

The Birth of Moses

Danae looked at the new patient intake list again. The name “Flora Jones” made her pulse quicken.

Danae was the nursing dayshift supervisor at Guardian Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center. Flora was her father’s second wife, whom she had lost contact with following his and her mother’s deaths. Flora had dated Danae’s father while he was still married to her mother more than 40 years ago. Eventually, the turbulent years gave way to strained, restless, and finally calm ones.

Danae listened to her mother talk about the saving power of Christ, and the ability of the Holy Spirit to empower us to love. And so, she had followed suit.

When Danae arrived at the room, she found that the woman was indeed the same Flora. Now, Flora’s leg was amputated from the thigh down because of diabetes. Flora’s only daughter, Danae’s half-sister, had been living in Florida and rarely kept in touch.

Over the next few weeks, occasional smiles could be spotted on Flora’s face.

“Is this your daughter, Mrs. Jones?” asked the nurse’s aide in Flora’s room.

“Yes,” beamed Flora. “This is my stepdaughter who is taking great care of me.”

When the nurse’s aide left, Flora reached for Danae’s hand. “Thank you for everything. The Lord set it up for you to be able to care for me when I needed it the most.”

1. Fill in the blank: I believe God often works behind the scenes because _____.

2. Describe a time when God surprised you with how He worked.

3. True or false: God always wants us to see where and how He is working.

Moses Is Born and Sent Away

Exodus 2:1-4, KJV

1 And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.

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.

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.

4 And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

Exodus 2:1-4, NIV

¹Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, ²and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. ³But 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 and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. ⁴His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

Verses 1 and 2a described Moses' lineage. His parents, identified as Amram and Jochebed in the genealogy in Exodus 6:20, were descendants of the tribe of Levi, Jacob's third son, whom God would later call to serve as priests. This lineage also spoke to Moses' future role as spiritual leader of Israel, as well as his brother Aaron's future role as Israel's first high priest.

Even as a baby, there was something different about Moses: "When [Jochebed] saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months" (vs. 2b). Hebrews 11:23 later described this even more explicitly: "By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child." Nonetheless, they took a huge risk by keeping Moses alive. Curiously, even three months later, Moses did not yet have the name he would be known by.

Finally, Jochebed could no longer hide her son, and made the painful decision of letting him go. She prepared “a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch” (vs. 3). The Hebrew word *tebah*, translated “basket” or “ark” (KJV), is only used in one other section of the Bible, in Genesis, when talking about Noah building a *tebah* to save his family and the animals (Gen. 6:14). She placed Moses in the little “ark” and set him on his way in the Nile River.

Perhaps Jochebed knew the daily bathing habits of Pharaoh’s daughter (vs. 5) and hoped that Moses would be found alive. However, there was no guarantee that Moses would be kept alive once he was found. Jochebed placed her trust in God’s mercy to save her son. In addition, Moses’ older sister Miriam shrewdly “stood at a distance to see what would happen to him” (vs. 4). If Moses had a chance of surviving, Miriam would see it happen—and as it turned out, would play a significant role in Moses’ survival.

4. *What are we told about Moses’ parents? What did they do after Moses was born, and why?*

5. *What did Jochebed, Moses’ mother, finally decide to do?*

6. *What did Moses’ sister, Miriam, do?*

Moses Is Saved

Exodus 2:5-10, KJV

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.

6 And when she had opened

Exodus 2:5-10, NIV

⁵Then 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. ⁶She opened it and saw

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.

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?

8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

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 women took the child, and nursed it.

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.

the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

⁷Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

⁸"Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother.

⁹Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. ¹⁰When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."

At just the right time, Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to bathe, with her servants accompanying her. When she saw the basket in the reeds, she sent one of her female slaves to get it. What happened next was literally a life-or-death decision for the baby Moses. "She opened [the basket] and saw the baby," and even though she recognized that it was a Hebrew baby boy—one her father had ordered to be killed—"He was crying, and she felt sorry for him" (vs. 6). Instead of following her father's orders, she had compassion on the infant boy.

