

Exodus Chapters 2 -- John Karmelich

1. If I had to write a title for Chapter 2, it would be “Moses – The humbling years“
 - a) Chapter 2 is mostly an introduction to the person of Moses.
 - i) With a section dedication to the faith of his parents.
 - b) A lot of the book of Exodus is about the life of Moses, which begins in Chapter 2.
 - c) The “burning bush” passage and the events of the exodus, begin in detail in Chapter 3.
 - d) Moses was 80 years old when he saw God speak through the burning bush.
 - e) The life of Moses, as written by Moses, is described in 3 books of the Bible (Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). The remainder of Exodus, along with Numbers and parts of Deuteronomy, cover the next 40 years of Moses life.
 - i) Therefore the first 80 years of Moses life is summarized in one chapter!, while the blow-by-blow details of the next 40 years of Moses life is covered in the remainder of Exodus.
 - a) So how do you summarize 80 years in one chapter?
 - b) You talk about what is *relevant* to the remaining years.
 - c) Think about this when you read chapter 2.
 - ii) If you had to summarize 2/3 of your life (Moses died at 120) in one chapter,
 - a) what would you include?
 - b) What would be relevant to the story that God is trying to teach us?
 - iii) Moses parents, and his sister are mentioned in Chapter 2,
 - a) but not their names? What was it about Moses’ parents that deserved to be mentioned for our learning?
 - iv) Moses did not begin to be used by God until he was 80.
 - a) We know this from reading Stephen’s account in Acts Chapter 7.
 - b) In the Book of Acts, the first martyr is recorded, named Stephen.
 - c) Right before the Jewish leaders stoned him, he gave an account of the history of Israel with some interesting details *not* recorded in the Old Testament. We’ll refer to a few of these as we go along.
 - f) Just because you are not presently being used by God does not mean God does not have a hand in your life.
 - i) Moses began to be used by God, beginning with the “burning bush” passage of Chapter 3. Before that, it is mostly a history of recorded mistakes.
 - ii) But those mistakes were used by God to help train lead his people.
 - iii) The lesson to learn, is that even though we may not see God’s hand in our lives at the present moment, he is always there leading us.
 - a) Even using our mistakes for His glory!
 - b) There is nothing that happens to us that not only God is aware of, but also that He can use for glory!
 - g) With that, lets go to Chapter 2.
2. **Chapter 2, Verse 1. 2:1** A man from the tribe of Levi married a woman who was a descendant of Levi. **2:2** And the woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a healthy child, she hid him for three months.
 - a) If you remember the last verse of Chapter 1, we left off with the Pharaoh issuing a decree that all male babies must be killed by throwing them in the river.
 - i) Parents to-be must have been in a state of fear and panic.
 - ii) We read here of Moses parents hiding the baby for 3 months.

- b) What is *not* recorded in this verse is that Moses had two older siblings. He had a sister (the oldest) named Miriam and an older brother named Aaron.
 - i) Imagine trying to hide a newborn baby from soldiers walking around the place.
 - ii) Imagine the fear as soldiers go from house to house looking for babies.
 - iii) Every time Moses cried, as babies do, the parents must have been frightened out of their minds.
 - c) Verse 2 said they hid the child because he was a “healthy” child.
 - i) Other translations say “beautiful” or “fine” child.
 - ii) There is an interesting commentary on this particular verse in the New Testament Book of Hebrews:
 - iii) *By faith* Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. (Hebrews 11:23 NIV *emphasis added*)
 - a) Faith in what? What did Moses' parents have “faith in” that they were willing to hide the child?
 - b) The answer is not given in the Bible, so we can only speculate.
 - c) The most common speculation is that Moses' parents were told that Moses was going to be “something special”, possibly the redeemer of all their troubles.
 - (1) For the Israelite people, I'm sure there was punishment for any person who hid babies as well as the death of the babies.
 - (2) Yet “by faith” Moses' parents were willing to be disobedient to local authorities in order to obey a higher power. (I talked about this last week when the midwives disobeyed Pharaoh.)
3. Verse 3: But when she was no longer able to hide him, she took a papyrus basket for him and sealed it with bitumin and pitch. Then she put the child in it and set it among the reeds along the edge of the Nile. **2:4** And his sister stationed herself at a distance, to find out what would be happen to him.
- a) Remember the order of the Pharaoh: All babies were to be tossed in the Nile by Egyptian soldiers and left to die.
 - i) If I were a parent of a newborn, the last place I would want to hide a baby would be by the Nile.
 - ii) If I were going to hide or abandon a child, anywhere in the opposite direction of the Nile would be my first choice!
 - iii) Again, we go back to Hebrews, and “by faith, Moses' parents hid the child”
 - a) I suspect (but can't prove) this may have been part of God's direction.
 - (1) Mainly because, it is such an illogical thing to do.
 - b) Notice Verse 4 says his (Moses) sister hung around from a distance to see the results.
 - i) I'm sure mom and dad couldn't take it.
 - ii) After 3 months of trying to hid the baby anyway they could, they couldn't bear to watch the end, or possibly they had to go off to work.
 - iii) But Moses' sister hung around to see the end.

