

God's Providence and Promises

Birth of Moses

Exodus Chapter 2

Good morning, saints.

INTRODUCTION TO GOD'S PROVIDENCE

SLIDE: TITLE PAGE – THE BIRTH OF THE DELIVERER

We're continuing on today in the Book of Exodus. As you know, Exodus contains stories of tremendous miracles: the 10 plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, manna from the sky and so on. Exodus is a book full of miracles, and there's a comfort there. We see plainly demonstrated that God is the ultimate power on Earth.

But... how do we understand the times when the miracles don't come? The Israelites were stuck in cruel slavery for hundreds of years – not just for a day or for a year, but hundreds of years. And what are we to think when God is silent during times when WE are suffering?

How do we interpret events that happen around us? For example, we had the presidential election last Tuesday – Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton.

- One news commentator described the results of the election as: *“A dream came true for millions of Americans, a nightmare for millions of others.”*¹

Close to half the country breathed a sigh of relief and said *“Thank God!”* The other half were shocked into disbelief – *“Oh my God, how could this happen?”*

- And – had the election result had gone the opposite way, the reactions of the two groups would be the reverse – but just as strong.
- One group saw the result as God exercising His influence... the other saw it as God sitting on the sideline.

This is a good example of how people – how WE – interpret events.

- Positive outcomes are seen as God exercising influence;
- Negative outcomes are seen as His remaining neutral and letting evil take its course.

Now – I hadn’t planned it this way, but the topic for today is:

click: PROVIDENCE

- THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

We've been going through the Book of Exodus chapter by chapter. Exodus chapter 2 and the Birth of Moses is up next. It has been in development for five weeks, and I'm speaking today because it's just way the Sunday schedule worked out. To me, it is intriguing that the Exodus 2 and the Birth of the Deliverer, the theme of which is the Providence of God – it for today – it's almost as if it was planned.

I want to start by reading from the lyrics from a song Angie played several weeks ago – Trust in You by Lauren Daigle:

*Truth is, You know what tomorrow brings
There's not a day ahead You have not seen
So, in all things be my life and breath
I want what You want Lord and nothing less
When You don't move the mountains I'm needing You to move
When You don't part the waters I wish I could walk through
When You don't give the answers as I cry out to You
I will trust, I will trust, I will trust in You!*

Trust. Trust when miracles don't happen, trust when the sea doesn't split, trust when God is silent. But... **WHY** can we trust?

- Because the ongoing Providence of God assures us that He is at always working out His Plan, both for His Glory and our good – even when it seems that He is absent.

Ok – the Providence of God is the theme today, and it centers around the Birth of Moses. Everyone loves a good origin story – how did Anakin Skywalker become Darth Vader? Who was Peter Parker before Spiderman? Who was Bruce Wayne before he became Batman? Who was Moses before God appointed him as leader?

- How did Moses *become* Moses?

We'll have a peek today at Moses before he was Moses.

SLIDE: WE KNOW

And we'll also see why the Apostle Paul could proclaim:
“And we **know** that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose”
(Romans 8:28).

Now one of the things that jumps out about this verse is the **strength of conviction** that Paul expresses here. It wasn't that he said, “*I believe – or I pray – that things will work out according to the will of God.*” But he says, “For we KNOW that all things work together for good to those who love God, and are the called according to His purpose.”

- It was a certainty! And that's a theme throughout the Bible -> THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD WORKING THINGS OUT, OFTENTIMES BEHIND THE SCENES

SLIDE: GOD'S PROVIDENCE AND PROMISES.

Grace makes the Promise and
Providence makes the Payment.

{Repeat}... *Grace makes the Promise and Providence makes the Payment.*

SLIDE: PROVIDENCE

I recognize that when we hear the term '*providence*' today, most people think of the capital City of Rhode Island. By the way, I was born in Providence RI, so you could say that '*providence*' is the reason I'm here.

- This is a picture that show the monument erected at my birth site. Some reason it looks like a donut?

At one time, the word *providence* meant more than just the capital of the smallest state in the union. But today, we live in a time that views all events in nature are ruled by independent natural forces. The universe runs by itself, and things just happen by chance. Who would name a city "Providence" today? The word itself sounds old fashioned and archaic.

But there was a time in America where the term "*providence*" was commonly used and understood. It was important to people. It signified God's intimate concern and care for His people. It meant that God ruled the universe, so everything that happened was a part of His Plan.

I want to illustrate this by two examples from American history:

SLIDE: Washington

In 1755, George Washington wrote to his brother John about surviving the disastrous battle around present-day Pittsburgh between the British led by General Braddock and the French and Indian forces. Washington was 23 at the time and was serving as a colonial volunteer to Braddock's staff. He wrote about God's providence during the battle:

*“By the all-powerful **dispensations of Providence**, I have been protected beyond all human probability and expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, altho' death was levelling my companions on every side.”²*

The British and colonial militia were ambushed and, because the General Braddock wanted to fight in traditional European style – line up in the open shoulder to shoulder – they were badly mauled by Indians firing from behind trees. Over 720 were killed. Washington rode back and forth thru the battle relaying the General's orders. **Every OTHER mounted officer was slain EXCEPT for Washington, who never was hit by a bullet.** One survivor of the battle stated: *“I expected every moment to see him fall. Nothing but the superintending care of Providence could have saved him.”*

Indians later testified that they had singled him out, but their bullets had no effect on him. **In fact, an Indian chieftain**

who was in the battle personally met Washington years later and told him that he ordered his warriors to specifically target him during the battle, but he eventually ordered them not to shoot at him after he realized that Washington was being protected by God.³

- ✚ This account of God's miraculous care of Washington and of Washington's open gratitude for God's Divine intervention – God's Providence – could be found in virtually all student textbooks UNTIL 1934; today, few have ever heard it.

