



BY DARLENE SINCLAIR

## Children of Destiny

**Jeremiah 29:11** *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

God has a destiny for all of us, children included. But what is a destiny? What does that mean? Is it big?

I will let you in on a secret: a big part of our own destiny is to help others achieve theirs. We can play a major role in seeing this accomplished if we have eyes to see.

Once upon a time a university student spent the summer traveling across Europe, surveying people from various small towns. As he sat on the park bench one sunny afternoon, an old man soon joined him. He began his usual line of questioning. After several minutes of interrogation, he proffered the final inquiry on his list. "Have any famous men or women ever been born in this town?" The old man frowned as he strained to recall the many years. He hesitated, considering for several more minutes, hoping to pass on some information of interest. At long last he shrugged his shoulders, sighed, and leaned toward the young man. With a great sense of disappointment he muttered, in a low voice, "Nope. Just babies."

Babies have destiny. They all do. As mothers, we have the exciting privilege to unearth potential and protect destiny as we raise our children to serve God and His Kingdom.

Childhood years are discovery years as we explore interests, develop talents, and nurture strengths. What potential is hidden within this child? How can I best steward the gifts He has placed here? And how can I best insure that this precious life will be prepared for a life of Godly pursuit? From what do I need to shield him and how?

These are the questions that we need to be asking if we hope to see them released into their God given destiny. If we seek wisdom, we will find it. But then we must put it into action.

I would like to consider two women who successfully helped usher children into productive, useful lives in the Kingdom. We will look at their insights, their purposeful and daring choices, and their deep faith.

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### Jochobed – Mother of Moses

Jochobed is a woman to be admired for many reasons. She is most well known as Moses mother, but she is also mother to Miriam and Aaron, two other important leaders in the nation of Israel. Her life is lived out in Egypt, against the background of slavery, oppression, and generations of despair. It was in this setting that she raised three children who grew to be adults of influence in their generation.

"It is not fair to the child to birth him into such a corrupt and terrible society." "Who would want to bring children into *this* world?" It is not uncommon in our day and age to hear such reasoning regarding the issue of bearing children.

Jochobed, though dwelling in captivity in a foreign land under the hand of oppression, did not succumb to such a pessimistic and despairing mindset. Something in her perspective rejected such negative thinking and caused her to rise above the status quo. Everywhere she turned there

was murmuring and complaining. People had long since stopped hoping in God's promises. Some may have forgotten them altogether. This was not to be her portion or that of her children.

In the midst of a demoralized people, she stood strong. Jochobed refused to fall prey to discouragement. She seemed to live out the cry of the Psalmist in *Psalm 144:11,12 Rescue me and deliver me from the hand of foreigners, Whose mouth speaks lying words, And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood-- That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; That our daughters may be as pillars, Sculptured in palace style...*

May we arise in this day and hour with such a cry! Sons who are strong and mature in their youth, daughters who have attained strength and beauty – let us be delivered from the hand of falsehood so that this might be our portion!

But how? What did Jochobed see? How were these children injected with a sense of destiny? Where did their confidence come from? I believe there is a clue in the scriptures.

In Exodus 2:1-2, speaking of Jochobed and her husband, we read: *And a man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi. So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months.*

It is recorded that Jochobed saw that her son “was a beautiful child.” I want to point out what it does *not* record. It does not say that his birth was attended with a herald of trumpets or angelic choirs. There was no mention of a Hollywood style soundtrack dramatically crescendoing in the background, cueing her as to the importance of the moment. She did not have the benefit of a clear prophetic dream or visitation. Nothing out of the ordinary is included in this humble account. Nothing at all. She simply bore a son and saw that he was beautiful.

This is not remarkable. It is not even uncommon. How many new mothers have you heard exclaim with similar revelations? “Oh, he’s wonderful!” or “He’s a miracle – an absolute miracle!” And I have even heard this very thing sighed in awe, “He’s beautiful, so beautiful.”

Jochobed saw what we are all free to see in every child entrusted to our care if we will look with eyes of faith and wonder. Each new babe is a miracle, a tender new life infused with God-sized destiny in seed form. It’s there to behold at first glance. Jochobed “saw that he was a beautiful child.” This nurturing of destiny began with recognition of destiny. So it begins with us - we must recognize our own destiny and that of our children.

Jochobed dared to see *and believe*. What she saw enabled her to respond with faith and boldness. She embraced the knowledge of this baby’s destiny and ran with it. Indeed, I think she had no choice. Once convinced of God’s plan and purpose for each young life entrusted to our care, we become jealous of that gift of destiny. Nothing must rob them of it and we will do our part to protect, nurture, and guide that destiny. But first we must be convinced of it.

*Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

*Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."*

*Psalm 139:13-17 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. **And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!***

Destiny, wrapped in flesh, is brought forth into this world with every newborn's birth. That is a miracle; that is beautiful! We just need eyes of faith to see and believe, and then we need to act accordingly.

