

Moses

In the Footsteps of the Reluctant Prophet
-- by Adam Hamilton

The Birth of Moses

(excerpts from Exodus 1)

⁶ Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died...⁸ Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing came to power in Egypt. ⁹ **"Look,"** he said to his people, **"the Israelites have become far too numerous for us"** ...

¹¹ So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with hard labor...¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites ¹³ and worked them ruthlessly. ¹⁴ They made their lives bitter with harsh labor.

[See Ignatian prayer style script notes at the end]

The Birth of Moses

(excerpts from Exodus 1, cont.)

¹⁵ The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives whose names were Shipah and Puah, ¹⁶ **"when you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live."**

¹⁷ The midwives, however, feared God **a & b** and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live.

[See Ignatian prayer style script notes at the end]

Depiction of a Birthing Stool, Ancient Egypt

4



Pharaoh and the Midwives,
from the Golden Haggadah, early 14th Century, British Library



The Birth of Moses

(excerpts from Exodus 1, cont.)

¹⁸ Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, **“Why did you let the boys live?”**

¹⁹ The midwives answered Pharaoh, ^c**“Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; ^d they give birth before the midwives arrive”** ... ²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

²² Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people:
“Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”

[See Ignatian prayer style script notes at the end]

The Birth of Moses

(*excerpts from Exodus 2*)



¹ Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman.
² and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son.
When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. ^{e1}

³ But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it ^{e2} and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile.

⁴ His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. ^{f1} ⁵ Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it.

[See Ignatian prayer style script notes at the end]

The Birth of Moses

(excerpts from Exodus 2, cont.)

⁶ She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying and she felt sorry for him. ^{g1} **“This is one of the Hebrew babies,”** she said. ⁷ Then, his sister asked Pharaoh’s daughter, ^{f2} **“Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?”** ⁸ ^{g2} **“Yes, go,”** she answered. So the girl went and got the baby’s mother. ⁹ Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ^{g3} **“Take this baby and nurse it for me, and I will pay you.”** So the woman took the baby and nursed him. ¹⁰ When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses saying ^{g4} **“I drew him out of the water.”**

SCRIPT NOTES to the SLIDES

Ignatian Prayer Style

(putting oneself into the scripture story as one of the characters)

9

➤ **SLIDE 2** - READERS: **NARRATOR 1** (Jim Alexander) & **PHARAOH** (John Estill)

1. **PHARAOH** [John] read the 2 parts of **Pharaoh's speech** from Scripture on this slide in an authoritative tone.
2. **NARRATOR 1** (Jim) read all text in light type, including the phrase 'he said to his people' in the middle of Pharaoh's pronouncement in verse 9.

➤ **SLIDE 3** - READERS: **NARRATOR 1** (Jim), **PHARAOH** (John), **SHIPAH** (Rita Ward) & **PUAH** (Floy Rorie)

1. **PHARAOH** [John] read **Pharaoh's speaking part** from Scripture in verse 16 on this slide in an authoritative tone.
2. **SHIPAH** [Rita Ward] read at the cue "a": **"Oh, Puah, what a terrible decree. I could never kill innocent little babies. What are we going to do?"**
3. **PUAH** [Floy Rorie] read at the cue "b": **"Shipah, I agree. We must let the little boys live ... even if it costs us our lives, for I fear God more than Pharaoh. Let us pray that God will provide deliverance."**

SCRIPT NOTES cont.

➤ **SLIDE 4** - READER: **NARRATOR 2** (Chris Alexander)

“Mothers, can you imagine having to deliver your children in this manner?”

➤ **SLIDE 5** – READER: **NARRATOR 2** (Chris) “Artists are often able to convey complex themes in a single painting. This illustration is a miniature on vellum from the Golden Haggadah, which was written & illustrated in northern Spain around 1320. A Haggadah is a book used in Jewish households on Passover Eve to celebrate the Israelites deliverance from enslavement. The book is in the British library in London. The illustration shows Pharaoh talking to the two midwives. A bearded man carries out Pharaoh’s instruction by throwing a child into the river.”

