

Moses in the bulrushes (Exodus 1 and 2)

Before we start learning about Moses, let's look at what had been happening in history. A long time after Joseph lived, God's people, the Israelites, were still living in Egypt and now there were lots and lots of them. A new Pharaoh was in charge of Egypt and he didn't know how Joseph, an Israelite, had helped Egypt with their food problem years before.

This Pharaoh called his assistants together and said, "The people of Israel are too many! They are too strong for us. We must make plans against them. Make them work very hard, then they will be too tired to cause problems".

So the people of Egypt made God's people work very, very hard. They worked hard in the cities and the fields without rest and their lives were hard and the Egyptians were cruel to them.

But God's people continued to grow in number and the people of Egypt became even more frightened.

Pharaoh then called the Egyptian midwives together; they were the people who helped the mothers when their babies were born. He said to them, "When the babies are born watch! If the baby is a girl, let the baby live, but if it's a boy, kill him!"

What a dreadful thing to say. He was a very, very wicked man.

But the midwives knew God would be angry so they let all the babies live. They didn't kill a single one.

So God's people continued to grow in number and the people of Egypt became even more frightened.

The Pharaoh was very angry now. He spoke to all the Egyptians and said, "All Israelite baby boys who are born must be thrown into the Nile River." The Israelites must have been very frightened. Was God looking after them or had he forgotten them?

God had a plan and this is what happened.

One day an Israelite woman called Jochebed gave birth to a baby boy. She and her husband, Amram, hid him for three months. Jochebed and Amram and their older children Miriam and Aaron looked at the baby and were sad. They didn't want Pharaoh to find out about the baby boy. But as he grew bigger and louder they knew they had to do something. So Jochebed got a basket made of reeds and covered it with tar, so that it would not let water in. She and Miriam went to the River Nile and put the baby in the basket among the tall grass at the edge of the river and Miriam hid nearby and watched to see what happened.

While Miriam was watching, Pharaoh's daughter came to swim in the river. The princess saw the basket and opened it and there was a little baby boy crying. She felt very sorry for the baby.

Miriam, who was hiding, came out from her hiding place and asked, "Would you like me to find someone to care for him, for you?"

The princess said, "Yes please".

So Miriam went to get her mother and the princess asked her to look after the baby, her own baby, though the princess didn't know that, of course. When the baby was a little boy the princess took him and looked after him at the palace. She called him Moses.

God had saved Moses from being killed.

Would God's people survive? Would God keep his promise to make a great nation? How would that one little boy, Moses, help?

Well, many years later, when Moses grew up, he would lead God's people out of Egypt and they would continue their journey with God as their king. They had gone into Egypt as a family, Jacob's family – his children and grandchildren. They would leave Egypt over 400 years later as a huge group of people, a whole nation and God would choose Moses to lead them out. God would speak to Moses and give him instructions. God would rescue his people and he would choose Moses to be his messenger.