

Calling us Out to Call us in
[Unlikely Deliverance and an Unlikely Savior – Exodus 2:1-10]

SaS – Special Air Service in Britain

David Stirling. A less likely war hero would be difficult to imagine. In college, Stirling misbehaved on a lavish scale. “**If he ever opened a book,**” Macintyre writes, “**the event was not recorded.**” Nor did Stirling show promise as a young officer: “He lacked the most basic military discipline, could not march straight, and was so lazy his comrades had nicknamed him ‘the Giant Sloth.’”

“Stirling was one of those people who **thrive in war, having failed at peace,**” is how Macintyre succinctly puts it, and the story takes off from there.

Stirling at age 25 — skinny, grumpy and temporarily paralyzed from the waist down — moping in a hospital ward after a parachute jump gone badly wrong. Lying there, trying to wiggle his toes, Stirling **cooks up a scheme** to insert small groups of highly trained soldiers behind enemy lines, to carry out special operations against high-value targets. Put simply, Stirling was pondering ways that “a team of just five men could wreck an entire airfield in a matter of minutes.”

On Nov. 16, 1941, the fledgling Special Air Service carried out its first mission. Code-named Operation Squatter, the plan was to parachute into the Libyan desert, infiltrate five airfields on foot, and blow up as many German and Italian planes as the team could find. This first mission failed miserably

Not deterred, Stirling led several more highly successful missions. He had a habit of saying ‘what, what’ after every sentence, earning himself the nickname ‘Captain What What.’”

“**The SAS changed the face of warfare,**” Macintyre concludes. You can track its legacy today in special forces around the world, including America’s Delta Force and Navy SEALs.

David Stirling was a very unlikely hero. Today we read about a even more unlikely war hero several thousand years ago. A man pulled from the swamp of the Nile who would one day lead God’s people from the power of the Nile.

An Unlikely Savior [Exodus 2:1-10]

Ex. 2:1 And a **man** of the house of Levi went and took *as wife* a daughter of Levi.

This verse might seem at first glance to provide only incidental and minor information to the reader, but it does more. It demonstrates that Moses was a chosen child from the only proper tribe for his future calling, fully in compliance with the law that God had not yet revealed to Israel but would reveal within Moses' lifetime (NAC).

The family of Moses was not incidental or by chance. Moses' family prepared him for God's mission in his life.

No one picks their family. None of us chose what hospital to be born into. Born poor? That wasn't your choice. Born rich? Wasn't your choice. Good reputation? Bad reputation?

Your birth is purposed to prepare the way of the Lord. Born into difficulty? God has now given you an open door to those in similar circumstances and up brings. High society? God has given you a station in life to share the Savior with those who need him.

Similar- the nativity of Jesus Christ prepared him for his earthly mission. Born to a poorer working class family, in a crowded town with no room, moved often at a early age, fled to Egypt for his protection. Yet these humble circumstances prepared his life:

Born in Bethlehem the house of Bread – He is the bread of life

Fled to Egypt—to fulfill Scripture “out of Egypt I will call my son” (Matthew 2:15)

God is using the unlikely or even unwanted circumstances of your life to prepare you for an unlikely Savior.

² So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he *was* a beautiful *child*, she **hid** him three months. ³ But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid *it* in the reeds by the river's bank.

The first hero of our tale is Moses' mother who, no doubt at considerable risk to herself, hid the baby for three months (Garrett). When Moses was old enough to be recognized, his mother decided to use other means to protect her child.

Midrash: “The Egyptians used to visit every house in which they reckoned a child was born. They brought with them an Egyptian baby whom they made cry, so that, hearing it, the Israelite baby would cry too.”

It was at the point Moses could not hide anymore that things changed. Let us be clear, the activity of hiding Moses by his mother was not sinful, if anything it was righteous protection of her beloved son.

The same is even more spiritually, to find redemption, salvation, and eternal protection you must stop hiding.

Psa. 51:1 Be gracious to me, God,
according to Your faithful love;
according to Your abundant compassion,
blot out **my rebellion**.

2 Wash away my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I am **conscious** of my rebellion,
and my sin is **always before me**.

4 Against You—You alone—I have sinned
and done this evil in Your sight.
So You are right when You pass sentence;
You are blameless when You judge.