- c) This verse is a great example of what Christians call “relinquishment”.
 - i) This means surrendering your will, letting go of the situation, and letting God deal with the problem.
 - ii) Can you imagine how many times Moses’ parents cried out to God to not let Pharaoh’s soldiers kill their son?
 - a) And then God probably said to them “Trust me, hide your son and I will protect him. Later God may have told them...” Now go hide in a water-proof ark by the river”.
 - b) Imagine the faith it took to do that.
 - c) I’m sure the parents thought, “Well, this is it, come on honey, lets go to work, I can’t bear to watch.
 - d) That is relinquishment. Now look how God worked!
4. Verse 5: Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself by the Nile, and her attendants were walking along the side of the river. When she saw the basket among the reeds, she sent her servant, who retrieved it. **2:6** She opened it and saw the child-and there he was, crying! And she had compassion on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." **2:7** Then his (Moses’) sister spoke to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, so that she may nurse the child for you?" **2:8** Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Yes, do so." So the young girl went and got the child's mother. **2:9** And the Pharaoh's daughter said to the woman, "Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him.
- a) Moses’ mom, probably left Moses in the river crying and sobbing.
 - i) The next thing you know, not only is your baby still alive
 - a) He is going to be raised by Pharaoh’s daughter
 - b) and Pharaoh’s daughter will *pay you* to take care of him!!!
 - c) Now that’s a happy ending!!!!!!
 - ii) God often works in our lives in the same way.
 - a) Ask any veteran Christian about “relinquishment”.
 - b) Most Christians can tell you at least one story of how after they have given up, and tried every possible solution, God stepped in and worked a miracle and a blessing beyond their wildest imagination.
 - c) God has said to us “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5b, NIV, emphasis added)
 - (1) God simply wants us to trust Him with the situation.
 - b) One more thing to point out before I move on.
 - i) Pharaoh’s daughter could have simply told her guards to drown the baby,
 - ii) Remember that God can control people’s thoughts for His glory!
 - iii) The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases. (Proverbs 21:1 NIV)
5. Verse 10. When the child grew older she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him from the water."
- a) I mentioned that one of the key themes of the book of Exodus is that the theme is “redemption”.
 - i) One can see a “pun” here in the name Moses.
 - ii) Moses’ life got resurrected (or redeemed) from the dead by Pharaoh’s daughter. Remember the baby was left for dead, and how has new life. This is why the Pharaoh’s daughter picked the name Moses.
 - iii) Just as Christ redeemed us from the “death penalty” of sin.

