

The Masterful Work of God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 April 2022

Preacher: Willard Lyons

[0 : 00] We're in chapter 1 of Exodus last week, and just to serve as a reminder now, we noticed and spoke a little bit last week about the various generations that had passed.

That we see in Exodus chapter 1. But anyway, new generations have come and gone, multitude of generations really.

Not just in Israel, but in Egypt. The rulers as well as the people of Egypt, along with the people of Israel. New generations have come and have gone.

And so that's the picture that we have here. As a result then, we see a new Pharaoh coming on the scene. And so that's kind of a picture we began with last week.

In verses 6 and 7, it says that Joseph died. And pictures the idea that the people of Israel multiplied. They were fruitful, increased abundantly, multiplied.

[1 : 20] And you notice, they evidently saw to it that all the floors in Egypt were very, very shiny. Because King James says they waxed exceedingly mighty.

That brilliant observation came to me while I was sitting there a minute ago. Yeah. Yeah. And the land was filled with them. So, we know from the study that Lee led us in that that was a reality.

They just got blessed in such a way while they were in Goshen that they just continued to increase and increase and multiply. But now, a new Pharaoh has come over Egypt.

And along with that, a new administration. You know, I'm sure that was the case every time a new ruler came on the scene. And as a result of that, they want to do their own thing, remember.

Don't really want to have anything to do with the previous administration and what they did, much less those hundreds of years earlier. So, the new Pharaoh that comes along, remember, either had never really taken time to study the history of their kingdom, their country, and didn't know much, if anything at all, about Joseph and all of the details of his life in Egypt, why he was there, what happened when he was there, and all of those things.

[2 : 48] And so, he didn't know about that. He didn't really care about that. He didn't want to know. And so, also with that, with his new administration then, things began, if they had not already begun to change, things started to change then, as far as how Israel, the seed of Jacob, fared.

And, you know, there was a time when they were favored, in a sense, that they were at ease and able to be well taken care of.

But now, that begins to change, because recognizing verses 8 and 9 again, new Pharaoh comes upon Egypt that did not know Joseph. He said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we.

And that's the supposition that really wasn't true, but it shows you the heart of the new Pharaoh. So, he says in verse 10, Come on, let's deal wisely.

And that's the idea of political craftiness, if you will. Let's deal with them in a crafty manner, lest they multiply. And when something happens and we go to war with someone else, they ally with that other country, and then they leave us.

[4 : 18] No doubt, no doubt, the new Pharaoh knows where the children of Israel came from, knew of their homeland, and may have even known what brought them there.

But, he didn't want to lose them. They are his subject. He's not worried about them overthrowing him. That's not his fear here. His fear is that they'll ally with another country if they go to war with another country, and thus they will be able to leave and then go back to Canaan where they came from.

They are currently his subjects, and he wants it to stay that way. And so, he says in verse 11, Let's set harsh taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens.

And so, after they started doing that, they built the two cities, treasure cities of Pithom and Ramses. Of course, another ulterior motive in this was so that their burden would become so heavy that their desire for liberty and freedom from Egypt would just vanish.

Because they would think it now an impossibility, it'll never happen, and so he'll be able to not worry about them leaving Egypt.

[5 : 45] Now, but look at verse 12 again. Remember what happened there as we lead up to where we left off last week. Amazing thing. Now, you tell me this is in God's hand at work here.

The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. All right? They were grieved, and the Egyptians were grieved then because of the children of Israel.

They were just astonished. They were dismayed at what was taking place here. You put them to work, and you just make their work so hard and difficult, but they just continued to thrive and grow and multiply.

Gives them the idea here there's a higher power at work here, and it's that higher power that brings fear to their own heart and lives. So, verses 13 and 14, the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor, made their lives bitter with hard bondage and mortar and brick and all manner of service in the field.

All their service wherein they made them serve was with rigor. Very difficult, hard oppression that takes place there. Now, again, they're still thriving here.

[7 : 03] They're still growing. So, in verses 15 and 16, remember what he does here. The king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Siphrah, and the name of the other was Pua.

And he said, When you do the office of the midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stool, if it be a son, then shall ye kill him.