We cannot hide from God but until we recognize our sin we will never recognize our Savior. Here is the difficulty, to come out of the shadows means that you become vulnerable and open yourself to examination.

Moses' mother ironically fulfills Pharaoh's decree that the Hebrew babies should be cast into the Nile, except that she did it to save him and not to kill him. The basket that Moses' mother got for him is here called a 'box.' Same word used for the ark. The choice of the Hebrew word *tevah* is probably deliberate to make the connection to Noah (Garrett).

The world says hide! Conceal your sin! The Lord says stop hiding and you will find salvation.

² So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he *was* a beautiful *child*, she hid him three months. ³ But when she could no longer hide him, she took an **ark** of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid *it* in the reeds by the river's bank.

Moses was placed in an ark, reminding us of our need for redemption and deliverance. We see that **deliverance and salvation is found** in the most **unlikely** of places.

Look at the major heroes in this narrative: Mom (2:2), sister (2:4), and the daughter of Pharaoh (2:5), sister (2:7) Women—the obvious point is that God can do a work of salvation through the humble and even anonymous persons (Garrett).

Mom and Miriam- Ark We sometimes have an image of Moses in his little basket floating down the middle of the broad river. In fact, the last thing Moses' mother would have wanted would be for him to go floating off; not only would she lose track of him, but he would head north, toward the open Mediterranean.

Also, small moving objects would draw the attention of dangerous wildlife (Garett).

Pharaoh's Daughter- In biblical context (ignoring Thutmose III or Ramses II) the greatest work ever done by a member of the Egyptian royal family was a singular act of kindness toward an apparently abandoned baby (Garrett).

We see over and over again that deliverance from the Lord is often found in unlikely places. So this begs the question: do we miss God's working in our lives because we are looking in "likely" ways?

We see this truth unfold: I can never 'plan' my life to glorious plans that God has for me. We must stop trying fit God into our expectations and know that with God anything is possible.

Throw my 3 month old in the Nile? Sure! Let Pharaoh's house raise this child? Sure? Let the river be a place of protection? Sure!

His stay at the Egyptian court enabled him to grow up free of the crippling physical and spiritual effects of slavery (Greenburg).

At the moment when it seemed the situation could get no worse, God uses those very circumstances to raise up a deliverer (Garrett).

My Response

10 And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name **Moses**, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."

God always draws us out... to bring us into his presence.

And as unlikely was the salvation and deliverance of this three month old baby boy (who would one day lead God's people towards the promises land), still today we have an unlikely savior.

Is. 53:1 Who has believed what we have heard?
And who has the arm of the LORD been revealed to?

2 He grew up before Him like a **young** plant
and like a root out of **dry** ground.
He didn't have an **impressive** form
or **majesty** that we should look at Him,
no appearance that we should **desire** Him.

3 He was **despised** and **rejected** by men,
a man of suffering who knew what sickness was.
He was like someone people turned away from;
He was **despised**, and we didn't **value** Him.

We have an unlikely Savior, but he is a wonderful savior!

Know This:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. **17** For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Respond this:

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

The world says hide! Conceal your sin! The Lord says stop hiding and you will find salvation.

Have you been fighting your past? Are you ashamed of being placed in a basket at three months old? Maybe God is using your past to form you into his image.

Notes

The narrator is determined to keep all the characters in this story, up to the naming of Moses, anonymous.

This represents not simply the birth and deliverance of one man, but is symbolic of the birth and deliverance of an entire nation (Enns).

Ex. 2:1 And a man of the house of Levi went and took *as wife* a daughter of Levi.

- This verse might seem at first glance to provide only incidental and minor information to the reader, but it does more. It demonstrates that Moses was a chosen child from the only proper tribe for his future calling, fully in compliance with the law that God had not yet revealed to Israel but would reveal within Moses' lifetime (NAC).