➤ **SLIDE 6** - READERS: **NARRATOR 2** (Chris), **PHARAOH** (John), **SHIPAH** (Rita) & **PUAH** (Floy)

1. **NARRATOR 2** [Chris] read all text in light type. Pause to let Pharaoh speak. Pause again when at speaking cues in **blue** to allow Shipah & Puah to read their parts.
2. **PHARAOH** [John] read his two lines on this slide...parts of verse 18 and part of verse 22, bolded) again in an authoritative tone – pausing for others to read in between.
3. **SHIPAH** [Rita] read at the cue “**c**” : “**Hebrew Women are not like Egyptian women;**”
4. **PUAH** [Floy] read at the cue “**d**” : “**...they give birth before the midwives arrive.**”

SCRIPT NOTES cont.

- **SLIDE 7** - READERS: **NARRATOR 2** (Chris), **MOSES' MOTHER** (Prissy Wisnewski), **MOSES' SISTER** (Barbara Wheat)
- 1. NARRATOR** [Chris] read all text in light type. Pause to let Moses' mother speak at cues **e1** & **e2**, as well as Moses' sister at cue **f1**.
 - 2. Moses' MOTHER** [Prissy] **“e1”** **“Oh, my precious baby boy. How beautiful you are to me! But, I fear for your life due to Pharaoh's awful decree.”**
 - [Pause for Chris to continue reading.]
 - 3. Moses' MOTHER** [Prissy] **“e2”** [Prissy] **“Oh, my son, I can hide you no longer. I pray that almighty God will protect you for I do not know what else to do.”**
 - [Pause for Chris to continue reading.]
 - 4. Moses' SISTER** **“f1”** [Barbara Wheat] **“Why does Pharaoh have to be so mean? What kind of person kills baby boys?”**
 - [Pause for Chris to continue reading.]

SCRIPT NOTES cont.

➤ **SLIDE 8** - READERS: **NARRATOR 2** (Chris), **PHARAOH's DAUGHTER** (Linda Morin), & **MOSES' SISTER** (Barbara Wheat)

1. **NARRATOR** [Chris] read all text in light type. Pause to let Pharaoh's Daughter speak at cues **g1 g2 g 3 g4** , as well as to let Moses' sister at cue **f2**.

2. **PHARAOH's DAUGHTER** [Linda] **“g1” “This is one of the Hebrew babies.”**

➤ [Pause for Chris to continue reading.]

3. **Moses' SISTER** [Barbara] **“f2” “Shall I go out and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?”**

➤ [Pause for Chris to continue reading.]

4. **PHARAOH's DAUGHTER** [Linda] **“g2” “Yes, go.”**

➤ [Pause for Chris to continue reading.]

5. **PHARAOH's DAUGHTER** [Linda] **“g3” “Take this baby and nurse it for me and I will pay you.”**

➤ [Pause for Chris to continue reading.]

6. **PHARAOH's DAUGHTER** [Linda] **“g4” “I drew him out of the water.”**

Discussion

► Fear vs Trust

1. Why do you think some people ignore the Holy Spirit and practice hatred and cruelty, while others respond to the Spirit and act out of love and a nurturing spirit?
2. As Christians, how can we be forces for good in the face of evil?
3. Why do you think Pharaoh's daughter engaged in subterfuge to rescue Moses and then provided for his upbringing-despite her father's decree?
4. Wasn't she taking a terrible chance?

Discussion

➤ **Does this story have any applicability to our lives today?**

5. Have you ever been placed in a position like that of **the midwives**...asked to do something against your conscience, that you thought was morally questionable or wrong? What was the outcome?
6. Can you identify with anyone in 2019 in a position like that of **Moses' mother**...under time pressure and faced with a desperate decision with life or death consequences?
7. Are there others, in the orbit of your day-to-day life (like a student, teacher's aide, or someone from another culture) - where, compared to them, you can be a force for good through your greater status & privilege (like **the princess**)?

Prayer: O God, you call us to find ourselves in your story. Grant us the courage not to give into fear and find creative ways to resist that which is wrong. Help us to trust that you can work in and through us to accomplish your purposes. Move us to compassion for those in need and stir our will to be part of your saving story. AMEN.