SLIDE: LINCOLN

My second example is taken from Lincoln's speech at his 2nd Inaugural Address (1865). Lincoln wrote:

"The Almighty has His own purposes. (then he quotes Jesus:) "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it **must needs be** that offenses come, **but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.**"*

Lincoln is referring to the reality that the evil wrongdoings that come to mankind are somehow **necessary parts** of God's Plan, but those involved therein will not escape Divine punishment. He continues...

* Matthew 18:7

SLIDE: LINCOLN #2

*If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, **in the providence of God**, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, **He now wills to remove**, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him?”⁴*

There is something very significant in what Lincoln said here. Lincoln recognized that *even slavery* – which was an evil creation of **mankind**, not God – is used by God in part of a grand plan. But those engaged in it are **not excused** from God’s punishment. They inflict a great evil upon people made in His image. The APPOINTED TIME – said Lincoln – had now come and God would stop the evil of slavery and impose a severe punishment.

We tend (and I’m including myself here) – we tend to think that the term ‘Providence of God’ applies to those times when God rides to the rescue us from a bad situation. Lincoln realized that both God’s RESCUE as well as the SITUATION ITSELF was in the Providence of God.

Remember when Jesus was standing before Pilate and was remaining silent: John 19:10–11

So Pilate said to Him, 'Do You refuse to speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You and authority to crucify You?' Jesus answered: 'You would have no power over me if it were not **given to you** from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.'

The power to order Jesus' death had been GIVEN to Pilate from above. This fact reveals that the Providence of God encompasses what we see as negative situations.

Why did Lincoln have such a vital belief in Divine Providence governing both the good and the evil BACK THEN but WE seldom do TODAY? As recently as the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, the great Negro spirituals that came out of slavery were being sung: *"We shall overcome"* and *"This little light of mine"*.⁵

But, the idea of divine providence has all but disappeared from our culture after three generations of intensive humanistic education. The conscious and militant exclusions of God and scriptural morality from all aspects of our educational system has taken its toll. A crucial part of one's worldview is the question of how God relates to this planet, that is, how God relates to mankind and nature. Once God's active participation is removed from the equation, people

unsurprisingly begin to accept the worldview that everything that happens out there usually happens according to natural causes. And nature is seen as functions INDEPENDENTLY of any rule or governance of God.

- And we in the Church are not immune to this worldview at least at times.

Oh – we believe that God is real all right, but we sometimes tend to see Him as a spectator up in heaven looking down – sure, He is rooting us on and cheerleading for us, but somehow He *seems* to usually have a “HANDS-OFF” POSTURE.

We see many events as happening by coincidence – by chance – and God has to *scramble* to respond. I personally think that this “hands-off” presumption about God’s Providence is one of the reasons that people think that Jesus’ 2nd Coming will be when **GOD WILL TAKE BACK CONTROL**.

- ✚ Now – I also say *‘Maranatha – come quickly Lord Jesus’* – I also long for the 2nd Coming of Christ – but the **assumption that is inherent in the position that God will THEN take back control** is that God is **not NOW** in control.
- ✚ But, if He is not NOW in control, then we’re all in trouble.

✚ *“If there is one single molecule in this universe running around loose, totally free of God’s sovereignty, then we have no guarantee that a single promise of God will ever be fulfilled.”⁶*

In reality, Chance does not exist. In a universe governed by God, **there ARE no chance events.** Chance is merely a word we use to describe mathematical possibilities. Chance is not an entity that can influence reality. Chance is not a thing. It is nothing.

There is a crucial difference between the Providence of God and fortune, fate, or luck. The key to this difference is found in the personal character of God.

- Fortune is blind while God is all-seeing.
- Fate is impersonal while God is a Father.
- Luck is dumb while God can speak.

All is brought to pass by the invisible hand of Providence.”⁷

OK – before we get into the story of Moses’ birth, let’s define what we mean by “Providence”.

SLIDE: PROVIDENCE

We get the word “*provide*” from the word “*providence*”.

The **FIRST** time we find the word *provide* in the Old Testament is in the narrative of Abraham’s offering of Isaac upon the altar.⁸ God called Abraham to take his son Isaac, whom he loved, to a mountain and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham agonized with God’s command but decided to obey. As he journeyed up Mt. Moriah, Isaac – who was carrying the wood – asks: “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” (Gen. 22:7). Abraham replied, “God **will provide** for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son” (v. 8).

Click: The word “*providence*” comes from the word “*providere*” which has two parts: “pro” (Latin: “forward,” “on behalf of”)⁹ **click>** and “vidi” (Latin: “to see”).¹⁰

- ‘providere’ is to “look ahead, prepare, supply, act with foresight”¹¹

Just as Abraham is about to plunge the knife, God stops him and provides a ram that is – all of a sudden – caught in a bush behind Abraham.

SLIDE: Abraham then called the name of that place “The Lord Will Provide” – what you may have heard as **Jehovah jireh**.

Click: Actually in Hebrew, the word 'jireh' comes from a word meaning "to see".¹²

Now – as I have often stated in the past, I am very watchful to mention that I personally don't know Hebrew – I know a few *words* but not the *language*. Too often, presenters PRETEND to know the language – be it Hebrew or more often Greek. And because of this, it's easy for us to hear a word being used out of context, especially when no one ever checks your interpretation.