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- The first hero of our tale is Moses' mother who, no doubt at considerable risk to herself, hid the baby for three months (Garrett).
- We find out that Moses has an older sister and in Exod 7:7 that Aaron was three years older than him. The fact that Moses was not the firstborn was significant; he follows in the line of Israel's leaders being chosen from younger sons (Isaac, Jacob, and later David) –Garrett.
- Beautiful – good/TOV
- 3 Months
 - midrash: “The Egyptians used to visit every house in which they reckoned a child was born. They brought with them an Egyptian baby whom they made cry, so that, hearing it, the Israelite baby would cry too.”
- ARK
 - The basket that Moses' mother got for him is here called a ‘box.’ Same word used for the ark. The choice of the Hebrew word *tevah* is probably deliberate to make the connection to Noah (Garrett).
 - The teller (narrator) has gone out of his way to indicate that there was no intention to abandon the child to his fate (Greenburg).
- Moses is the new Noah, who goes through water in his ark sealed with tar in order to save the people of God from a wicked generation (Garrett).
 - Moses and Noah both were deliverers/rescuers who were called by God to lead people and

animals through and out of danger into a new location where those people would become dominant in establishing a new stage of God's unfolding plan of redemption of the world.

- Floating
 - We sometimes have an image of Moses in his little basket floating down the middle of the broad river. In fact, the last thing Moses' mother would have wanted would be for him to go floating off; not only would she lose track of him, but he would head north, toward the open Mediterranean.
 - Also, small moving objects would draw the attention of dangerous wildlife (Garrett).
- Moses' mother ironically fulfills Pharaoh's decree that the Hebrew babies should be cast into the Nile, except that she did it to save him and not to kill him (Garrett).

4 And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

- The second hero is Moses' sister, who watches over him from a distance. The text does not tell us whether she did this on her own initiative or from her mother's command. Were it not for her, the mother would not have been reunited with the baby (Garrett).
- Shows an important truth that the entire family was involved in protecting the young child.
- Miriam was most likely 6-12 years old. Not old enough to work and yet responsible to leave the house on her own.

Ex. 2:5 Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. ⁶ And when she opened *it*, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

- Saw
 - There was surely no attempt to place Moses in his little ark at a location likely to be discovered. The whole intent was just the opposite. Yet he was discovered—and by an Egyptian! (NAC).
- This sets up an implied parallel between Moses' actual mother and the princess, who will be his adoptive mother: as the former sent Moses' sister to watch over him, so the latter sent her servant to bring him safely to shore (Garrett).
- That the princess would choose to bathe in the Nile as opposed to a bathtub reflects the esteem of the pantheistic Egyptians for the sacredness of that river, an issue only hinted at here but of great importance to the later aspects of the story (NAC).
- Compassion—So the river cannot capture its prey, and even Pharaoh's house is changed from destroyer to savior (Motyer).

- Maidens
 - The princess never went abroad unescorted. When she bathed, only her slave-girl accompanied her into the water; her companions stayed on the bank of the river to guard her privacy (Greenburg).

Ex. 2:7 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?"

- Moses must have heard this part of the story many times, and not merely from his adoptive mother but from Jochebed and indeed from Miriam herself (NAC).

Ex. 2:8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden 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 And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."

- His stay at the Egyptian court enabled him to grow up free of the crippling physical and spiritual effects of slavery (Greenburg).
- Not only does Moses' name literally parallel his situation, the circumstances of Moses' discovery on the Nile foreshadow future events. Although Moses' sister and the compassionate princess came to terms with one another in their discussion on the Nile, Moses and the irrational Pharaoh would never come to terms in their negotiations on the Nile (Garrett).
- When she named the child she prophesied, for he did draw Israel out of the Sea, as it is said (Greenburg).

15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.

Ex. 2:21 Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses. ²² And she bore *him* a son. He called his name Gershom, for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land."

- The fact that he did this willingly (content) indicates that he had put Egypt behind him. As far as he was concerned, that life no longer existed (Garrett).

Ex. 2:23 Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. **24** So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. **25** And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them*.

Illustrations

Application

At the moment when it seemed the situation could get no worse, God uses those very circumstances to raise up a deliverer (Garrett).

Women—the obvious point is that God can do a work of salvation through the humble and even anonymous persons (Garrett).

In biblical context (ignoring Thutmose III or Ramses II) the greatest work ever done by a member of the Egyptian royal family was a singular act of kindness toward an apparently abandoned baby (Garrett).

Good –Ark remind us of the creation narrative and the need of deliverance and redemption.

God's common grace is protection. But for the grace of God where would I be?

Deliverance and salvation is found in unlikely places.

It was at the point of hiding that deliverance was found

I can never plan my life for the plan of the Lord.