

Six Pivotal Women in the Birth of a Nation

I. Promise and Blessing

A. The Promise - Family Grew into a "People."

[Exodus 1:1-7](#) (ESV)

¹ These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household:

² Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah,

³ Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin,

⁴ Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

⁵ All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt.

⁶ Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation.

⁷ But the **people** of Israel were **fruitful** and **increased greatly**; they **multiplied** and **grew exceedingly strong**, so that **the land was filled** with them.

B. Blessing

1. Expressed through time (400 years)

fruitful– reproduced

increased greatly – teemed, swarmed!

multiplied

grew exceedingly strong – *meod meod* mighty

filled the land! – ha'arets The EARTH

What is happening in Abraham's family is in tune with God's creational purposes.

This is a microcosmic fulfillment of God's macrocosmic design for the world.

Israel is God's starting point for realizing His divine intentions for all.

God will make **Himself** and **His Name** known!

Pharaoh seeks to undermine God's purposes **not only for** Israel, but **also for** the world.

Pharaoh's opposition threatens God's purposes to be known throughout the world.

2. Gives rise to persecution and ultimately more blessing

Two governments. Two perspectives

[John 16:33](#) "I have said these things to you, that in me you **may have peace**. In the world **you will have tribulation**. But take heart; I **have overcome** the world."

II. Persecution - Fear of the promise

A. Opposes Divine Purpose (Presence of His Promise)

[Exodus 1:8-9](#) (ESV)

⁸ Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who **did not know** Joseph.

⁹ And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are **too many** and **too mighty** for us.

B. Politics of fear fails... the promise is resilient.

Pharaoh's perspective (Balaam)

[Numbers 23:20](#) (NKJV)

Behold, I have received a *command* to bless; He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.

[Exodus 1:10](#) (ESV)

¹⁰ Come, **let us deal shrewdly** with them, lest they multiply, and, **if war breaks out**, they **join our enemies** and fight against us and escape from the land."

[Exodus 1:11](#) (ESV)

¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to **afflict** them with **heavy burdens**. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses.

Too blessed to be stressed!

[Exodus 1:12](#) (ESV)

¹² But **the more they were oppressed**, the more they **multiplied** and the more they **spread abroad**. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel.

[Romans 5:3](#) “**Not only that,** but we **rejoice in our sufferings**, knowing that suffering produces endurance,”

C. Slavery!

[Exodus 1:13–14](#) “So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as **slaves** ¹⁴ and made their lives **bitter** with **hard** service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.”

ruthless slaves bitter hard

[Genesis 15:13](#) “Then the *LORD* said to Abram, “...your offspring will be sojourners...afflicted for four hundred years.

*Brick-making operations are big business in several developing nations. Usually resembling a rustic fortress, most are surrounded by walls seven or eight feet high—to keep brick poachers out, and to keep slave laborers in. They have a dark, otherworldly presence to them because of the **dust and smoke that hang constantly in the air**, coating everything with gray-red dust and soot.... **The kilns require extra labor** to stoke the charcoal fires constantly to keep them at optimum temperature. This is one of the worst jobs —excruciatingly hot, dirty, and sticky, the workers covered with charcoal dust that mixes with the dust of clay and dirt until sweat-soaked skin begins to harden and crack.*

Before the bricks are ready for the kiln, they must be shaped and pre-dried in the sun. All day long, slaves perform the backbreaking labor of packing wet clay and straw into molds that form the bricks. They slap the clay into the molds forming row after row, then other workers, usually children, carry the bricks on their heads to set them out in the sun to dry. When they are dry enough to fire, the slaves carry them to the kiln to be baked. Hour after hour, day after day, weeks that flow into months, months that fade into years ... some of these slaves have been at this dirty, tedious, painful work for decades with no relief in sight. Until now.

D. Genocide – Kill the boys!

[Exodus 1:15–16](#) (ESV)

¹⁵ Then the king of Egypt said to the **Hebrew midwives**, one of whom was named **Shiphrah** and the other **Puah**,

¹⁶ “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.”