We are all familiar with the story of Jochobed's daring faith and rescue of Moses – the building of a basket made of reeds and then daubed with pitch, a baby gently laid to rest within and eventually released to drift upon the river's waters, a young and beautiful son ultimately surrendered to God's care.

Wherein lies the daring faith? Let's consider her position. First of all, we know that because she saw this child's beauty, she hid him away for three months. Before the birth of Moses, Pharaoh had decreed that all sons born to this people must be put to death. But how could Jochobed hand over this precious new life simply to be destroyed? Soldiers patrolled the streets, watching and listening, ready to unleash destruction upon all newborn sons. This was surely not God's plan for son.

What would be done to parents who defy this decree? Most certainly Pharaoh would not look kindly upon such action. Still, she must hide him away. She must afford him protection somehow.

In time, it was impossible to hide the cries of her growing infant. Now what?

More faith, daring faith. She refused to give him over and determined to hide him away on the river, entrusting him to God's hand. Would someone find him? What if it was an Egyptian soldier? A mother's prayers were lifted on her son's behalf.

We know the next part of the story – Pharaoh's daughter's Egyptian maids find him adrift amongst the reeds, Pharaoh's daughter wants him for her son, Miriam suggests to the princess that Jochobed could function as a nurse for Moses and the arrangement is agreed upon, and when he is fully weaned Jochobed returns him to Pharaoh's courts.

Wow. If you don't yet admire Jochobed, you soon will. Let's consider her position once again.

Jochobed was caught in the throes of emotional tidal waves: fear tormented her as she released her son to the waters, heartrending joy flooded her soul as he was returned to her arms, grief at the knowledge of having to release him to Pharaoh's courts plagued her soul, and an obstinate determination to see him established in a knowledge of God pervaded her conscience. In the midst of the assaulting waves, she held fast to a vision of God's purposes. She then demonstrated persistent and daring faith.

Imagine caring for a babe - morning, noon, and night - knowing that soon he would be removed from your safekeeping forever. How could you possibly endure the pain that would ensue if you gave your heart fully? Many of us would hold back, shrinking from the inevitable anguish, attempting to keep our hearts safe from harm's way.

But not Jochobed. There is evidence in the scriptures that she invested thoroughly and wholeheartedly.

*Exodus 2:11 Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren.*

Somehow, years later, after being removed far from his people and receiving training at Pharaoh's court, Moses still knew who he was. He recognized his brethren and empathized with

them. His heart still beat with them. He had not forgotten where he had come from. How did such knowledge and compassion become so deeply embedded in his heart?

His mother. This story is about her. God was careful to bring her role in Moses' life to our attention. We must learn from her.

Let's look one more time at the scenario. Moses was returned to her as a babe, but only until he was weaned, which, in that cultural setting, was typically accomplished by the age of five or six. Jochobed knew that her time was limited. Instead of holding back, lamenting the misery of her situation, she counted the days and made use of every precious hour. Every opportunity was cherished. As she held him she probably prayed for him. She spoke of God's faithfulness and recounted His promises to His people while she nursed and caressed him; she told stories about his forefathers while dressing him; she planted deep within his heart a love for his people and their God. This was purposeful and unreserved love and devotion. In a few short years, she had won his affection to her, her people, and her God.

*Exodus 1:10 And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son.*

Jochobed understood her portion, her role, her part in Moses' life. She would not overstep her bounds. With tears in her eyes, she released him to his destiny. Her final entreaty to him was to *always* remember who he was. He would.

Then she was gone from his life forever. But her influence would remain. Such was her portion, and such is ours – to have influence that remains.

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### **Jehosheba – A King's Aunt**

The story of this brave woman may not be as familiar to many of us. Let me set the scene for her adventure.

Jehosheba the daughter of Jehoram the King of Judah, was sister of Ahaziah. Upon King Jehoram's death, Ahaziah, then twenty-two, became king. Athaliah was Ahaziah's mother. Ahaziah ruled in Jerusalem for one year. At that time, Jehu rose up against King Joram of Israel and killed Joram. Ahaziah was visiting King Joram at the time and was also killed by Jehu. When Athaliah, mother of Ahaziah, received word that her son the king was dead, she had a less than pleasant response.

Let's pick up the story in 2 Kings 11:1-3 (NJK).

*1 When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs. 2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram (Jehoram), sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered; and they hid him and his nurse in the bedroom, from Athaliah, so that he was not killed. 3 So he was hidden with her in the house of the Lord for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land.*

What a scene! What a grandmother! How horrible! Who can imagine a woman who destroys her own posterity? These royal heirs were her grandchildren, her descendants! (Before you get too alarmed, let's think a bit. In all actuality we don't have to look too far to see the exact thing

happening today. When a woman willingly aborts her own child, she is essentially eliminating part of her heritage!)