But if it's a daughter, she shall live. Midwives. All right. You're going to assist these Hebrew ladies in their birth. When it comes time for that child to be born, you look closely in that moment.

You look closely. And when that baby comes out of that birth canal, you look immediately to see if it's a boy or a girl. If it's a boy, you put it to death.

If it's a girl, she can live. All right. You wipe away all, wipe out all the male children. And eventually, through the years, the growth of the nation is going to cease.

[8 : 12] That's the idea here. It's going to take a long time for that to happen. But nonetheless, that's something that was in his heart and in his mind here. But verse 17, remember what happened.

Now, they feared God.

They had a reverential fear of God. No doubt again, they knew what God had said in the beginning. That whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.

Said that to Noah. And so, they understood that. They knew that, no doubt. And in their fear of God, they kept these boy children alive.

Now, verse 18 and 19. This is kind of where we left off last week. We looked at it a little bit, but let's review it again. None of the male children of Israel were being put to death.

[9 : 16] So, what does the king do? And the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said unto them, Why have you done this thing?

And have saved the men's children alive? I'm surprised he just didn't put the midwives to death. Amen? That's amazing here. God's hand at work again. But why have you kept them alive?

And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian. Now, remember the reason being here. It lies in the fact that the Hebrew women were accustomed to hard work.

Hard labor. That was the case because of the harshness of the taskmasters of Egypt. Forced labor. Hard labor.

Difficult labor. And that was, you know, even if, you know, You don't show up for work and say, Well, I'm pregnant. I can't work. No. You work anyway.

[10 : 23] And so, you know, We mentioned last week that they say that it has been shown that a lot of women that are pregnant, that do hard, harsh labor, especially outside in the fresh air, during their pregnancy, that they don't have any pain when it comes to the time of labor.

Now, the women of Israel, all of them were in a state of slavery, men and women as well, obliged to work with the brick, with the mortar, the services in the field, all of those kind of things.

So, as a result, the picture here is, they were continuing to not only have children, but they had children quickly, and without much labor pains, if any at all.

So, what the midwives said was really true. Hey, the Hebrew women just are like the Egyptian women. Now, on the other hand, the Egyptian women never underwent hard labor.

I mean, as far as working. All right? They never worked in the field with the brick and the mortar and all of that. They were keepers at the home. Or not even keepers at the home.

[11 : 44] They just stayed home. Amen? And watched their soap operas. Yeah. As the camel, as the camel drove, right? Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Or as the pyramid stands. Yeah, whatever the case. Yeah. They sat at home. And consequently, their labors were hard, difficult, sometimes even dangerous.

And so, what the difference here? Boy, you know, you talk about the creative, crafty work of God here as a master craftsman.

Amen? Yeah. Making it so that physically, these Hebrew women would not be hindered in their giving birth because of the hard labor that they underwent.

What an amazing, creative work of God here that we see. And all through this, all through everything we see here, we see not only the hand of God, but we see the intricacy of the hand of God and the work of God in all of this while everything's going on.

[12 : 59] Verse 20, 21, Therefore, because of what the midwives have done, sparing the children, God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and waxed very mightily.

And it came to pass because the midwives feared God that He made them houses. Now, I don't know this to be the case or not, but I would almost imagine it would be.

Of course, you've got a big multitude of women populating the people of Israel. I don't know how many midwives there were. The two are mentioned, but remember we said they were more than likely the heads of the midwife association or whatever.

But whether or not that's the only work these ladies did, I'm kind of doubting that. Because if they didn't have a need to be a midwife at some certain point, they just didn't stay home.

They more than likely went to the fields, worked with the brick and the mortar and all of that like everybody else. Then when they were needed as a midwife, they did their work there.

[14 : 19] So as a result, their lives were tremendously busy. They were exhausted, no doubt. Didn't make very much money.

The children that they gave birth to would suffer as a result of that because a lot of times the midwives probably would not be able to nurse their children adequately.

financially, the income financially that they had was very meager. So it was difficult and hard to take care of their own kids.

So what does God do? He said He made them houses. He dealt with them in a very special and a very blessed way here.

