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## A Man of the House of Levi Married a Levite Woman

### 2: 1-10

A man of the house of Levi Married a Levite woman DIG: Why did Moses' parents give him up for adoption? What does that say about them? What was the importance of Moses' mother being able to nurse him until he was five? Where did Moses get his name?

**REFLECT:** How has race, riches, or your faith shaped you for God's purposes? Where in your life are you looking for circumstances to favor you? Could you trust the Lord with your child?

**Ahmose** died and was succeeded by **his son, Amenhotep I**, who was later honored for founding the institution responsible for building the royal tombs, although **he himself** was not buried in the Valley of the Kings. **He** was the second **Pharaoh** of the Eighteenth Dynasty. After **his** death, **Thutmose I** became the third **Pharaoh** of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

**Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman (2:1).** The names of **Moses' parents** are not given here but in **6:20** we learn that **his father** was **Amram** and **his mother** was **Jochebed**, **Amram's** aunt. This **Levite** couple had two older children: **Aaron (6:20)** and **Miriam (15:20)**.<sup>16</sup> It was significant that **Moses** was born **a Levite**. **He** descended from the Kohathite division of the Levites (see the commentary on **the Life of David, to see link click Et - The Kothathites**). This group was specially set apart at Mount Sinai to carry the holy objects of the Tabernacle upon their shoulders when **the Israelites** marched in the desert, especially the ark of the Covenant (**Numbers 7:9**). Thus, **his** genealogy was very special to the Hebrew reader; it pointed to the fact that **Moses** was being set apart for **God's** special service, just as **his** tribe would later be set apart.<sup>17</sup> Today the Muslims teach that **Moses** was not a **Jew** because **he** descended from **the house of Levi** rather than **the house of Judah**, but we know that all 12 tribes from Jacob make up the Jewish nation.

**And Jochebed became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a beautiful and healthy child, she then hid him for three months** because of the decree given by **Thutmose I (2:2)**. **She** recognized **that he was going to be no ordinary child** and that **God** had a special future for **him (Acts 7:20)**, but after **three months she** couldn't **hide him any longer**, so **she** tried something different.



**JOCHEBED**

**But when Jochebed could not hide him any longer, she and her husband defied Pharaoh's decree and hid the baby (Acts 7:17-20). She got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch (2:3a).** The **Hebrew** word for **basket** used here is the same word translated **ark** in **Genesis 6:14**. **It was coated with tar and pitch** just like Noah's **ark** was and **it** was built for floating, just like Noah's **ark**. The **Hebrew** word for pitch is *kafar*, and translated *atonement* elsewhere in the Bible. Because all **Hebrew** boys were supposed to be drowned in **the Nile**, placing **him among the reeds along the bank of the Nile** would seem to be a curious thing to do **(2:3b)**. However, it was really an act of **faith**. The Bible teaches us that **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). They** had to trust **God** with **their child**. More watchful than **Miriam's, His eyes neither sleep nor slumber (Psalm 121:1-8)**.

**God's** protection is clearly seen in **His** care of **the infant**, but there is a human element also. **Jochebed** told **Miriam, Moses' sister**, to stand **at a distance to see what would happen to him (2:4)**. This was also an act of **faith**. **Jochebed** wanted to make sure that **her son** was discovered, so **she** placed **him** in a location where the royal court bathed frequently.



**Pharaoh's daughter Hatshepsut** was about twenty when **she went down to the Nile to bathe** in a secluded spot. **Her attendants were walking along the riverbank with her.** There was **the ark.** **She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it (2:5).** The phrase, **among the reeds,** is the **Egyptian word *sup*,** which is used later in the proper name *yam sup* for the **Red Sea** in **13:19.**

**She opened the papyrus basket and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. God** brought together two things that **He** has made, a baby's cry and a woman's heart. **Pharaoh's daughter** could not pass this little **baby** by.<sup>18</sup> **She** said to **her** attendants: **This is one of the Hebrew babies. Then Moses' sister Miriam asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"** Her offer was not out of place because **Pharaoh** had murdered so many of the **Hebrew babies** that there were many **Hebrew women** able to nurse such a **child.** **She** answered: **Yes, go. And the girl went and got the baby's mother (2:6-8).**

**The rabbis teach that the reason Pharaoh's daughter recognized the baby to be Hebrew was because she had converted to Judaism. They believe the reason she went into the Nile alone was for Jewish purification purposes, a mikveh, not for a normal bath. They take this theory a bit further and say that she had some contact with Jews and especially with Jewish babies. This is also their explanation of why she decided to keep this baby and bring him to the palace and raise him as her own child. By taking this baby, keeping him alive, bringing him into the palace of the great Pharaoh, and raising the boy as her own son, she broke her own father's edict to kill every Hebrew male child.**

**Hatshepsut** said: **Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you. So Jochebed took her own baby and nursed him (2:9).** The royal decree of killing the **Hebrew boy** was no longer applicable because **he** had the royal

protection of **Hatshepsut herself**. In the past, **Job** spoke to Eliphaz about **ADONAI**, saying: **He catches the wise in their craftiness (Job 5:13)**, and that's what happened with **Moses**. **Pharaoh's** own scheme to kill **the Hebrew** boys was not only thwarted, but **his** enemy was brought into **his** own household to become a member of **his** family! So both Noah and **Moses** underwent watery trials in which they both survive and become deliverers of **God's** people.<sup>19</sup>

**When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son.** The normal age of weaning a boy in ancient **Egypt** was five. Our self-image is set by the age of five; therefore, by the time **Jochebed took him to Pharaoh's daughter** to become **her son**, **his** Jewishness was already part of **his** personality. **He** would never forget **his** roots. It would be the basis of a life changing decision **he** would make thirty-five years later (**2:11-12**). Hence, after being weaned for five years **he** was legally adopted by **Hatshepsut**, who was probably in **her** mid-twenties, to be raised as **her son** in the royal court of **Egypt**.