6. Well, we now have a gap of about 40 years between Verse 10 and Verse 11.
- a) We only have one other clue of the life of Moses in this time period.
 - b) Back to Stephen's speech in Acts: "Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action." (Acts 7:22 NIV)
 - i) Don't take this lightly. The historian Josephus recorded that the Pharaoh who raised Moses had no son, and therefore Moses was next in line for the throne.
 - ii) The Egyptian education was the best that existed in the ancient world.
 - iii) A modern paraphrase would be "Moses was educated at Harvard, Yale & West Point Military Academy and graduated top of his class at every level."
 - iv) Notice it also says, "Moses was powerful in speech & action". This is the same Moses who told God (later) to send his brother Aaron, as I don't speak well!"
7. Stephen further records (in Acts 7:23) that Moses was 40 years old when this next set of verses takes place. Verse 11: And it happened in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his people and observed their hard labor. And he saw an Egyptian man attacking a Hebrew man, one of his fellow countrymen. **2:12** He looked this way and that and saw that no one was there, and then he killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand.
- a) Remember that Moses was raised in his early years by his true mother.
 - b) Apparently that made a bigger impression on Moses than all the years of training under the Pharaoh!
 - i) Take that as a reminder to raise your children well!
 - ii) "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Proverbs 22:6 NIV)
 - c) You have to suspect that Moses know he was being raised to be leader of his people.
 - i) I'm sure his mother told him over and over again the story of how God miraculously saved him.
 - ii) I'm sure Moses' parents probably thought He was going to be the redeemer.
 - a) After all, Moses' was now going to be raised by Pharaoh's daughter.
 - b) Moses' mom probably thought her role was now to raise her child to explain and emphasize what God has done through their lives.
 - (a) That's a good model of how to raise our children.
 - (b) Let them know over and over again how God has worked in our lives!
 - (2) One can see a parallel with Mary, the mother of Jesus!
 - iii) Moses was probably getting a big ego by this time.
 - a) "Gee, God protected me at birth..."
 - b) "I graduated top of my class as Temple of the Sun University"
 - c) "I'm hot stuff"
 - d) OK, God, I'm ready for you to use me."
 - e) Unfortunately for Moses, God wasn't ready for Moses yet.
 - iv) Ever wondered why if Moses was "Prince Pharaoh", why didn't God just wait for Moses to become "King Pharaoh" and then simply give the order to release the Israelites? I'm sure he could have done it that way!
 - a) The problem is, then man gets the glory not God.
 - b) People would have looked back at that, and not have seen the hand of God. The way *God choose* to redeem Israel was done in a way of where there was no explanation other than God himself intervening.
 - c) "I will not yield my glory to another." (Isaiah 48:11b, NIV)

- v) Notice that his actions were wrong, Moses heart was in the right place.
 - a) Moses was #2 man in the most powerful kingdom on Earth.
 - b) He could have said, Israelites, Shishmilaites, who cares, I've got power, I've got stuff, who cares about those people anyway...I'll protect mom and dad, and the rest of them can go back to work"... But no!
 - c) Moses knew there was one true God!
 - (1) He forsook his "earthly" rewards for future heavenly benefits.
 - d) The writer to the book of Hebrews picks up on this.
 - (1) "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.
 - (2) "He (Moses) chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.
 - (3) "He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward." (Hebrews 11:24-26 NIV)
 - d) Last thing to notice here. Moses is a murder.
 - i) I've been pretty angry many times in my life, and have witnessed my share of cruelty. I'm not sure I could pick up an instrument and kill somebody.
 - a) One of Moses faults is a hot temper.
 - b) Despite this fault, God can use him, as he can use any man.
 - c) Remember that Paul started off persecuting Christians before he got called by God. Think of the guilt of living with *that* the rest of your life!
8. Verse 13: When he went out the next day, there were two Hebrew men fighting. So he said to the one who was in the wrong, "Why are you striking your fellow Hebrew?" **2:14** And the man replied, "Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Are you planning to kill me just as you killed that Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, thinking, "Surely what I did has become known." **2:15** When Pharaoh heard about this event, he sought to kill Moses. So Moses fled from Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian; he settled by a certain well.
- a) Think about Moses' reputation among the Israelites at this time.
 - i) I'm sure Moses' parents spread the word that their *son* was "Prince of Egypt".
 - a) His parents were probably waiting for Moses to be #1 just to lead the people out of bondage.
 - (1) The Israelites *knew* the 400 years were probably about up.
 - (2) Many could have been looking to Moses for redemption.
 - b) So here Moses kills an Egyptian.
 - (1) You would think some of the Israelites might have seen this as a "start of something" and want to follow his lead, but Moses was rejected as a leader.
 - (2) It was only the second time that Moses was accepted as a leader!
 - (3) When you read Stephen's speech in Acts Chapter 7,
 - (a) It was the rejection of Moses *the first time* that Stephen used as "prophecy" to show how Jesus would be rejected *the first time*
 - (b) Stephen brought up several examples of rejection of God's appointed leader to show the prediction of the Jews rejecting Jesus as their Messiah.