Now, God takes care of them. He makes them houses, gave them families, preserved their posterity, and then because throughout what they did in spite of the command of the king and sparing the male children that were born, they helped build up the nation of Israel.

[15 : 34] So God in turn builds up their family. All right? God always blesses the faithful. Amen? Now, verse 22.

Pharaoh sees that that didn't work. So, still amazes me here that he didn't deal harshly with the midwives.

But anyway, verse 22. Pharaoh charged all his people. Now, not just the midwives, all of the people, saying, every son that is born, you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.

So he said, cast every son that is born, every male, in other words, male child that is born, cast it into the river, every daughter you shall save alive.

So, his violence becomes more and more brutal, if you will, in the methods that he does. Just throw him in the river. And of course, it's the Nile River, no doubt, that he's talking about here.

[16 : 45] Pharaoh has no concern at all that doing this would exterminate, eventually exterminate, the people of Israel. The Nile, there's another idea here, the Nile River seemed to be a sacred river to them.

Good possibility that what Pharaoh was going to do here now is to use these Hebrew male children, babies, that were thrown in the river, use them as a sacrifice to his God, so that in turn, his God will

enrich the land in its fertility and do marvelous things in that way and bring favor of his God to Pharaoh.

So, stands to reason he would do that if this is what he's going to do. And so, you see the brutality in that. Now, again, while all that's going on, something else is happening here.

We get into chapter 2, and that's what we begin to see. God is still at work here. And he starts out by speaking of a couple of people, a man and a woman, that happen to get married.

There's never a time when God is unaware of his people, their situation, their condition, their needs. He's always aware of that.

[18 : 23] And Scripture shows us and tells us that God is always eager to come to the aid of his people. All right? Now, we see that in chapter 2 in a very particular way here.

God is preparing something here. He's preparing while Pharaoh is attempting to do away and to murder all the male children. God is preparing for their deliverance.

And it's amazing the way that he does that. Because this edict that Pharaoh had issued to put all the male children of the Hebrews to death is going to be the means by which God prepares for the deliverance of the Hebrew people from Egypt.

Isn't it just like God to use something like that? Amen? I'll show you. You guys are going to do stupid silly stuff. I'll show you. I'll just take it and I'll use it for my glory.

And that's what he begins to do. So, in chapter 2, notice what happens here. Verse 1 and 2, there went a man of the house of Levi, or the tribe of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi, and the woman conceived and bare a son.

[19 : 46] And when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. So, a man of the house of Levi, his name was Amram, a Levitical family as we see, and the Levitical family of Kohath.

He took a wife that was a daughter of Levi, and her name was Jochebed. We see that in Numbers 26, 59. Now, in Exodus chapter 6, when we get there, verse 20, we'll realize that Moses was not the first child born to these two people, to this couple.

He wasn't the firstborn. His sister Miriam and Aaron were. In fact, Aaron was the firstborn, and then Miriam, and then came along Moses.

Verse 7 of our current chapter, we'll see, shows that when Moses was born, Miriam is not just a little child, she's older.

Don't know how old, quite, but she's older. Old enough to do some wise things here. And so, you see kind of the birth order there, and the thing that takes place here.

[21 : 10] Aaron and Miriam both were born before the edict of Pharaoh came along to destroy the male children of the Hebrews. Now, Moses is born, all right, to Jacobet, and she sees that he's what the Bible calls in the King James, a goodly child.

And when she saw that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. Anybody seen a goodly child?

Aren't they all goodly? I heard somebody say, I've never seen an ugly baby, but I say, I have. I've seen some, yeah, but thankfully they didn't stay that way, but nonetheless, nonetheless, she saw an outward countenance in this baby that she called beautiful, was beautiful to her.

And the idea was, so it kind of puts the two together here. Because he was a comely or beautiful looking child, she hid him three months to spare him from Pharaoh's edict, or the death that would come as a result if he was found.

Now, so what's the connection here? It's kind of the old, it's not a fable, I guess, but the old idea here, when that child is a beautiful child, it kind of speaks of a divine favor that's upon that child.