So, whenever I cite a Hebrew word, I'm using the CONSENSUS meaning of the rabbis and Hebrew scholars as to how the word is used in the particular passage, not some out-of-context meaning. **The text of my presentation is put on the website and the references to a word's meaning is included so that you can check it out.**

Example from college: (watchtower) – for he said 'May the Lord watch between me and you when we are absent one from another.'

So, back to the word 'jireh' – it comes from a word meaning "to see".

SLIDE>

- So – In response to Isaac’s question about where’s the lamb for the sacrifice, Abraham was saying – **God will see (to it) Himself.**

I believe that it is significant that – the first time that the Bible speaks of God’s providence – it’s about *God’s making a provision for our needs.*¹³

- **This event – this story – of Abraham, Isaac and God providing the lamb as sacrifice is a PROPHETIC event, looking forward to Christ, the Lamb of God.**
- **God makes a Promise, and Providence makes it come true.**

We will see this in the Exodus story – in the providence of God, the cruel slavery of the Egyptians was used to shape the Israelites into a people, and when God determined it was the appointed time, He punished the Egyptians for their actions and led the people out to a new life in Him.

In Exodus chapter 2, we’ll also see another point: **our human tendency to try to bring about changes in accord with**

OUR OWN timing rather than in God's timing, and thus messing up the picture. **Moses will kill the Egyptian taskmaster**, but rather than being celebrated as a deliverer, he will be forced into exile for 40 years. He got impatient about not having a son – rather than waiting for God's appointed time in which God's promise will be fulfilled.

Most of us know the story of the American Abolitionist **John Brown** who, just a year and a half before the outbreak of the Civil War, attempt to start the freeing of the slaves by capturing the U.S. arsenal at Harper's Ferry, VA. He failed, was captured and sentenced to hang. On the day he was hanged, he wrote a letter that said, in part:

*I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land can never be purged away **but with blood**. I had as I now think, **vainly flattered myself** that without very much bloodshed, it might be done.¹⁴ 12/2/1859*

“VAINLY FLATTERED MYSELF” – John Brown thought that he could bring about the abolition of slavery. We think that we can do anything on our own effort.

- Q: Does providence essentially mean that we can do ANYTHING we want to and God will use it for His purposes? Well – yes, in a way...

** “... you (and I) will certainly carry out God's purpose, HOWEVER (we) act, but it (does) makes a difference... **whether you serve like Judas or like John.**” C.S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain

- **By the way – trivia question: does anyone know where John Brown’s gravesite is?**

SLIDE: JOHN BROWN GRAVESITE

- – just outside of Lake Placid, NY. The site of his family farm is a New York State Historic Site; located on John Brown Road right behind Olympic Ski Jump.¹⁵
- Brown considered this farm as his home for at least 10 years prior to the Harper’s Ferry incident.

Ok – on to Exodus Chapter 2

THE BIRTH OF MOSES

SLIDE: EXODUS CHAPTER 2

Let's pick up the story in Exodus Chapter 2:

The background is that the Israelites are under cruel slavery in Egypt. The Pharaoh attempted to limit their population growth by hard work, but it only increased their numbers. Next, he orders the midwives to secretly kill newborn male babies, but that didn't work. Finally, the Pharaoh orders that all newborn Hebrew males be thrown into the Nile River. In doing so, it would help slow the population increase plus be an offering to the River Nile – which the Egyptians worshipped. They also worshiped the things that were IN the Nile, such as crocodiles.

- When the Egyptians threw the Israelite male newborns into the River, they were also sacrificing to their gods – that part of what was behind this command.

So – that's where we are. **Behind the scenes, the providence of God has been working all this time. Now, it begins to come into plain view.**

1 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. 2 The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months. 3 But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile. 4 His sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him.

5 The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the Nile, with her maidens walking alongside the Nile; and she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid, and she brought it to her. 6 When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the boy was crying. And she had pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." 7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you?" 8 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go ahead." So the girl went and called the child's mother. 9 Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. 10 The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, "Because I drew him out of the water."

11 Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one

of his brethren. 12 So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 He went out the next day, and behold, two Hebrews were fighting with each other; and he said to the offender, "Why are you striking your companion?" 14 But he said, "Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and said, "Surely the matter has become known."

15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, and he sat down by a well."

Chapter 2 goes on to describe how Moses protects a group of women shepherds at a well in Midian and eventually marries one of them – a woman named Zipporah – who is the daughter of Jethro "*the priest of Midian*" (Exodus 2:16). Moses spends the next 40 years of his life as an exile working as a shepherd for his father-in-law in the land of Midian, and then – at the age of 80 – he has the history-changing encounter with a burning bush. That will be Chapter 3 next time.

In verse 1 of Chapter 2, the text says that a man from the house of Levi married a woman from the house of Levi, and they had a child. This means that they all are of the house or tribe of Levi. We're not told here what their names were, but

we later learn that the man's name is Amram and the woman's name is Jochebed (Exodus 6:20).

This was their third child. Miriam, the oldest, was about 10–12 years old at the time. Aaron, Moses' older brother, was three and apparently had been born just *before* the edict to kill the male newborns had been issued.

SLIDE: TOV

The text says that the parents saw that the child was "*beautiful*". Now, every mother thinks their newborn child is beautiful, so why does the Scripture specifically include the word here? The reason is hidden in the Hebrew language.

The Hebrew word here is TOV, and the original Hebrew says was that Moses' mother saw how "**TOV**" Moses was.

Hebrew scholars say that translating the word as "*beautiful*" isn't necessarily wrong, but it hides an association being made here between Moses and some of the earlier Biblical acts of God. Those associations begin at creation.

