

Roughly 350 years have passed since Joseph's death at the end of Genesis. The 70 descendants of Jacob have grown to an expatriate community nearly 2 million strong. Joseph's contributions to Egypt have long-since been forgotten, and the Pharaoh newly risen to the Nile Throne sees the children of Israel as a threat that must be destroyed. (This foreshadows a recurring event in world history -- godless rulers trying to wipe out the Jews.)

Like the world-rulers of today, Pharaoh decrees the death of helpless children as a way of preserving his own values. But God rescues one such child to be an instrument of deliverance for His people. Moses is adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and is exposed not only to all the education and training of the world-order, but also to its passing pleasures (Heb. 11:25).

Exodus is the story of people upon whom the Lord has set His affection and to whom He has promised a future of blessing and hope. Despite His love and promise, however, these people find it hard to follow God during the process of their deliverance and of their inheritance. They keep refusing to go with His plan and want Him to go with theirs.

Exodus 2:11-22                      Moses attempts to rescue his people by his own ability and strength. The Hebrews spurn his leadership, and Pharaoh tries to kill him, so Moses flees to Midian (eastern Saudi Arabia).

Exodus 2:23-3:9                      God hears the cries of misery and oppression coming from His people held captive in Egypt. He sets Himself to deliver (snatch away, defend, rescue, recover) them from their heavy affliction.

Exodus 3:10-4:17                      Moses is the man. God tells Moses the plan: Moses will identify himself as the messenger of I AM; God will perform miracles to convince Pharaoh to set the people free; and, Moses will repeat what God tells him to say. Moses reluctantly agrees.

- v.18 1. Even though Moses has received clear instruction from the Lord about leaving, he still asks Jethro -- who is *both* his father-in-law and the "priest of Midian" -- to be released.
- v.19 2. That done, Moses is told by God to go back to the place that almost got him killed.
- v.20 3. In obedience, Moses takes his family (obligations) and his ministry skills (the staff of God) and sets out to fulfill his assignment from God. Even so, God tries to kill him along the way. Why?
- v.21-23 4. God explains what this whole thing is all about: He is a jealous God (Ex. 34:14) who feels about all His people the way a devoted father feels toward his firstborn child. The stakes are very high.
5. God delivers *because of His covenant*, not because of Moses' girding, training or calling. There is more than one way to deny God's people access to their Promise Land.

a. Circumcision (Genesis 17:10-14)

b. Circumcision of the heart