[22 : 49] child. So she's figuring, all right, because he's such a pretty baby, God's got something in store for him, all right? And we've all said that at some point, whether it be to our grandkids or somebody else's kids, just can't wait to see what God's going to do with that kid.

You know, well, it's kind of the same thing here, only when he's a baby. God's no doubt got something in store, something special he's going to do with and through him.

So it kind of shows you the mindset of Amrin and Jacobet, and that is that they're godly people.

They're always considering the things of God.

This baby's got to have favor of God upon him. So she hides him. You know, and it's natural for him to be hidden anyway, even if there wasn't any favor, because he's her little baby.

All right? But she does something different here. that kind of pictures some great things here. Again, you just, you just, you can try your dead level best to try to figure out the heart and mind of God and how he does things.

[24 : 04] And the more you think you've got it, the more you figure out you're wrong. But consider what God's doing here. He's already prepared the heart and mind of the mom and dad of Moses, before he's ever born, to consider the things of God, to make that a priority in their life.

And now their baby boy is born under an edict that he should die. But she believes the favor of God's upon him.

She's not going to let that happen. So what does she do here? Take note here. she hides him three months. All right? Now, Hebrews 11.23 says this, by faith, Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents.

Now, it's not the idea here that Moses had faith in three months, but his parents did. It was by faith that Moses was born when he was three months old, because they saw he was a proper child, and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

Now, why were they not afraid of the king's commandment? Why would they not be? I mean, you would think they'd be terrified.

[25 : 29] We've got a baby boy here. We love him. God's instilled that in them, a love for their baby. But he's a boy, and the king wants to put all the boys of the Hebrews to death.

Why were they not afraid of the king's commandment? Yeah, if that kid's got the favor of God upon him, we don't have to worry about the king's commandment. Yeah, God's going to take care of him. And that faith ushers through when she builds that little ark out of bulrushes that we'll see here in a second. All right? So, she hides him for three months.

She keeps him at home. How do you keep a, well, how do you keep a baby from crying for three months? But I guess when they cry, you can't tell whether it's a boy or girl, can you?

Unless it's Ted. All right. So, they exercise, they hid that child, not afraid of the king's commandment.

[26 : 32] Now, that faith that they demonstrated here was not a faith that came as a result of something God said to them. It was a faith that was exercised in their reality that they believed God would take care of everything.

and so, it was a lack of fear. Faith that was issued from a lack of fear of the king's commandment. And faith in that fact that God had instilled within them that love and nurture for their baby because he was their child.

And that, of course, that faith was strengthened when they saw the countenance of the child and thought it was something special. people. And so, in spite of all that king had determined to do, they felt it was an impossibility for anything to happen to that baby boy.

Alright? So, remember what she does here. Has confidence in the fact that she can now, after three months, when she can no longer hide him, after he's old enough, she has to do something.

And she has confidence in what she's doing here. That's an amazing thing to me. What does she do? Verse 3 and 4, when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, dabbled it or daubed it with slime and pitch, and put the child therein, and she laid it in the flags or in the reeds by the river's bank, and his sister stood afar off to wit what would be done to him.

[28 : 23] Now, she takes an ark of bulrushes, and I got to thinking about that the other day. You know, bulrushes, small finger-sized reeds, kind of triangle-shaped, get up to about ten foot tall, highly used, highly found in Egypt.

They stripped that outer skin off of that, known as papyrus, made for a lot of things, make sail for boats and sheets and everything else, but mostly for paper.

But then they would take some of it, and she particularly used this to form what the scripture calls an ark. all right?

And by the way, the center portion of that reed, they say they use for food. They can eat it. All right? And so it's a well-used plant.

It's kind of like an emu. when I was pastoring out at New Harmony, had a family there that had an emu farm.

[29 : 35] He started that when that began a big business. And so I went out to see that one time, and they showed me around there, and they were telling me, there's not one aspect of this bird that is not used.

now, everything, the manure, great fertilizer, the oil from the emu, you realize, it's not medicinal, but it helps pain and things like that.

And all, you know, every part, you can eat them, they're delicious, they say. They use the feathers for various things. So everything about that bird, you know, is consumed. in some way.