SLIDE: TOV#2

Remember – after each part of the Creation effort, God looked at it and pronounced it to be... (wait for response)

“good” ‘TOV’.

Click: And Elohim said, Let there be light: and there was light.
And Elohim saw the light, that it was 'tov' (*good*)...

Genesis 1:3–4 Orthodox Jewish Bible

- So, in Hebrew, the word **‘TOV’** means **“Good”**

You have heard the Jewish expression ‘mazel tov’ – ‘tov’ means ‘good’, ‘mazel’ means ‘luck’. ‘Mazel tov’ means *good luck*.

Right off, the Rabbis recognized that Scripture is showing that Moses’ very birth was under divine influence, and he would have a great purpose. Stephen says in Acts: “At this time Moses was born, and he was **beautiful before God.**” Acts 7:20

The NT Book of Hebrews says 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 *New International Version*

Did the parents KNOW that this would be the deliverer of Israel and that they needed to go to some extraordinary measure to try and save him? There is NO indication of that at all. They knew that there was something special about the child and had

the faith to him in God's hands for God's purpose, whatever that might be. I have to believe that is a spiritual beauty. Just because the kid was cute – every mother thinks their new baby is *cute*... that's not the point. There was a spiritual something about that boy – a spiritual beauty – that arrested the parents and they knew that at any cost that child had to be saved.

- *“There was a spiritual quickening inside of them that responded to everything they knew of God, everything they knew of man.”¹⁶*

Somehow, they knew that they had to risk everything to try to save him. So they hid him. They hid him for three months. But you can't hide a baby much more than three months, especially if you're a slave working on a city.

So, Moses' mother builds a floating cradle out of the same material that the typical Nile River boats were made – papyrus – and she and Miriam placed it in a certain spot in the river that they know had no crocodiles because that's where the princess baths.

“ARK”

SLIDE: ARK, BASKET, CHEST

I want to look briefly at the word used to describe what infant Moses was placed into.

The Orthodox Jewish Bible describes the vessel as follows:

Exodus 2:3 says that... “But when she was no longer able to hide him, she took for him a **TEBAH**...” pronounced **TEVAH**)

<click> she took a **TEBAH**

- The KJV translates this as: “...an ark of bulrushes...” KJV
- “...a papyrus basket...” NIV
- “...a wicker basket (chest)...” NAS

The Hebrew word here is '**TEBAH**' - pronounced **TEVAH**), which means “*chest, box or coffer*”.¹⁷ A coffer is a strongbox, or a box in which you put valuables.

- So how do we get the translation of TEVAH as an ARK in the KJV?

SLIDE: TEVAH

Remember that the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek and then into Latin and then into English, etc.. 'Tevah' in Hebrew means *chest* or *box* in Hebrew.

<CLICK> The Latin word for “chest” or “box” or coffer is ARCA. So the Hebrew word Tevah was translated into Latin as ARCA and then into English as Ark. And, of course, the word ARK immediately makes us think of Noah’s ark.

<CLICK> And, in fact, there is only ONE other situation in Scripture where this word is applied: God tells Noah to... *Make thee a tevah (ark)*. The word Tevah in Genesis is the SAME word that is used regarding Moses’ basket.

The word is very archaic & scholars don’t know either its derivation or even to what language it belongs. It is certain, however, that it was **an oblong box that was not capable of sailing as a ship does, but intended merely to float.**¹⁸ (actually, with Noah, there was *nowhere* to sail to... world was covered with water. He had just to float until the water went down.)

There is another ‘Ark’ in Scripture that we run across – the **Ark of the Covenant**. So, a good question at this point is:

- Are these Arks somehow related? Answer: Not really.

SLIDE: 'ARK' OF COVENANT?

Besides *Tevah*, There is *another* word in Hebrew that also means *chest* or *box*, and <click> that is aron.¹⁹ Pronounced *aw-rone*. And since both 'tevah' and 'aron' chests/boxes were translated as *arca* in Latin, they both came to be frequently translated as ark.²⁰ However, both words are properly translated as *chest* or *box*.

Strong's Hebrew 727. aron Transliteration: aron

Phonetic Spelling: (aw-rone') a chest, ark

SLIDE: COMPARISON OF WORDS

So, the Ark of the Covenant is NOT linked linguistically with Noah's ark or Moses' ark – these are two distinct words in Hebrew and linking them together because both have the English word 'ark' applied would be incorrect.

By the way – there is ONLY ONE OTHER PLACE in scripture where the word 'aron' is used,

Click> and there it means “**coffin**”. And, it refers to when Joseph died, was embalmed, and put into an 'aron'.....a coffin.

- Is there something symbolic in the fact that the same exact term, 'aron', is used to describe BOTH the container into which Joseph was laid to rest, as well as the container built specially to hold the original stone tablets of the Ten Commandments?

Perhaps it has something to do with a **symbolic linkage between the immense value of Joseph to Israel's formation and the immense value of the 10 Commandments to sustaining the life of Israel?** Not sure.

- But, “*It is interesting to note that in the **Book of Revelation**, at about the same time the Ark of the Covenant is found and placed into the new Temple, the tribe of Joseph also suddenly reappears. Could it be that these two future events are connected, and we're given a hint of that by use of the word 'aron' in both contexts? Don't know – Time will tell.*”²¹

Ok – it says in Hebrews 11: 23:

By faith Moses was hidden by his parents for three months after his birth, because they saw that the child was TOV; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

- Faith is always a RESPONSE. Faith is NOT positive thinking. Faith is a response to something. God had said something; you respond to it.