III. Daughters Undo the Genocide

A. Shiphrah and Puah – Midwives

[Exodus 1:15–21](#) (ESV)

¹⁵ Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah,

¹⁶ “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.”

¹⁷ But **the midwives feared God** and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.

¹⁸ So the king of Egypt called **the midwives** and said to them, “Why have you done this, and let the male children live?”

¹⁹ **The midwives** said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.”

²⁰ So **God dealt well** with **the midwives**. And the people multiplied and grew very strong.

²¹ And because **the midwives feared God**, he gave them **families**.

Shiphrah – beautiful

Puah – splendor, light, joy

1. Fear God and boldly defy Pharaoh (two frail women v tyrannical demigod)

17b ...did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.

From a Vizier of that time: “**What is the king** of Upper and Lower Egypt? He is a **god** by whose dealings one lives, the father and mother of all men, **alone by himself, without an equal**”

2. Shrewd with the shrewd

[Exodus 1:19](#) “The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are **not like** the Egyptian women, for they are **vigorous** and give birth before the midwife comes to them.””

Faith or a white lie? **Two frail women outthink the shrewd tyrant!**

3. Blessing, impact, and legacy

[Exodus 1:20–21](#) “So God **dealt well** with the midwives. And the **people** multiplied and **grew very strong**. [21](#) And because the midwives feared **God**, he **gave them families**.”

IV. A Child is Born (Savior)

Death Culture and 3 Who Defy It

[Exodus 1:22](#) “Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.””

THROW EVERY BOY INTO THE NILE!

A. Jochebed- Gave Birth to Deliverance.

1. Saw the good.

[Exodus 2:1](#) “Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman (lit. **a daughter of Levi**).

[Numbers 26:59](#) *Amram's wife was **Jochebed the daughter of Levi**.... And she bore to Amram Aaron and **Moses** and **Miriam** their sister. (Yahweh is glorious)*

[2](#) The woman conceived and bore a son, and when **she saw that he was a fine (tov) child**, she hid him three months.”

“and God saw that it was **good**” *7x in [Genesis 1](#)*

She saw the promise in that baby boy!

[Hebrews 11:23](#) (NIV84)

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.

The story of the birth of Moses is not merely about the birth of one man, but **represents the birth of a nation**. A savior is born, and **through him they will receive a new beginning**. Their slavery will end and their savior will bring them into their rest, the Promised Land.

Sarah & Isaac Hannah & Samuel Mary & Jesus

2. Preserved the promise in a vessel

[Exodus 2:3](#) “When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket (**ark**) made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the riverbank.”

Like Noah in the ark. Among the reeds. Foreshadow of the Red (reed) sea.

in hope against hope!

B. Miriam – Loyal Love & Chutzpah (audacious courage)

[Exodus 2:4](#) “And **his sister** stood at a distance to know what would be done to him.”

1. Love could not let go; love had to know!

2. Chutzpah – a slave who advises Pharaoh’s daughter!

C. Pharaoh’s Daughter - mercy triumphs over judgment

[Exodus 2:5–6](#) “Now the **daughter of Pharaoh** came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She **saw the basket** among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. **6** When she opened it, she **saw the child**, and behold, the baby was **crying**. She **took pity on him** and said, “**This is one of the Hebrews’** children (Heb. *yeled* - boy, son).”

1. Saw, opened the unknown, recognized the dilemma

recognition that **this is a Hebrew** boy!

*This child, once doomed to death by Pharaoh’s decree, will become the **instrument** of Pharaoh’s destruction and the **means** through which all Israel escapes ... Egypt itself. Moses, once abandoned in the reeds (*suph*) along ... the Nile (v. 3) will lead his people in triumph through the Reed Sea (*yam suph*, cf. 13:18). Moses’ **redemption as an infant** foreshadows Israel’s redemption at the infancy of her existence as a nation. Here is an interweaving of creation and redemption themes that extend from Genesis through Exodus.*

When redemption finally comes, it is accompanied, as in [Matthew 2](#), by the senseless murder of children. Salvation promised by God is not greeted by a waiting world, but opposed with hysterical fanaticism which borders on madness.