In this story we have a clear example of a woman whose bloodthirsty quest for power caused the eradication of the family's heritage. In the midst of this horrific chaos, this bloody massacre, this murderous enterprise, Jehosheba shows a keen awareness of destiny. Her infant nephew represents the future and embodies the promise given to her fathers (see 2 Chronicles 6:16). She needed to step in and provide protection somehow.

Acting in a way contrary to the will of a madwoman like Athaliah must have been frightening. Undoubtedly Athaliah would not hesitate to respond with fury if crossed. Yet we see that Jehosheba, with nothing to gain and everything to lose, chooses to work against her scheme.

Why? What would cause a woman to take such action with such obvious peril to her own safety? Once again, it is because of what she saw. Jehosheba clearly recognized the importance of this little boy's life. She perceived his destiny in God and therefore intercepted his destruction. His life was fought for, at great risk to her own. She felt certain that it was worth the possible cost. Somehow she was convinced of his value and accepted her role as protectress. This was a noble woman, ready to sacrifice her own well being to see the destiny of another fulfilled. Her brother's son would be spared and live to become king.

With clarity of plan and purpose, a brave and daring maneuver was undertaken. She would hide the baby away, along with his nurse, in the temple. His needs were provided for; all care was given to him for his prospering. He was nurtured in every way, including his destiny. When at last he was old enough to accept the crown, he would be brought forth to take his place on the throne before his people.

A deed of great courage and valor was needed. People who know their God will do great and mighty exploits. What is needed today? Understanding His plans and purposes equips individuals even now for such accomplishments. I would suggest that preservation of destiny is always deserving of such acts of heroism when the circumstances so require.

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### **Wanted: Courageous Mothers**

Back to our original premise: every child is created with destiny; every person is intended to help others attain their destiny.

Proposed conclusion: as mothers we are largely responsible for seeing our children established and released into their destiny.

Our children, from the beginning of their days, have been given into our hands for the purpose of care, nurture, and protection until the time comes when they will stand on the threshold of adulthood, prepared and ready to serve the Lord of all lords. If we have been entrusted with so great a task, surely it is worthy of our best and most faithful endeavor.

Where do we start? Let's summarize our lessons from Jochobed and Jehosheba.

1. Learn to see with Godly eyes.

Our culture does not encourage us to view children as packages of God-sized destiny wrapped in human flesh. Instead they have become disposable commodities, accepted only if they fit our plan. After all, they are nothing more than demanding little babies with runny noses who interrupt our comfortable schedules. Why would someone choose to invest time, money, and energy in that? What is the benefit?

Setting aside our agendas so that we might discover and develop our children's potential is considered foolish and unfulfilling. Why should we give ourselves to such an endeavor when we are told that there is no guarantee of any good thing coming from such an investment.

Granted, this type of expenditure - such selfless living - does not provide instant gratification, nor will it necessarily lead to fame and riches. But if we have eyes of faith we will see God's promise of a future and a hope given to that child; he is fearfully and wonderfully made. We recognize, perceive, and comprehend that in God's eyes this is a beautiful child. For that reason alone, he is beautiful! He is a sound investment.

This is a faith adventure – we must choose to see what God sees, as God sees. The future is taken in with one glance – God knows all that He has planned for this new life: influence in his generation, representation of Christ here on earth, and fellowship for all eternity. Begin to see what He sees.

Our vision can become easily distorted. Frustration can cloud the view and we no longer envision our children as accomplishing His purposes. Discouragement and failure dim the light of hope. His promises are the light along the way; we must cling to them when difficulties arise. Hold His word before your eyes, hide it in your heart, and let it fill the horizon of your vision. This is where you are headed – this is their destiny. Don't lose sight of it!

## 2. Let what you see catapult you into action.

Jochobed and Jehosheba are both wonderful examples of women who saw a vision for the lives of young children and acted to see it fulfilled. They did not sit back and wait, but were proactive, aggressively assessing situations and strategizing accordingly.

First of all, we must wisely use the time given to us, being good stewards by buying up every opportunity to teach, invest, and nurture destiny. In our day and age, we will normally have 17 or 18 years before our children are off to school or career. Recognize right now that this is not long. Do not fritter away the days and weeks. In no time at all they will add up to months and years.

Get a plan for teaching them about God in a faithful way. Formal methods of instruction as well as informal need to be considered.

Two things are foundational: instruction in His Word and a personal knowledge of Christ.

Therefore we must pray. Pray earnestly. Pray without ceasing. Apart from the Holy Spirit they will not truly come to the Father. They must have their own personal encounter with the Living God. Hearing about yours may be the beginning, but it cannot be the end. They need a testimony of their own. Above all, paramount to their preparation is this: they *must know* their God.