So, Moses' mother, by faith, takes the waterproof papyrus basket containing her son and PLACES IT among the tall reeds along the bank of a tributary of the Nile. Miriam remains behind to watch. They didn't just push it out into the current – they SET it among the reeds.†

Ironically, they were just doing just the pharaoh had told them to do. They were “throwing” him into the River Nile. Pharaoh had not specified anything about an ark being around the kid when they threw him in.

I think that this is important to note that that they purposely PLACED the basket among the reeds on the bank of the river. They didn't just sit back, push it out into the current and say “*what will be will be*” – They did all they knew to do and then said “*God, he's yours now.*”

† Strong's 7760. 'sum' or 'sim'

-
- They placed that basket not only in the Nile but also in the PROVIDENCE of God.
-

SLIDE: THE RESCUE

The daughter of the Pharaoh is coming...
Is this good news or bad news?

They're living in Goshen, probably very near to **Avaris**, the then-capital city of Egypt, which would have contained the Palace of the Pharaoh. Jochebed – Moses' mother – obviously *chose* to PLACE the basket near the normal bathing site of the Egyptian princess – she didn't *push* it out into the current and wave goodbye.

The daughter of Pharaoh is walking along the Nile River with her maidens when she sees the basket among the reeds and instructs her maidservant to retrieve it.

Evidently, the basket had a lid which was closed at the time because the text says that the child starts crying when the basket was “opened” (Exodus 2:6). The child was probably asleep in the darkness of this cradle, which would be gently rocking in the water. Then, the basket is opened, sunlight streams in and shocks the baby awake, and he starts crying. The Princess' womanly instincts took over – save this child from certain death. She knew immediately that the child was

Hebrew – the fact that the infant had been circumcised gave it away. All of Egypt was engaged in a frenzy of killing new born baby boys. The maidservants were fully aware of the risk of non-compliance and may have refused to follow her instructions – perhaps they even advised Pharaoh’s daughter not to do something prohibited by her father. Apparently, it made no difference to her that the child was a Hebrew.

>> **This one spontaneous act of kindness CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY.** When she got up that morning, she never imagined her appointment with God's plan. That’s the same with us!

- As I said last time, Pharaoh had been worried about the Hebrew men – he should have been **worried about the women** – Hebrew and non-Hebrew.

Miriam, Moses’ 12-year old sister, was hiding in the bushes and watching what went on, and she now rushes up and asks the Princess:

“Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?”

The Pharaoh’s daughter answers ‘Yes’. So Miriam goes and brings Moses’ mother Jochebed back to the scene. The Princess tells her to take this child and nurse it for her, and she will pay her for doing it.

So Jochebed takes the infant back to her own home and they are now under the protection of Pharaoh's daughter, and his mother is being paid money to do what she would have gladly done for free.

So, the daughter of the very man who ordered that these Hebrew infants be killed is the one to save this Hebrew who had been selected by God to liberate Israel. And, he would be raised in the Pharaoh's own house at the Pharaoh's own expense.

Verse 10 says that when the child "*grew up*", she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter. The normal nursing period at that time was between three and five years long, so Moses lived with his family and Israelite neighbors until he was about five and then he was returned to the Princess. By this time, Moses would have learned Hebrew to some extent and told about the history of his people, as well as God's promises of a Deliverer and the eventual journey to a new homeland in Canaan.

The Pharaoh's daughter adopts the child as her own son, and it is she who actually gave Moses his name – which is a Hebrew translation of the Egyptian word "to draw out".²² She named him Moses because "I drew him out of the water." (v.10)

- We don't even know her name, but her amazing heroism and moral vision are astonishing. Out of all people, it is her name for Moses that sticks.

SLIDE: MOSES' EDUCATION

There can be no doubt that, as the adopted son of the princess, Moses would receive the highest training. Scripture tells us that he was "mighty in his words and deeds" (Acts 7:22). Scripture is silent about the details of his life between the time he was brought to the Palace until he reached 40. There are many Jewish and Egyptian legends which extol his wisdom, and his military and other achievements; the Jewish historian Josephus has Moses being a general that defeated Ethiopia, but Josephus is not regarded as a totally reliable source because he often mixes in legend and portrays it as fact.

Moses would have been taught politics, math, geometry, astronomy, physics, anatomy, pathology, therapeutics. He would have been trained on how to cure eye disease.

He would have learned all of the major languages and also would have been able to write and understand Egyptian hieroglyphics. He had access to vast libraries. He was trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.

And, as a member of the royal family, Moses was immediately accepted as a member of the priest cast. The people of Egypt worshiped thousands of deities. But the priest cast was also secretly taught that there was one supreme God who was present in all the other gods. They were essentially manifestations of the one God. Why the priests never told the people that, we don't know. They kept it secret.

Unlike in the movie Ten Commandments, Moses' Hebrew beginnings were undoubtedly not kept secret. The Egyptians knew he was a Hebrew, and HE knew he was Hebrew. And for all intents and purposes, the general Israelite population considered him an *Egyptian* – regardless of his Hebrew blood. Moses would not have been fully welcomed in either camp.²³

SLIDE: I'M MOSES

Verse 11 says "One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and saw their forced labor."

Between Vs 10 and 11, Scripture takes a sudden jump forward about 35 years. Moses knows that God had promised to deliver the Israelites, and his birth and miraculous rescue evidently convinced him (correctly) that it would be by him. Somehow he knew that, as an Israelite, he was going to deliver the Israelites from slavery.

But in **WHOSE** timing would this occur?