**She named him** the family name of *mose* or **Moses** (which means *son of*), saying: **I drew him out of the water (2:10)**. Therefore, **Moses** was adopted and given the **Egyptian** name *mose*, the typical name of the Eighteenth Dynasty. There was *Ah-mose (son of Ah)*, *Ka-mose (son of Ka)* and *Thut-mose (son of Thut)*. Every name before the word *mose* was the beginning of an **Egyptian** deity. That probably meant that originally **Moses** had a longer name, beginning with the name of an **Egyptian** deity and ending with *mose*. But later, when **he** rejected **his** upbringing in the culture and religion of **Egypt**, **he** probably dropped the first part of **his** name because **he** wouldn't allow **himself** to be named after an **Egyptian** god (**Heb 11:24-25**).

Historians have called **Hatshepsut's** story the **Thutmose family feud** because it reads like a soap opera. **Thutmose I** had four children by **his** great royal wife; however, all died in childhood except the little princess **Hatshepsut**. **He** also had a **son**, **Thutmose II**, by a woman in **his** harem. Later, when **Thutmose I** found **himself** nearing death, **he** married **his daughter Hatshepsut**, then about thirty, to **her** younger half-brother **Thutmose II**, who became the fourth **Pharaoh** of the Eighteenth Dynasty. It was the custom for royal brothers and sisters to marry each other to preserve the royal line. **She** and **her** sickly **husband** had two daughters, but just like **his father** before **him**, **Thutmose II** had a **son** from **his** harem. Therefore, when **Hatshepsut's husband, Thutmose II**, died prematurely, this **son** of the harem, **Thutmose III**, officially became **Pharaoh** of **Egypt** when **he** was only nine years old. What a mess!

Once again, to keep the royal line pure, this boy **Pharaoh** was married to one of **Hatshepsut's** daughters. The situation had become unmanageable. **Hatshepsut herself**, now about thirty-eight, was named to a group of regents to govern **Egypt** until **Thutmose III** was old enough to assume the awesome responsibilities of the **Pharaoh of Egypt**. **He** was the fifth Pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

Theoretically, **Hatshepsut** should have faded into the background. And indeed, for the next few years that is just what **she** seemed to do. **She** must have walked submissively behind the boy-**Pharaoh** on all state occasions. And **she** deferred in every way to **her** daughter, the Queen. But **she** resented the young **Pharaoh**, **her** half-nephew. **Her** father had been the mighty **Thutmose I**. **Her** great grandfather, **Ahmose** the Liberator, had driven the dreaded Hyksos from Egypt. **She** believed that the purest royal blood flowed through **her** veins, whereas the boy **Pharaoh**, **Thutmose III**, was virtually a commoner. **He** was the **son** of a harem nobody and **Hatshepsut's** husband, was himself only half royal. **Thutmose III** could only claim one-quarter royal blood. **She** must have believed with all **her** heart that despite the fact that **she** was a woman, **she** alone, by birth and by blood, was entitled to the throne.



Therefore, early in **the** young **king's** rule, **Hatshepsut** usurped **her** half-nephew's position. **She** must have donned the most sacred of **Pharaoh's** official costumes, a ceremonial dress that went back to the predynastic kings of **Egypt**. Wearing only a short kilt with a lion's tail hanging to the ground in the back, carrying the royal scepter in one hand and the sacred crook in the other, and with a square-cut false beard attached to **her** chin, **Hatshepsut** mounted the throne and proclaimed **herself Pharaoh of Egypt** and ruled it for the next twenty-one years. **She** was not only one of the most remarkable women in the history of **Egypt**, but also one of the most remarkable women in the history of the world. **Her** temple dedicated to Amun-Re at Dayr al-Bahri is especially impressive. It included **her** own funeral monuments as well as chapels dedicated to Osiris, Re, Hathor, Anubis and her royal ancestors.

The moment **she** seized the throne, **Hatshepsut** must have banished **Thutmose III** to the vast and gloomy interior of the temple of Amon. There **his** head would have been shaved and **his** royal garments exchanged for a simple linen kilt. **He** was put into training as an apprentice priest, the court saw **him** no more, and **his** name was never mentioned in **Hatshepsut's** presence again.<sup>20</sup>

At that time **Moses** was born, and **he was no ordinary child. For three months he** was cared for in **his father's** house. When **he** was placed outside, **Pharaoh's daughter** took **him** and after five years of being nursed by **his own mother**, **Moses** was brought up as **Hatshepsut's** own **son**. Between **verses 10** and **11** there is a time gap of about thirty-five years. These thirty-five years represent the period of **Moses'** training when **he was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action (Acts 7:22)**. But during the years of **his** ouster, **Thutmose III** never forgot and **he** never forgave. **He** just bided **his** time, and waited for the opportunity to take revenge on **Hatshepsut** - or anyone associated with **her**.