Same thing with the reed, the bulrush. All right? Now, she forms what the scripture calls an ark. Isn't that amazing? The scripture uses the word ark, no doubt, to recall what happened in the day of who?

Noah. Okay? When Noah is spared, God tells him to build an ark. Same word. All right? Because God's going to use that ark to deliver Noah and his family and the animals.

[30 : 54] Jochebed makes an ark in which God is going to deliver Moses from death.

Yeah, amazing to me. Pitched with pitch just like the ark was. Pitch and slime is asphalt and tar. The asphalt is used to help hold the reeds together.

That had to be a heavy dude. Amen? Not the baby, but the ark. Yeah. And then the pitch, or the tar rather, would keep it and make it water tight.

So she makes this ark, however big it was, and puts the baby in. I've got to believe, what I was thinking today was that she no doubt, you didn't do this overnight.

It takes a while for that asphalt and that tar to dry, to gather it all up, to shape it, form it, and do it. So it took a number of days, no doubt, to do that. So she'd go down to the river, and she'd get these bulrushes, take them home, which probably was not an unusual thing to see.

[32 : 05] but she was going to form a boat out of this thing. All right? You ever wondered what people would think about her like they thought about Noah?

Noah building this big old boat, now she's building this smaller boat, but it's a boat. What are you going to do with that? Oh, we'll see. But she builds that and then takes it down to the river, comes back, gets the baby or maybe the daughter, maybe Miriam's got the baby, and she puts the baby in the ark, closes it up, tightens the lid, sets it in the river, and lets it float, probably waves goodbye, with never a thought of ever being able to see him again as a child, forever.

But I think it interesting that this older sister of Moses. Miriam, no doubt went with her mother, and she's kind of hiding back behind the bulrushes, because she wants to see that thing float down the river, and see what happens to the ark that the baby brother's in.

Now, I don't know how wide was the Nile River at that juncture. Because this was a point where it was customary for her, the king's daughter, to go and bathe.

Some conjecture was by some, that wasn't a bath that she was taking, she was going to wash clothes. King's daughter doesn't wash clothes. Yeah.

[33 : 52] So, it was a common place, people commonly knew that that's where she went, so that's, you know, she wanted to have it close proximity, thinking that surely somebody will see it and do something.

That was her hope. That was her hope. Now, you know, today the Egyptians would think it ridiculous for the idea of the king's daughter to wash in the Nile River.

That was for the commoners, the lower class of women today. But back then it was quite acceptable because it was thought that there was a medicinal aspect to the Nile River.

Alright? It's kind of like the sulfur water. Amen? Anybody ever had a drink of sulfur water?

Claremore when we lived there, of course, they were still doing it.

The old Will Rogers Hotel. Up on fourth floor or something there were sulfur baths. People from all over the country or the places of the world would come there just to take a sulfur bath because it would help them physically.

[35 : 00] Arthritis or whatever. Smelled the high heaven, but yeah, I'm not going to bore you with the story of my first drink of sulfur water. I didn't take a bath. No, that's not.

But I didn't know what sulfur water. I never heard of sulfur water in my life. My first wife and I, before we got married, we were going on a picnic in sulfur, Oklahoma, of all places, from Ada, and have a picnic.

And all the girls made up fried chicken and potato salad and baked beans and all of that. And we got there and we sat down at the table and ate. And then we started walking around.

I see this pavilion here with all these water fountains. I mean, there were a dozen at least water fountains, if not two dozen water fountains, in this place. I said, all right.

I said, what's that? He said, that's sulfur water. You know, what came to my mind, that wasn't real brilliant back then, what came to my mind was spring water.

[36 : 02] You know, like cold spring water, oh, that'd be so good. Yeah. So I, all right. And they just stood there and looked at me, watched me, and they didn't say a thing. I walked over there and I turned that spigot on and I whoa, the smell at first.

I thought, what's wrong with this stuff? And they just, oh, can't believe you did that. On a full stomach, no less. I was miserable the rest of the day.

But, so I figured out it wasn't spring water, it was sulfur water. So now I knew. Amen. And I didn't have the aches and pains then that I do now, so I didn't know if it helped.

