and the troubles in our lives. Isaiah 63:5 is still true.

#### **GOD REMEMBERS HIS OWN**

We live in a troubled world full of problems, full of evil. This causes some of us to question God. Is He there? Does He care? One of the great takeaways from this lesson is that God never forgets His own. His people are precious to Him. He cares about our misfortunes. He has compassion on us in our suffering. Just as God watched over Israel in Egypt, heard their cries, and gave attention to their needs, so we can count on the Lord to take care of us. Let this lesson encourage us to have faith in God and His everlasting care for us.

#### **Daily Devotions**

- M. Rachel's Midwife Saves Benjamin's Life (Genesis 35:9-21)
- T. Ordaining and Guarding God's Officers (1 Kings 19:8-18)
- W. King Hezekiah Cries Out (2 Kings 20:1-11)
- T. The Holy Spirit Gives Vision (Acts 9:8-19)
- F. Unconditional Contentment (Philippians 4:10-13)
- S. Joy in Trials (James 1:1-5)