At this point, Miriam inserted herself into the scene, and displayed her cleverness. As Pharaoh's daughter had already recognized Moses' ethnicity, Miriam arrived

and asked, “Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?” (vs. 7). Pharaoh’s daughter agreed, and so Miriam fetched “one of the Hebrew women”—one of the few who could nurse the baby—Moses’ (and her) mother (vs. 8). When Jochebed arrived, “Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you’” (vs. 9). Not only was Moses saved, but Jochebed was now being paid to nurse her own child. Jochebed’s faith was rewarded in more ways than one.

In time, Moses grew old enough to no longer need nursing, and Jochebed once again had to give up her son—but this time to be raised as Pharaoh’s grandson, as a member of the royal family of Egypt, one of the most powerful nations on earth. It is possible that Moses stayed with his mother even longer than his nursing period, as it is clear that Moses knew of his Hebrew heritage and his siblings, and chose to identify with them instead of with the Egyptian royalty (vs. 11). It was also at this time that Moses was finally given his name—possibly derived from the Egyptian word *mes*, meaning “son,” but also from the Hebrew word *mashah*, “drew out,” for “I [Pharaoh’s daughter] drew him out of the water” (vs. 10).



A reed basket from ancient Egypt.

Photo: Gary Todd

7. How did Pharaoh’s daughter react when she saw Moses?

8. How did Miriam influence what happened next?

9. What did Jochebed do when Moses became old enough?

A 'Surprise' Witness

Surprise parties start with guests shouting "Surprise!" God works in ways that yell "Surprise!" as well.

Rapper Earl "DMX" Simmons, who died in 2020, was the only rapper whose five albums debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart. That can be considered a God surprise. *Christianity Today* says Simmons had this success by always making Christianity a "central element of his music."

"When DMX came on the scene, he showed the world that they could and should have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ," wrote Cassandra Chaney, a professor at Louisiana State University who researched how rappers discuss heaven in their music.

DMX was a deacon. He conducted Instagram Bible studies. He also believed in the power of prayer and would end his albums and concerts with a prayer. At one concert he ended a prayer in tears and thousands of concert goers were in tears as well. Although this rapper/actor fought personal demons such as drug addiction, he openly and boldly professed his faith. It is believed that he sold some 74 million records worldwide throughout his career, and he was grateful for his influence for the Lord. This is one of his prayers: "You let me touch so many people and it's all for the good/ I influenced so many children, I never thought that I would/ I'm just the one that's givin' it."

As *Christianity Today* said, "Simmons represents a different kind of testimony, but one the church needs to hear."

10. *When have you been surprised at the way God works through people?*

11. *What is wonderful about serving a "surprising" God?*

12. *When have you heard a "surprise" testimony from someone you might not have thought God could use?*

Surprise, Surprise

By faith we believe that God is working for us even if we cannot see Him working. We trust that God's is moving for us in unknown and beautiful ways. God is moving behind the curtains and setting up a grand show for His glory and praise. Hebrews 11:1 says it like this: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." We need to look to see where the Lord might be moving in our lives and join Him as He works in ways that bring Him glory.

► *Where, or how, might God be working in your life in a surprising way? Pray that He will allow you to see His workings and praise Him for everything He is doing right now.*

KEY VERSE

And the woman conceived, and bare a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.

—Exodus 2:2, KJV

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.

— Exodus 2:2, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of October 3 through October 9

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

Mon. Exodus 3:1-15— God Calls and Equips.

Tue. Exodus 14:21-31—God Brings Victory.

Wed. Psalm 105:26-27, 37-45—God Remembers His Promises.

Thu. Hebrews 3:7-19—God Expects Obedience.

Fri. Hebrews 4:1-11—God Offers Eternal Rest.

Sat. Deuteronomy 1:1-8—God Promises a Homeland.

Sun. Deuteronomy 32:3-14, 18—God Is Perfect and Just.