

JOCHEBED: A COURAGEOUS AND ASTUTE MOTHER

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Exodus 2:1-10

To properly understand the situation and to give context to the story, read Exodus chapter 1.

Background:

From the death of Joseph in Genesis 50:26, to the rise of a new Pharaoh in Exodus 1:8, was more than 200 years. This new Pharaoh does not know about Joseph. The Egyptians view the Israelites with suspicion for they are numerous, and the Pharaoh is afraid that they may turn against him and leave Egypt. He deals with them treacherously, enslaves and oppresses them and makes their lives bitter. To control their population, he orders the Hebrew midwives to kill all the boys that are born, but to save the girls. However, the midwives fear God above Pharaoh so they defy him and do not kill the male infants. Pharaoh then commands his people to throw the babies into the Nile river.

The story of Jochebed, the mother of Moses, begins with chapter 2. Most of what we know about her is found in verses 1-10. Exodus 6:20 and Numbers 26:59 tells us that her name is Jochebed and that she has three children: Aaron, Miriam and Moses.

Read Exodus 2:1-10

Discussion:

- Considering the circumstances (Pharaoh's command to kill all male infants) do you think courage is required of the Hebrew midwives and mothers? Why?
- Does Jochebed display courage? (Hebrews 11:23)
- List all the ways Jochebed displays ingenuity and courage and why you think so.
- Does she entrust her son to the providential care of God? How?
- Read v. 10 again - How do you suppose she felt, as Moses' biological mother? Does this action require great courage and resolve from Jochebed?
- What and/or who, does Jochebed draw courage from?
- Do you think she also displays great faith in God? How?

The definition of astute is having or showing shrewdness and an ability to notice and understand things clearly; mentally sharp or clever.

- Do you think Jochebed is astute? Why?
 - To save her son, she needs a plan. What is it?
 - Is her plan clever? Why?
- (Note: The papyrus basket was a miniature version of Noah's ark; Gen. 6:14)
- Is it a surprise that her older daughter, Miriam approximately 8-10 yrs. old, acts as a sentinel for the baby? Why? Do you suppose she was coached by her mother?
 - Do you think Jochebed has clearly thought through her plan from beginning to end, and have considered the consequences even if it is of great sacrifice to her and Amram?
 - List all the ways her plan can go wrong.
 - Why do you think her plan succeeds?

- Do you see God at work behind the scenes? What is he orchestrating?

Summary:

Because Jochebed trusts and fears God, He gives this mother the courage and ability to think clearly and creatively thereby fulfilling God's redemptive plan for Moses and the entire nation. However, saving her son's life comes with a cost. Though she is blessed to nurse and nurture him for a short time, she must be willing to relinquish her son to be adopted and raised by someone else. This is the love of a mother, making great sacrifices and being willing to do the difficult things that parenting requires. As God quietly orchestrates events in the life of Jochebed, be assured that He is working behind the scenes in your life as well.