Moses evidently thought as John Brown did: *“God, leave it to me; I’ll handle this one.”* You see... if you’ve been trained in all the learning of the Egyptians, what is the most obvious way that you’re going to achieve deliverance for the slaves? You’re going to trample down all injustice, rally the people to a standard, and let’s go. That’s the normal way – the human way of doing things.

- Remember, God had not spoken to him at this point in his life – that would come 40 years later – so Moses isn’t expecting any direct divine intervention. He doesn’t yet know God’s ways.

So, when he is 40 years old, he sees a taskmaster cruelly beating one of the Israelites – no doubt he had seen this many times before, but this time was different – **he had come to a decision about whose side he was on.**

Hebrews 11:24 says: *“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.”*

The Levite blood in him **boils at injustice**, just like it had in his ancestor Levi when he plotted and carried out the massacre at Shechem to avenge the rape of his sister Dinah by the king’s son (Genesis 34). **Moses has a temper.**

Moses waits until no one is looking and simply kills the Egyptian.

- Now you've got your rallying point. Everybody rally round this; let's go.

Moses had a *freedom* mentality. He hadn't been raised in the slime pits. All these slaves could only think in terms of slavery. Here's an Israelite who really knows freedom. What's the matter with you guys? Let's go! Simple as that! But they did not understand what he understood.

Next day, when he tries to break up a quarrel between two Israelites, the aggressor says to him: "Who made you a ruler and judge over us?"

- That's a strange and dangerous thing for a slave to say to an Egyptian prince. You wouldn't think that type of response would be given to someone who has the power of life and death over you.

But, the man evidently knew that Moses was trying to mediate the quarrel based on his standing as a fellow Israelite. **MOSES' PROBLEM** was that he did not have any tribal authority – he was not a judge, an elder, a tribal prince in the Hebrew community. So, the man tells Moses – "*bug off buddy, or are you going to kill me like you did the Egyptian*".

- Stephen in the Book of Acts says that **Moses had assumed that they would recognize him as the deliverer** – they did not (Acts 7:25).

And now Moses knows that he is in real trouble. The Israelites he hoped to lead don't accept his authority over them. In addition, the word is out that he killed an Egyptian and buried him in the sand. That made him a double criminal in Egypt.

- Crime # 1: he killed an Egyptian while the man was performing his official duty.
- Crime # 2: he buried him without proper religious ceremony. And in the Egyptian religion, you don't get to heaven unless you have that. So he not only killed the guy, he kept him out of heaven.²⁴

This also would mean to the Pharaoh that Moses was a rebel – and what Pharaoh feared most was a rebellion of these slaves.

And so, in utter despair, with his entire life fallen to pieces around him, Moses flees into the Sinai desert and into the land of Midian, where he sat down by a well, marries a woman, has two sons and tends sheep for the next 40 years. Then, he met God in the burning bush.

Moses' failure had been an attempt to **carry out spiritual ends by carnal means**. He wanted to become a deliverer before he was called to it of God; and he attempted to accomplish it by **means other than those which God would appoint**.²⁵

As a side note, I believe that the rejection of Moses' authority by the two Hebrew men lingered in Moses' consciousness – 40 years later, when God at the burning bush tells Moses to go back to Egypt to free the people, Moses – out of a lack of self-confidence – replies, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11) -> If even the slaves won't listen to me, how can I expect the most powerful man in the world to listen?

OK – here's what we know about Moses up to now

- He is a Levite and has the Levite temper and a hatred for injustice
- He loves God and believes in God's promises to Abraham
- He is highly educated and has military prowess and strength.
- By **faith**, he has renounced his royal privileges – his own personal comforts – and throws his lot in with the fate of his fellow Hebrews.
- And, he is **impatient** with God's timetable.

SLIDE: MIDIAN

Moses flees to Midian. The Midianites were distant cousins of the Israelites – they also descended from Abraham but thru Abraham's 2nd wife Keturah. (Genesis 25:4)

I won't get into this today, but you should know that the land of Midian is probably NOT on the Sinai Peninsula. It is most probably in what is now Saudi Arabia. If so, that means that the crossing of the Red Sea, the burning bush, and the giving of the Law DIDN'T occur where we thought it did.

<click> It also means that the real Mt. Sinai probably is in Saudi Arabia, not on the Sinai Peninsula. We'll discuss this a bit further in future sessions. But one among several reasons why many historians think like this is that Sinai was full of Egyptian forts and mining camps. It was not part of Egypt per se but was occupied by Egypt. Moses would have been readily apprehended by Egyptian forces if he stayed in territory they controlled. He had to flee to somewhere beyond Egypt's sphere of control.

SLIDE: The REPROACH OF CHRIST

Moses' decision was made in the full light of all of his wisdom, all the wealth that was at his fingertips, and all the pleasures that were his. He made a choice. He refused to be called the

son of Pharaoh's daughter. In the NT Epistle to the Hebrews, we read:

24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25 He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 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

Paraphrase of Malcolm Smith: The Scripture tells me it was **for the sake of Christ**. Now, what did Moses know of Christ? Christ would be born for another 1500 years. Then what was his hope?

He was by faith committing himself to the people who believed in the deliverer of Genesis 3:15, when God stated:

"The seed of the woman... shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

Moses was committing himself to the coming Deliverer. And by faith in one who had not yet come, Moses committed himself. He abandoned himself. Hebrews 11, again, verse 13, describes him, along with others. It says, "All these" that died in faith", without receiving the promises, but having seen them

and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

I had often wondered the spiritual status of people prior to the advent of Jesus. If we must believe in Christ to be saved, where did they stand? Here, the Epistle answers my question – all those who looked forward to Christ **by faith in God's promises were in God's kingdom**. The difference is that they had to wait in Paradise until their sins were ATONED for at the cross.

