Exodus - Commentaries by L. Douglas Nicolet

The Christian Shepherd: 2003, Fragment: Hide Your Treasures

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“There went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months” (Ex. 2:12).

The fruit of this marriage in the Lord was a goodly child. Why instead of making a display of him did Moses’ mother “hide” this lovely child?

Was it not because she was well aware of one—Pharaoh (the prince of the power of Egypt)—who had decreed his death. She and her husband saw the child as Jehovah viewed him beautiful (Heb. 11:23 JND), because he was a potential deliverer of God’s people. Beloved parents! View each of your precious children this way and then diligently hide them from the wicked world and its prince.

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 1999, Editorial: "Three Months"

“And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months” (Ex. 2:2).

“In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father’s house three months” (Acts 7:20).

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment” (Heb. 11:23).

It is recorded three times in Scripture that Moses’s parents had three months in which to hide and nourish the precious treasure given them.

Pharaoh issues the command that every son is to be cast into the river, while every daughter is to be saved alive. The world will gladly accept the blessings that the grace and fruitfulness (daughters) of true Christianity provide. But it hates strong Christians (sons) who will represent God the Father in energy and dignity, shining as lights in this dark scene. Thus the enemy seeks to have believers’ spiritual strength cast into the river (the world), there to succumb to all its wicked influences.

We can hardly think of darker times in which to raise children for God than what is recorded in Exodus 2. But even in those “perilous times” we find two people who say by faith, “No! We will not give in to such demands!” And God graciously rewards their faith, giving them “three months” time which they have to work with and preserve their child. Oh! beloved parents! How short a time you have with your little ones. What are you going to do with those three months that God has allowed you?

What do those three months represent in the three places in which we read about them? We believe that, in application, they represent (1) the preserving of our children from the world through love, (2) bearing the responsibility of their nourishment and (3) doing all in the energy of faith.

Preserving Love

In Exodus 2 we have the principle of love the mother being prominent in this account. There is no greater love in nature than that of a mother’s heart. This preserving love is a deep and devoted love. In a world that seems so bright, inviting and exciting it takes such love to hide our precious children from its destructive influences. Oh beloved parents! Do you love your children enough to hide them in Christ from the world’s river, which is flowing by the door of your house?

The time comes when Moses can no longer be hid (Ex. 2:3). But it was during those three months, while hiding him, that Moses’s mother diligently prepared that ark. She knew her work was unacceptable to the world that she would not receive encouragement—but that was of little concern to her. The world’s disapproval had no affect on the efforts generated by her preserving love.

She used slime and pitch, not trying to make the ark look attractive to the world, nor did she care if her faith was socially acceptable or politically correct. She used slime and pitch, because those materials were needed to keep the river of the world from seeping in and harming its precious cargo. There is nothing attractive about the Christ of Christianity (Isa. 53:2) to this world. But faith knows that He who has filled all heaven with His glory the rejected Man of sorrows perfectly protects.

Wise Love

Moses’s faithful mother—in the wisdom of love—did not place the ark right out in the middle of the river where the current would quickly sweep it away. It was carefully placed in the flags (reeds) “by the river’s brink.” Thus, preserving love will wisely use the appropriate “flags” (nature) that God has given in order to keep children from being swept over the world’s brink of destruction. The needs of nature in our dear children must not be denied them for, if used in godly wisdom, they will help guard from the world’s deadly influences.

Watchful Love

Next, this mother's preserving love sends Moses's sister standing afar off to watch the child. Beloved parents, you can't always be with your children, but you can always watch over them in prayer. May we "watch unto prayer" (1 Peter 4:7)! Thus Moses's mother's love was rewarded, for the result of this watching love was that she was told by Pharaoh's daughter to "take this child away, and nurse it for me" (Ex. 2:9). How important it is to separate our children from harmful, worldly influences.

Then we read that "the woman took the child and nursed it. And when the child was grown, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter" (Ex. 2:9-10 JND). How long did the mother have to raise the child that her love had protected from the world? All the time she needed even until Moses was grown! The effect of this love is seen years later when we read that God put it in Moses's heart to "visit his brethren" (Acts 7:23). His mother's preserving love had attached her son's heart to the people of God, and he considered them brethren his people.

Preserving Nourishment

In Acts 7 we have the second mention of those three months, this time characterized by the responsibility of providing nourishment. We read that Moses was "nourished up in his father's house." Fathers, you have the God-given, solemn responsibility as head of your house to provide a place in which the children God has given you can be nourished up in the things of God.

In the very next verse (Acts 7:21) we read that when Moses was cast out (placed in the ark), Pharaoh's daughter took him up and nourished him. In the Greek the thought between the two "nourishings" is quite different. The nourishing of the father's house provided lasting benefit for the child. But the kind of nourishing that Pharaoh's daughter did for Moses was with the intent to benefit herself. The world will offer to nourish our children, but always with its gain as the object. A father provides nourishment for his dear children for their blessing and for the benefit of the people of God.

Morally there is a very great difference of character between Pharaoh and Pharaoh's daughter. Pharaoh represents the outwardly corrupt, violent and destroying influences of this Christ-rejecting world. But Pharaoh's daughter represents the charming, attractive and seemingly gracious, helpful influences of the world.

The first we naturally fear and seek to hide from, while the latter all too often fools us into accepting its embraces. Beloved parents, never forget that both Pharaoh and his daughter seek to destroy your children! Fathers, see to it that you, not Pharaoh's daughter, provide nourishment for your children!

Preserving Faith

In Hebrews 11:23 we have the third mention of the three months. Here we find the principle of faith in action, in preserving Moses from the world. Moses's parents saw their child "beautiful" (JND) because he represented deliverance for the people of God. Beloved parents, look at your children in that way—beautiful to God and to the brethren as potential deliverers for the people of God.

These parents Amram and Jochebed were a son and a daughter of Levi. They had similar exercises. They walked together in singleness of mind and heart, desiring to see their precious and beautiful child preserved from the destroying enemy. Oh! may God grant faith to Christian parents that they walk together as one (Amos 3:3), not fearing the commandment of the king. It was faith that united them together in purpose of heart and gave them confidence and energy to hide their beloved son in the face of the king's commandment of death.

Let us all seek God's grace in helping to preserve the dear children by love, by nourishing and by acting in the energy of faith that we may say to them in truth in the words of the Apostle, "Beloved, I desire that in all things thou shouldest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospers" (3 John 2 JND).

Ed.

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