



Study Guide: Exodus – Chapter 2

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Exodus Chapter 2 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Exodus Chapter 2 serves as a pivotal narrative bridge within the book of Exodus, introducing the birth and early life of Moses, the central figure through whom God will deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage. This chapter contributes to the overall flow by setting the stage for God's intervention in history through an unlikely deliverer. Readers should watch for the themes of divine providence, protection, and preparation that emerge subtly yet powerfully throughout the chapter, highlighting God's sovereignty even in moments of apparent human vulnerability.

Context

Exodus Chapter 2 follows the initial account of Israel's oppression in Egypt and Pharaoh's decree to kill Hebrew male infants. The immediate literary context is the continuation of Israel's suffering under Egyptian rule and God's unfolding plan to rescue His people. Historically, this chapter is set during the period of Israelite enslavement, reflecting the covenantal tension between God's promises to Abraham and the present reality of oppression. The key human actors are Moses and his family, with Pharaoh's edict as a looming threat. God's providential care is implied rather than overtly stated, consistent with the narrative style of Exodus. This chapter introduces Moses, who will become the covenant mediator and deliverer, linking the historical setting with God's redemptive purposes.

Outline

The chapter can be divided into three main movements. First, the birth and early concealment of Moses, highlighting his mother's protective actions and the initial threat from Pharaoh's decree. Second, Moses' placement in the Nile and his rescue by Pharaoh's daughter, illustrating divine providence through human agency. Third, Moses' upbringing in Pharaoh's household and his identification with his Hebrew roots through his sister's



intervention and his return to care for his people. Each section builds upon the previous, developing the narrative of God's preparation of Moses for his future role.

Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1-3: The chapter opens with the introduction of a Levite man and woman who conceive a son. The birth of this child occurs under the shadow of Pharaoh's command to kill Hebrew male infants, setting the stage for tension and danger. The mother's awareness of the threat prompts her to hide the child for three months, demonstrating courage and faith.

Verses 4-5: When concealment is no longer possible, the mother fashions a basket coated with tar and pitch to protect the child and places him among the reeds by the riverbank. This act of faith entrusts the child's safety to God's providence, even as she risks exposure.

Verses 6-7: Pharaoh's daughter discovers the basket and the crying child. Moved with compassion, she decides to adopt him despite the risks involved. The child's sister, who has been watching, approaches Pharaoh's daughter and offers to find a Hebrew nurse, cleverly ensuring the child's connection to his heritage is maintained.

Verses 8-10: The sister brings the child's mother to nurse him, allowing the child to be cared for by his own family initially. When he grows older, he is brought to Pharaoh's daughter and becomes her son, receiving the name Moses, meaning "drawn out," symbolizing his rescue from the water and foreshadowing his future role as deliverer.

Verses 11-15: As an adult, Moses witnesses an Egyptian beating a Hebrew and intervenes by killing the Egyptian. This act forces Moses to flee Egypt to escape Pharaoh's wrath, marking a turning point in his life and beginning his exile in Midian. This section reveals Moses' identification with his people and his emerging role as their defender.

Verses 16-22: In Midian, Moses encounters the daughters of a priest of Midian who are being harassed by shepherds. He defends them and is invited to stay with their father, Jethro, eventually marrying one of the daughters, Zipporah. This period of exile serves as preparation for Moses' future mission, providing him with new relationships and experiences.

Verses 23-25: The chapter closes by returning to the plight of the Israelites in Egypt. God hears their groaning and remembers His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This



divine remembrance sets the stage for the forthcoming deliverance, emphasizing God's faithfulness despite Israel's suffering.

Key Themes

One key theme is divine providence operating behind the scenes. Although God is not explicitly mentioned in every verse, His hand is evident in the preservation and protection of Moses. Another theme is identity and belonging, as Moses navigates his Hebrew heritage and Egyptian upbringing. The tension between exile and home highlights the preparation necessary for God's chosen instrument. Additionally, the theme of covenant faithfulness emerges as God remembers His promises and the suffering of His people, underscoring His commitment to deliverance.

Cross-References

The story of Moses' birth and rescue parallels the narrative of Isaac's birth in Genesis 21, where God's promises unfold amid adversity. The theme of God remembering His covenant echoes Genesis 8:1 and 9:15, where God remembers Noah and the covenant with creation, emphasizing divine faithfulness. The intervention of Pharaoh's daughter can be compared to Esther's story, where a foreign woman becomes an instrument of salvation for her people. Moses' flight to Midian and subsequent calling is further developed in Exodus 3, revealing God's direct commissioning. These cross-references deepen understanding of God's providential care and covenantal faithfulness throughout Scripture.

Application

Modern disciples can draw encouragement from Moses' story of being preserved and prepared in difficult circumstances. This chapter invites believers to trust in God's providence even when His presence seems hidden. It challenges readers to recognize that God often uses ordinary people and unexpected situations to fulfill His purposes. The tension Moses experiences between his identity and environment encourages believers to embrace their calling and heritage in Christ, even amid cultural pressures. Additionally, the chapter reminds the church to remember God's faithfulness and to act with courage and compassion in protecting and nurturing others, especially the vulnerable.

Summary



Exodus Chapter 2 narrates the birth, preservation, and early life of Moses against the backdrop of Israel's oppression in Egypt. Through the courageous actions of his family and the unexpected kindness of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses is saved and raised in a royal household while maintaining his Hebrew identity. His adult confrontation with injustice leads to exile in Midian, where God's providential preparation continues. The chapter concludes with God's remembrance of His covenant and the suffering of His people, setting the stage for the deliverance that will unfold. This chapter highlights themes of divine providence, identity, and covenant faithfulness, framing Moses as the chosen instrument for God's redemptive plan.