PROVIDENCE

The story of Exodus is the story of the providence of God.

Consider what happened:

- The Pharaoh is scared spit-less about the growing population of Israelites. He's afraid that they would either leave the country or participate with any new invading army.
- So, he puts them into hard slavery, which causes their population growth rate to increase.
- So he eventually orders that all the male be thrown into the Nile.

- If only he'd have held his peace, nothing would have happened. Moses would have become a slave and lived and died a slave. But the Pharaoh said *'throw the Hebrew male newborns into the Nile.'*
- The Result? One of them comes floating onto his own doorstep and is raised by his very own daughter. The Pharaoh ends up paying for the education and training of the one who was ultimately going to bring about his worst nightmare.
- The Pharaoh said, *"Kill them all."* God said *"The very method that you are using to kill them will actually destroy you in the end. For – out of those waters that you said throw them into – comes the deliverer, and you, Pharaoh, are going to pay for his education."*

Psalm 2 says the kings of the earth set themselves against the Lord, and in response, 'He who sits in the heavens laughs' (vs. 4).

MIRACLES VS PROVIDENCE

Christians love to see the workings of God in miraculous ways, don't we? Jesus healed people, cured blind eyes, raised the dead, straightened withered legs, turned water into wine.

God split the Red Sea, caused 10 miraculous plagues to fall on Egypt, led the Israelites thru the wilderness under a cloud, and He caused manna to fall from the sky and water gush from rocks.

- All of these were SPECTACULAR miracles, unmistakable because they could be readily seen. They were very visible.
- But we tend to forget that in Scripture, the marvelous story of God's providence NORMALLY unfolds through a **natural** course; or rather – **natural in its progress, but supernatural in its purposes and results**.²⁶
- The dilemma **YOU AND I** often face is that we would **PREFER to SEE** the providence of God with our natural eyes rather than – in faith – **trust that God is working behind the scene**.

We seem to have the opposite mindset about God's Providence has **changed** from that of Washington, Lincoln, and John Brown. When we don't see Him working, we tend to immediately do a reverse of the Adam/God relationship in the Garden– remember, **Adam was hiding and God called out to Him, "Where are You?"** We now all too frequently think God is hiding and so we call, **"God where are You?"**

GOD'S BACK

Let's be honest – how many of us – and don't raise your hands – know of people who have traveled many hundreds of miles to see what was claimed to be the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

- Why – because we would like to SEE how His providence is at work today. It must be happening over there in Kansas City or Toronto, but I'm not so sure about Kinderhook or Chatham or Ghent.
- We all say – *“God – please show me Your wonderful Plan so that I CAN SEE it working in my situation...”*

SLIDE: SHOW ME YOUR GLORY

Remember when Moses made an audacious request of God. He asked, “Show me Your glory.” [Ex.33:17–23].

God responded, “You will not be able to see My face, for no human being can see My face and live.” Instead, God offers a mystical compromise. God says: “...you shall stand there on the rock while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but

My face shall not be seen.” He places Moses in the cleft of a rock while His glory passes over him, and THEN He allows Moses to see His BACK.

- It’s like God was saying that we will eventually see that He had been working in our situation – we’ll see His footprints.
- But we never see from the front while it’s happening – **while His glory is approaching us**. He permits us to see His fully glory only **AFTER** it has happened because we humans presently “live” in this world of physicality and limitation.

PATIENCE WITH GOD AND WITH OTHERS

SLIDE: PROVIDENCE

The Cross teaches us that suffering causes redemption. As Moses learned, we can see only “God’s back.” Only in retrospect, with the passage of time, perhaps even ages, is suffering interpretable, and often not in this physical world at all.

There are two points here that are applicable to the Christian walk.

CLICK: FIRST, WE NEED PATIENCE WITH GOD.

Like Moses, we are impatient with God's timetable. I know that I often am. And I believe that I am not alone. Evil and perversion seems to be on the march across the land, and we look forward to Second Coming when Jesus will rule as king.

We're impatient with God's timetable. One prime example of this – IMO – is the SCRIPTURALLY–UNSUPPORTED teaching that the Holy Spirit is:

- REESTABLISHING WATERED–DOWN VERSIONS OF THE OFFICES OF APOSTLE AND PROPHET AS A PRELUDE TO THE 2ND COMING.
- Another example is the teaching that WE can hasten the 2nd Coming by becoming a purer (i.e. more worthy) Bride.

Neither teaching is scripturally supportable. **I believe that these were/are unconscious – but oftentimes sincere – attempts to move forward with the Second Coming BEFORE God's appointed time.**

People want something to happen, they want to visibly see that they're a part of something big – and *what's bigger than a major move of the Holy Spirit? Or, what's bigger than helping the 2nd Coming along?* **JOHN BROWN HAD CALLED SUCH A NOTION AS “VAINLY FLATTERED MYSELF”.**

- **My daily walk with Christ is all I can influence.** The 2nd Coming is HIS thing!

WHAT IS EASY TO FORGET IS THAT...

This longing is not evil. But people forget that... “There are times in the Biblical record where there is NO evidence of God speaking to anyone. {There's no record that God spoke to any Israelite during the hundreds of years of Egypt, and God didn't speak to Moses until he was 80.}

Much mischief is done in God's name because people fail to believe that God can rule, bless them, and bring forward His purposes *unless they are getting personal revelations from God*. {The Church has been sold a lie, and because of that, many ...} feel a need for ongoing additions to God's revealed will for them to be successful or please God. (However), In doing so, they reveal that they do not understand God's providence and its relationship to His promises.”²⁷

- Grace makes the promises, God's Providence makes the payment – not us or our sincere effort.