Kamala Harris became the first vice president to visit an abortion facility, the vice president denounced pro-life laws as “plain old immoral,” said she wanted to “uplift” abortion, praised an abortionist as an “extraordinary health care provider,” and asserted without proof that denying women access to pap smears and breast exams is one of the “potentially intended consequences” of overturning Roe v. Wade.

2. Chutzpah speaks up with an offer to help

The princess is in a dilemma. Mercy has touched her heart. She knows the consequences. Her head must have been spinning!

[Exodus 2:7](#) “**Then his sister** said to **Pharaoh’s daughter**, “**Shall I go and call** you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?””

3. Courage to face the consequences

[Exodus 2:8](#) “And **Pharaoh’s daughter** said to her, “Go.” So **the girl** went and called **the child’s mother.**”

4. Mom gets the best job in the world

[Exodus 2:9](#) “And **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.”

5. Adopts and NAMES him “Moses” (a prince of Egypt)

[Exodus 2:10](#) “When the child grew older, she brought him to **Pharaoh’s daughter**, and **he became her son**. She named him **Moses**, “Because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water.””

V. At the Right Time — Safeguarding the Promise

A. Zipporah - the Little Bird who Marries the Egyptian Prince

[Exodus 2:16–17](#) (ESV)

¹⁶ Now the priest of Midian (*Reuel/Jethro) had **seven daughters**, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. (*Friend of God/Excellence)

¹⁷ The shepherds came and drove them away, but **Moses stood up** and **saved** them (NIV - came to their rescue) , and watered their flock.

[Exodus 2:21](#) “And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and **he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah.**”

B. Zipporah saves Moses from Deadly Negligence

[Exodus 4:24–26](#) “At a lodging place on the way the Lord met him and sought to put him to death. ²⁵ Then **Zipporah** took a flint and **cut off her son’s foreskin** and touched Moses’ feet with it and said, “Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!” ²⁶ So he let him alone. It was then that she said, “A bridegroom of blood,” because of the circumcision.”

Briefly, here is what happened:

1. Moses had neglected to circumcise Gershom (and perhaps Eliezer). It is also possible that Moses was not circumcised, raised in the palace of Egypt.

2. If a male was not circumcised, he would not be “passed over” at the time of dealing with the “firstborn sons.”

[Exodus 4:22–23](#) “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, **Israel is my firstborn son**, [23](#) and I say to you, “**Let my son go** that he may serve me.” **If you refuse** to let him go, behold, **I will kill your firstborn son.**””

3. She knew what to do and did it swiftly!

This is apparently such a serious concern that the Lord is willing to kill Moses, whom he had just taken so much time to convince of his role in God’s plan. Moses can argue, pout, whine, and hold his breath about going to Egypt and God will deal patiently with him—but circumcision is another matter. Failure to circumcise meets with swift punishment.

VI. Impartation & Activation

A. Every Promise – Yes in Him

B. Every Blessing in the Heavens

*fruitfulness *increase *exceedingly mighty *fullness

C. Resilience – more you are afflicted, the more you are blessed

D. Compelled by Love, Daughters defy Death Culture and partner with God.

1. Shiphrah & Puah — Fear God and Do the Right Thing — Start a movement. Make the future possible.

2. Jochebed - Saw something by faith “no ordinary child” and risked everything to keep the promise alive.

3. Miriam - With Love and Chutzpah she broke through the boundaries of power and orchestrated the future

4. Pharaoh’s Daughter — Mercy triumphed over Judgment. Named and adopted the deliverer who would bring down the dark empire of her father.

5. Zipporah — At the right time, she saved her husband by doing the right thing. Even after years of neglect.