- c) Pharaoh himself probably knew the boy was an Israelite.
 - (1) This is probably why Pharaoh was so unforgiving of Moses' action and wanted to kill Moses. Remember the Pharaoh feared an uprising. This is why he had the babies killed, to cut down the number of male children.
 - b) Moses may have been in training to be a great leader, but he was a lousy murderer.
 - i) He couldn't even cover up his own tracks!
 - ii) When Pharaoh found out, Moses had to make a run for it.
 - iii) At this point in his life, Moses *looked* Egyptian. Being #2 in command, I'm sure he could have made a good run out of the country without guards getting wind of his plans.
9. The next set of verses talks about Moses time in the Wilderness.
- a) From the time he fled from Egypt until the time God spoke to Moses in the burning bush was 40 years (Acts 7:30).
 - i) Stop and let that sink in for awhile: FORTY YEARS!
 - ii) If you've every been in the physical wilderness, its not something to wish on anyone. It takes skill and patience just to survive out there.
10. **Verse 16** Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came and began to draw water and fill the troughs in order to water their father's flock. **2:17** And then some shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses came up and defended them and then watered their flock. **2:18** So when they came home to Reuel their father, he asked, "Why have you come home so early today?" **2:19** And they said, "An Egyptian man rescued us from the hand of the shepherds, and he actually drew water for us and watered the flock!" **2:20** He said to his daughters, "So where is he? Why in the world did you leave him? Call him, so that he may eat a meal."
- a) My first thought reading this passage was, "Gee, if I had 7 daughters, I would be anxious to marry one off to the first guy who did a good deed for one of them!
 - b) If you wonder how Moses single-handedly beat up the shepherds, remember that Moses graduated from the top schools in Egypt. This included military training, and undobitly, hand to hand combat.
 - c) There is a little pun in verse 19. Moses' future wife pointed out that "he (Moses) drew water for us". Moses' name means to be "drawn out of the water".
 - i) The "type" is of a redeemer.
 - ii) A lot of commentators speculate that these verses are a "typology" of the Christian Church.
 - a) This family is "gentiles", i.e. non-Jews
 - b) Moses also became a "redeemer" to non-Jews!
 - d) The Midianite tribe draws their ancestry to Abraham, but through a different wife.
 - i) They probably believed in one God, the God of Abraham, but did not have the revelations that were given to Isaac and Jacob (and the rest of the Israelites).
 - e) One could talk a lot about the "wilderness". When one thinks of the "wilderness" (spiritually), one thinks of trials that one goes through.
 - i) The "wilderness" is something every veteran Christian goes through at some point in their lives.
 - a) It could be a time of loneliness after the loss of a loved one.
 - b) It could be a time of being in strange place with no friends around.
 - c) It could be a time of unemployment and cash is very tight.
 - ii) God puts us through these times for testing.

- iii) As one of my favorite teachers, Chuck Missler used to say... “Sometimes I think God stays up at night dreaming of new ways to test me and just say “Trust me, just trust me”.
- iv) Chuck Swindoll wrote a wonderful profile on Moses. One of the passages that just jumped out at me was his discussion of Moses & the wilderness. I’ll paraphrase one of my favorite passages:
 - a) When going through a “wilderness” experience, the main thing you have to do is get to a point of acceptance. Before God can use you, he needs to first of all, accept your situation. God wants you to praise Him *through* the wilderness experience. Once you can get to that point, then is when God can use you, when God is ready.
 - (1) God had Moses in the dessert for 40 years!
 - (2) God needed that much time with Moses as God expected Moses to lead several million people through the wilderness for another 40 years. The training was absolutely necessary.

11. Meanwhile, back to Moses’ future father-in-law and his matchmaking skills: Verse 21: Moses agreed to stay with the man. And he gave Zipporah, his daughter, to Moses. **2:22** When she bore a son, Moses called his name Gershom, for he said, "I have become a resident alien in a foreign land."

- a) One of the first things to point is that God always takes care of His chosen people.
 - i) Even though Moses lost everything by fleeing Egypt, God provides an occupation for him, all be it a lowly one working for his father in law.
 - ii) David gave a great comment on this principal: “I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. (Psalm 37:25 NIV)
 - iii) God may put you through trials, but He never, repeat NEVER forsakes you.
- b) Again in Hebrews it is repeated “God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5 NIV) You got to stop and think about Moses at this situation.
 - i) Here was Moses, #2 man for the most powerful nation on earth.
 - ii) Now he was a shepherd for his father-in-law!
 - a) Talk about humility.
 - b) In Chuck Swindoll’s book on Moses, he makes up a pretty funny story about Moses running into one of his old buddies from graduate school?
 - (1) “Moses, buddy, long time no see. Hey, guess what, Pharaoh put me in charge of such-and-such great task...So Moses, buddy, what have you been up to? Shepherding, oh, that’s cool, Pharaoh has you in charge of all the shepherds, eh? Oh, you’re just tending sheep for your father in law? Oh, ah well, see ya’ around sometime.”
 - c) I’m suspecting by this point in Moses life, he was so low, he would take anything to survive.
 - d) I’m sure Moses spent many a night in the dessert thinking about the Egyptian he murdered, thinking about why he left his old life, his parents, and was it all worth it.
 - (1) I’m sure he was questioning God’s role for his life.
 - (2) Did he make the right decision?