- Intentions may be good, but *“Do not imagine that the good you intend will balance the evil you perform.”*²⁸

God is in control of His universe, and He is using that control for the benefit of those who are recipients of His promises.

There is not a single promise dependent upon us getting a personal revelation so that we make the right decision. Even our sin, which we regret so much, cannot foil God’s good purposes as revealed in His promises. Our sin is always being cleansed by the blood of Jesus, and He is keeping His promise to sanctify us. We are safe. If tragedy strikes Christians, as it often does, not a single promise of God is in jeopardy. He promised that He is working all things together for our good. God never breaks His promises.

OK – the SECOND and last point has to do with what Roy said in his last presentation.

CLICK>: WE NEED PATIENCE WITH EACH OTHER.

The patience that is in view here focuses more on interpersonal relationships with other people. It is the patience of longsuffering and of forbearing in the midst of personal injury. This is the most difficult patience of all. If we

look at the triad of virtues underscored in the New Testament—faith, hope, and love—we see that each one of these virtues contains within it the necessary ingredient of patience. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13 that love suffers long. This longsuffering, forbearing patience is to be the Christian's reflection of the character of God.

To be sure, a longsuffering patience is one of the most difficult traits to exercise. It is subjected to trial every day. And these trials can eat away at our love, our hope, and our faith. This erosion can leave us broken and embittered. Sometimes we can only look to Job who cried from the dung-heap: "Though he slay me, I will trust in him."

Wrapping up...

Read: God's Divine Providence is still at work.

I enjoy reading the historic events of the OT and NT because they reveal that God WAS in control NO MATTER HOW THINGS APPEARED TO THE PEOPLE. The crucifixion was not seem as something good by the disciples, but Jesus saw it was necessary. But they saw it completely differently after the

Resurrection. Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem and preached a sermon, saying:

SLIDE: PETER

This man (Jesus) was handed over to you **by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge**; and you, with **the help of wicked men**, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 2:23

This is exactly what Lincoln was saying – the crucifixion was a **deliberate** part of God Plan – **Jehovah Jireh – God provided Himself the lamb**. It was a wicked deed done by wicked men – but it was part of His Providence for our salvation. And God had **foreknowledge** of the cross – He didn't have to switch to Plan B because – by chance – Jesus was executed. God was in control!

God does not change, Who He was back THEN is Who He is right NOW.

- If He was always in control back then, then He is always in control right now.

We are not to get discouraged about who wins elections or the nightly newscasts of wars and evil in the world – the

events are indeed evil, but God's redemptive **providence** works through the most diabolical actions.

- Judas's act of wickedness helped to bring about the **BEST THING** that ever happened in history, the **Atonement.**

It is not by chance that we refer to that day in history as "Good" Friday.

*In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me;
Glory, glory, hallelujah! His truth is marching on.*

SLIDE: Jesus' math

1 Cross + 3 nails = 4 given.

- **Grace made us great promises – and in the Providence of God, Jesus made the payment.**

Endnotes

- ¹ *Fox News with Bret Baier*, November 9, 2016
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- ³ David Barton, *The Bulletproof George Washington*, WallBuilders Press, 2003
- ⁴ Second Inaugural Address of Abraham Lincoln, SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 1865, <https://www.loc.gov/teachers/newsevents/events/lincoln/pdf/avalonInaug2.pdf>
- ⁵ <http://www.negrospirituals.com/index.html>
- ⁶ R.C. Sproul, *Chosen By God: Know God's Perfect Plan for His Glory and His Children*
- ⁷ RC Sproul, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith*, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Chapter 20 Providence.
- ⁸ Strong's listing of all texts of Scripture containing the word 'provide'
- ⁹ <http://latindictionary.wikidot.com/preposition:pro>
- ¹⁰ <http://latindictionary.wikidot.com/search:site/q/vidi>
- ¹¹ http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=provide
- ¹² Strong's #3070. *Yhvh Yireh Yhovah* and *ra'ah*; Jehovah will see (to it)
- ¹³ RC Sproul, *Everyone's a Theologian*, Reformation Trust Publishing, 2014, pg. 79
- ¹⁴ John Brown's last letter, written on day he hanged. From "*John Brown: a Biography*," by Oswald Garrison Villard, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/brown/filmmore/reference/primary/>
- ¹⁵ <http://nysparks.com/historic-sites/29/details.aspx>
- ¹⁶ Malcolm Smith, *Exodus*.
- ¹⁷ Strong's Hebrew 8392. *tebah* ► *tebah*: a box, chest Phonetic Spelling: (tay-baw') - noun feminine ark (properly chest, box)
- ¹⁸ *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Genesis 6:14
- ¹⁹ Strong's Hebrew 727. *aron*
- ²⁰ Editor's note: Did You Know, Definition of Ark, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ark>
- ²¹ Tom Bradford, Torahclass, Week 3 Exodus chapter 1
- ²² Judaism 101, *Moses, Aaron and Miriam*
- ²³ Bradford
- ²⁴ Malcolm Smith, *Exodus*
- ²⁵ Alfred Edersheim *Bible History*, Bk. 2, Chapter 3
- ²⁶ *Ibid*, Book 2, Chapter 3
- ²⁷ Bob Dewaay, *Providence and Promise, How God Rules His Universe for the Good of His People*, Critical Issues Commentary, Issue 113,
- ²⁸ Norman Mac Donald, *Maxims and Moral Reflections*