But anyway, how did I get off on that? She wanted to see what took place and what happened here. Now, look at verse 5.

When the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river, her maidens walked along by the river's side. And when she saw the ark among the flags or the reeds, she sent her maid to fetch it.

[37 : 20] So no doubt it was off a little way from the bank. But she's walking there along the bank and she sees this thing floating in the water.

What in the world is it? She has no clue. No clue at all what's in that basket or that edifice that's flowing down the river here.

All right? And so she sends her maidens to go and fetch that thing. All right? Now, verse 6 and 8.

By the way, Pharaoh's daughter's name is Thermotheus or Thermaltheus M-O-U-T-H Thermaltheus Hebrew tradition called her Maris.

All right? I don't know why. Anyway, verse 6 through 8. When she had opened it, so they bring that up and they set it down and she opens it.

[38 : 19] Has no clue what's in this thing. When she opens it, she saw the child and behold the baby wept. Now, I don't know what the deal is.

It's not really important but I can bring it up anyway. That must have been a pretty thick edifice to be soundproof. Because she didn't hear the baby crying, just she opened the lid.

She opened that and notice what it says here. She opened it, she saw the child and behold the baby wept and she had compassion on him. And who wouldn't?

Amen? You see this little precious gorgeous baby boy in this basket that had been floating down the river. somebody's gotten rid of it. All right?

You know, like we would think somebody's dumped a dog. No, probably not. But when she saw the baby she had compassion on him. The word compassion is a good word.

[39 : 22] We're familiar with it. Literally it speaks of an emotional response which results or may result in action to remove its object from impending difficulty.

mercy. What's another word that we know that has that same definition? That's what the word mercy means.

Mercy, biblically speaking, is that same idea. It's seeing something and seeing it as being something very, very pitiful. Something very pitiful.

but it gives a sense when you see the pitness, is that a word? Pittiness? The pitiful condition of what you're looking at, it stirs within you a desire and a need to do something about the condition and change it.

That's what mercy is. And so that's what she had here. Compassion just like mercy. she sees it, she is concerned about the state that she finds that baby in, and she wants to change its condition.

[40 : 38] She has compassion. Now, what does she say? How she knows this, I don't know. Got some ideas. She had compassion on him and said, this is one of the Hebrews' children.

It's a Hebrew baby. How did she know that? I'm kind of guessing maybe it was because of what blankets the baby was wrapped in and so forth. You know, customarily you could tell from what country or nationality or whatever by some of those things what the baby was wearing, all of that. But she recognized it's a Hebrew baby. Some of the, one of the Hebrews has put that baby. And you've got to believe, I mean, she had to believe that whatever, whoever the mother was took pains to take care of that baby.

Because of the ark that she built for it. I mean, very intricately put together, placed, no doubt, comfortably in that basket to float it down the river to see what would happen.

now, look what happens. Here's, remember, Miriam is hiding behind the reeds looking at all this, wondering what's going to happen.

[42 : 07] Then said his sister, Miriam, to Pharaoh's daughter, shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you?

Amen. Oh, of all things, how could this happen? Pharaoh's daughter said to her, go, and the maid went and called the child's mother.

Amen. Yeah, tremendous picture here. Oh, God's, in all of this, remember, God is preparing for the deliverance of his people from the bondage, severe bondage, of Egypt.

Yeah. And this is how he's doing that. Good picture of grace. Amen. Yeah. Grace at work, intricately.

Yeah. In the picture of Moses and his mom and his sister and all that transpired and all of that. Look closely at what's going on around us and in the world and see the hand of God at work behind the scenes.

[43 : 24] Amazing. Let's pray. Father, thank you again for your love and grace, your goodness and kindness to us. Thank you, Father, for your love for us that has provided such an intricate salvation and as we see even the beginning of that for us in the passages that we've been looking at.

So, Father, thank you for your wisdom and your goodness and your faithfulness in meeting the needs of a lost creation.

So, Father, thank you for that. Thank you for our time together tonight and now I ask that you just continue to enable us to be amazed and to be able to watch closely at what you're doing in and around our lives and we'll thank you and praise you for it now in Jesus' name.

Amen.