- e) We all can relate to this. Especially in our times in the “wilderness”
 - (1) We second-guess God. We second-guess our decisions. We wonder did we make the right decisions. How do I get out of this mess anyway?
 - (2) Again, Moses had to hit a point of acceptance of his new life.
 - (3) The old life was gone. Period. That is when God can use you!
12. Back to God and the Israelites: **2:23** It happened during that long period of time that the king of Egypt died. And the Israelites groaned because of the slave labor and cried out, and their desperate cry about their slave labor went up to God. **2:24** And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. **2:25** God saw the Israelites and God had compassion
- a) When you read verse 24 that God “remembered” his covenant (contract) with Abraham., Isaac & Jacob,
 - i) It’s wrong to picture God thinking “Oh dear, I forgot all about those guys, better check in on them”
 - ii) Verse 24 is from the human perspective. When we see God, react, we think, aha! *Now* God is reacting to our prayers & requests.
 - iii) From God’s perspective, He heard their groaning from the first time they cried out. So why did God wait 400 years to do something about their groaning?
 - a) First of all, He told their common ancestral father Abraham in Genesis Chapter 15 that *it was going* to be 400 years.
 - (1) I don’t know about you, but when I go through my “wilderness” sufferings, I wish God would give me a specific deadline. If I knew the suffering was going to last 10 minutes or 10 years, at least I could have a set of facts to put my faith in. With us, God simply says to “trust Him”, that he will work it out in his time.
 - (2) The question was were they praying to God to *keep* His promises, or were they wallowing in self-pity?
 - (a) That’s the difference between positive and negative prayer. It is one thing to reassure yourself by asking God to keep His promises that “He will never leave you nor forsake you”... It is another to say “woe-is-me”. God never answers the latter.
 - (b) Jesus tells us not to groan (worry).
 - b) So why did the Israelites have to wait 400 years for a redeemer?
 - (1) 1.It would take 400 years to become a “great nation”. For the population to grow from 70 to into the millions.
 - (2) 2. Since Jesus teaches that Moses spoke about Him (John 5:46), I would like to throw out another “theory”.
 - (a) There was “approximately” a 400-year gap between the last Old Testament Prophet and the time of Jesus.
 - (b) Did Jesus expect the religious leaders to see that as a Prophecy? A 400-year time gap of the redeemer?
 - (c) The Israelites were under similar slavery & hardship at the time of Jesus’ arrival.
 - (d) The Bible is not clear on this time gap being a prophecy. It is only speculation.

- b) So what are we to learn from these verses about Israel’s “groaning” and God “remembering”.
 - i) I can’t do better than the words of our Lord himself. Jesus commands us not to worry.
 - ii) Jesus said “So do not worry (a command!), saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:31-33 NIV emphasis added)
 - a) God made a promise to the Israelites and He kept it.
 - (1) God said he would make Israel a great nation.
 - (2) God said they would be there (with suffering) for 400 years.
 - (3) As we will see, God will bring them out as a great nation.
 - iii) How we as Christian brothers and sisters, forget that God makes the same promises to us.
 - a) God said he would make us a great nation (Colossians 3:12)
 - b) God said we would have trials and tribulations while on this earth (2 Timothy 3:12)
 - c) And God will come to redeem His people, just as He redeemed Israel.
 - d) The only major difference is we don’t know the day or hour. This was designed so that every generation, every believer could be on watch for the Day of the Return of our Lord.

13. Let’s Pray: Father, how grateful we are for the lessons you teach us through Israel. You choose Israel to be a special people to yourself. To use them as an example for our lives. To show them and us, your mighty handiwork, and help us to trust you more. Lord, you, and you alone see the end from the beginning. We don’t understand our wilderness experiences, but they were all designed by you to help us grow and mature as believers. Help us to accept our times in the wilderness, and teach us the lessons you want us to learn, and praise you during those difficult times for the glory you will show. We ask this in Jesus’ name, Amen.