

Jochebed – Moses' mother

Ex. 1:22-2:10

1:22 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.

2:1 And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife **a daughter of Levi**. **2:2** And **the woman** conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. **2:3** And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. **2:4** And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. **2:5** 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. **2:6** 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. **2:7** 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? **2:8** And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called **the child's mother**. **2:9** 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 woman** took the child, and nursed it. **2:10** 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.

Ex. 6:20

6:20 And Amram took him **Jochebed his father's sister** to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years.

Num. 26:59

26:59 The name of **Amram's wife** was **Jochebed the daughter of Levi**, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and to Amram she bore Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam.

Heb. 11:23

11:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of **his parents**, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

Focus on Faith and Family

Moses is named more in the Bible than any other human being, other than Jesus and David. So it is not surprising that his naming is described in Exodus chapter two. In the same chapter, however, Moses' parents are NOT named. Probably this is so that the main focus would be on what God would do through this special baby rather than on his mother or his father.

Even so, Moses' mother, Jochebed who was named later (6:20) was NOT a minor character in Ex. 2:1-10. Far more is said about what she did than about baby Moses' actions. He wept in a significant way (2:6), but she did many things. Moreover, her faith-based action is praised in Heb. 11:23. It took genuine faith to do what Moses' parents did.

negatives

Did Jochebed save Moses by hiding him for three months and then placing him in an ark of reeds in the Nile? In a way, yes. Nevertheless, what she did was dangerous and humanly speaking the outcome was far from certain.

God saved Moses from Pharaoh, and many of the worksheet lines on the following page are about this. In many of the lines below, however, the danger and difficulty of the situation are stressed. The Nile was a great river and a dangerous place for a child, let alone for a tiny baby.

The greatness of Jochebed's faith is best seen in light of the negative situation. Was there any alternative course of action (B-2)? Did she totally disobey Pharaoh's command (1:22) or only in part (B-3)? Is anything recorded about her praying (B-4)?

Although the faith of Moses' parents is rightly praised in Heb. 11:23, is there anything directly stated about their faith in Ex. 2:1-10? Did the making of the ark (2:3) and the posting of Miriam (2:4) indicate genuine faith? Some might say that these things were just signs of superficial hope.

Mark the points below as correct (C), incorrect (X), or partly correct (▲).

A	() Little is known about Jochebed.
A-1	() She is not named in Ex. 2:1-10.
A-2	() She is not named in Heb. 11:23.
A-3	() Her husband is named first (Ex. 2:1, 6:20).
A-4	() Her daughter, Miriam, said more than she did.
A-5	() Her husband is mentioned more often in Ex. 2:1-10.
A-6	() We do not know her background (Ex. 2:1, 6:20, Num. 26:59).
B	() Jochebed's actions were dangerous and difficult.
B-1	() The tiny reed boat (ark) was weak.
B-2	() There was no better alternative (Ex. 2:3).
B-3	() She disobeyed Pharaoh (Ex. 1:22, 2:2-3).
B-4	() She should have prayed more (Ex. 2:2-5).
B-5	() She had to entrust her defenseless baby to God.
B-6	() She did not know what would happen (Ex. 2:4, Heb. 11:23).

positives

There seems to be an emphasis on the ministry of women in the first two chapters of Exodus, much like in Luke chapters one and two. Moses' father is briefly mentioned in Ex. 2:1, but more is said about Jochebed did. *She made and placed the ark.*

God seemed to use women in a special way in these chapters. Yet none of the women are named in Ex. 2:1-10. This helps focus more on what God did, even though the Lord himself is never mentioned in the chapter until verse 23. (This is similar to the Book of Esther.)

Does the passage directly say that Jochebed taught Moses about the Lord (C-2)? No, because God is not even mentioned, but does that prove that she did not teacher her son about the God of the Hebrews? Certainly not.

Why isn't something recorded about Jochebed's teaching? We do not know, but this probably helps keep the focus on what God himself was doing. The same could be said about the lack of information about prayer (B-4). Without a doubt, Jochebed prayed, but does it say that she did?

Mark the points below as correct (C), incorrect (X), or partly correct (▲).

C	() God used Jochebed and various other women.
C-1	() She conceived and gave birth to Moses (Ex. 2:1).
C-2	() She taught Moses about the Lord (Ex. 2:9-10).
C-3	() God used Jochebed's daughter (Ex. 2:4, 7-9).
C-4	() God used Pharaoh's daughter (Ex. 2:5-11).
C-5	() God used the midwives (Ex. 1:15-21).
C-6	() God uses everyone (Rom. 9:17).
D	() God quietly worked out his sovereign plan.
D-1	() God is never directly mentioned in Ex. 2:1-22.
D-2	() God used Moses' good looks (Ex. 2:2, Heb. 11:23).
D-3	() It does not say that God gave Jochebed wisdom.
D-4	() Moses' crying was directed by God (Ex. 2:6).
D-5	() God was in charge rather than Pharoah.
D-6	() Pharoah failed (Ex. 1:22, 2:10).

conclusions

worksheet answers

It is true in a way that all that baby Moses could do was cry. Yet even that was used by the Lord (D-4) to elicit compassion from Pharaoh's daughter (2:6). The miracle of Moses' deliverance was a quiet one in most ways aside from his weeping (D).

The prominence of Jochebed in Ex. 2:1-10 in comparison to her husband, Amram (A-5), helps demonstrate that it was God himself who was at work rather than two powerful human. Though we know a lot about her background from Ex. 6:20 and Num. 26:59 (A, A-6), this is mostly kept hidden at first so that she does not become the main focus.

Since we know from Heb. 11:23 as well as from Ex. 2:2-4 that Moses' parents were people of faith (B-5, B-6), there is no reason to criticize them for not praying enough (B-4) just because prayer is not directly mentioned. God giving Jochebed wisdom is not mentioned either (D-3), even though he surely did so.

Finally, Moses' mother only partly disobeyed Pharaoh (B-3), since she eventually placed her infant son in the Nile as the evil king had commanded (1:22). Though undoubtedly many Hebrew boy were killed, Exodus shows that Pharaoh still failed (D-6).

So what?

The biggest negative point, in the sense of difficulty and pain, is brought out in lines B-5 and B-6. Moses' parents had to entrust their defenseless baby to the Lord not knowing what would happen to him. Their ability to protect him was very limited.

God's ability was not limited, however. He was able to use even the unsaved to accomplish his purpose (Pro. 21:1, C-4). Therefore we may correctly say that God uses everyone. On the other hand, the wicked still do great harm which is not according to God's will. So it may be best to say that line C-6 is only partly correct, since it is correct in one way yet incorrect in another.

The greatest positive point in this study is that God was in charge rather than Pharaoh (D-5). This truth was not apparent to everyone, least of all to Pharaoh himself. Yet it was still true. God was quietly working out his sovereign plan despite the evil king (D). Ironically, Pharaoh's own daughter played a key role in it all.

Is God still in charge today despite all the evil that exists in the modern world? The answer is still yes, in the same way that it was back then. Evil exists, but God still uses little-known people like Jochebed as well as the mighty to fulfill His long-term plans.

applications

Apply the points which you believe are most important or seem most needful.