You also should observe and explore your child's talents, then seek wisdom for a plan to develop them. Provide avenues to see their unique gifts fostered, whether they are academic, musical, athletic, administrative, or artistic. Choices in schooling, private lessons, group activities, and field trips can encourage them in their area of interest.

It is important that you help determine which directions they most need to pursue. One common plight in our culture is the tendency to push children in all possible directions (involvement in as many activities as possible looks good on those school transcripts.) Becoming well equipped in

many areas may be appropriate for some, but not all. If they have the talent and a God-given desire to become a great musician they will need to invest much time, often to the detriment of some other God-given ability. They cannot be an Olympic swimmer, a world-class guitarist, and a Nobel winner in literature all at the same time. Helping them learn the all-important lesson of hearing His voice and doing only what He asks is imperative. None of us were meant to do it all.

Create opportunities of growth for your children if there are none available. Set up book clubs with friends if they enjoy reading. Secure a community room and schedule a concert if they are musicians; invite a few family friends who you know are supportive of your children, then provide refreshments following the performance (it can be very brief and simple – these are friends who care about your child!) If they love parties and hospitality, help them design invitations and plan a theme party. Let them pick out the menu (find a children's cookbook), do the shopping (help them make the list), and prepare the food. Maybe their interest is history. Consider hosting a history night with friends complete with period costumes, food, read-out-loud stories, and even an acted out scene or two with famous personalities. The sky is the limit when you let your imagination be sparked by their interests.

In the midst of this nurturing comes an intruder. As mothers we need to continually assess the moment - be aware of the setting - watch for the enemy's attack. Not only do we need to be mindful of how to positively nurture in every given opportunity but we must also function as a protectress. There is an enemy who wants to steal, kill, and destroy – and he is mindful of destiny. He has heard God's promises, and he believes them! Therefore he is poised to rob our children of that destiny. We must be keenly aware of his devices and snares, and while our children are still young, it is our responsibility to keep them from harm's way.

What are the influences in his life? What is she watching and reading? What about his source of education? Is he being trained in a Biblical worldview? Are her friends having a good impact? Some hard and unwelcome decisions may be in order.

The difficulty in this lies in the demand it may put on us. As we witnessed in the lives of Jochobed and Jehosheba, there was danger involved. When we put ourselves between them and that danger, we ourselves become exposed. God is our only shield.

It may mean that you make unpopular decisions regarding your child's activities – decisions that extended family or friends do not understand or agree with. You may encounter resistance from others, and even from your child. For instance, you have become concerned about certain movies so you prohibit them from your child's viewing. However, his cousins are allowed to watch them and it becomes an issue of contention. Maybe the internet has become troublesome and you decide to veto your daughter's involvement for a season. Her friends' parents criticize your decision. Perhaps in an attempt to shield your children from ungodly influence, you opt to teach them at home. Grandparents and fellow Christians are quick to question your choice. In all such situations it will require real determination to stand strong in your conviction of what is best for that particular child. Keep your eye on the goal of protection if you hope to overcome such difficulties.

Providing protection from harm may require sacrifice on our part. Whether you need to create a place of refuge, like Jochobed's basket, or find one, such as a room in the temple, the onus is on you to supply protection. Be creative; be daring; be adventurous. It will require faith, determination, and wisdom. They all can be found in Him.

### 3. Be ready to release them in due time to their destiny.

Investing wholeheartedly, sacrificing your desires so that they might be nurtured, battling on their behalf, and loving them freely binds their heart to yours – and yours to theirs. Letting go can be the most difficult thing to face when you have given yourself to them in every way. But release them we must.

It usually comes in steps. We must train them to recognize the enemy's tactics and teach them to stand in battle. Bit by bit, we must show them how to use the Word (their sword), how to stand in faith (their shield), and how to live victoriously in every situation (nothing can keep us from loving.) Teaching them to stand in battle is an important step in their preparation.

We must also be willing to release them to failure. This is a necessary lesson in the process of maturity. Knowing how to find God in the midst of disappointment and inadequacy will better prepare them for life's adventure – an adventure that is sure to reveal weakness and deficiency. It is God's hand of mercy that allows such insufficiencies to be disclosed so that we might turn to Him and find real strength. Learning how to find that strength is most beneficial.

In time, there will probably be a physical releasing as they leave home and establish a life of their own. With confidence in God, we can know that He will be with them. They will need to make their own choices, but our hope is that His grace and mercy will follow them. In wrong and right decisions, He will not leave them or forsake them. Just as Jochobed released Moses to Pharaoh's court, and Jehosheba saw young Josiah crowned before his people, so we must step back and let them go. We have done our part; we have shielded them until the time was right, and we have had our season of influence. Now they must fly away to fulfill the destiny He has planned.

He has a future and a hope for them. We can know this, we can see this, and we can act on this. Our portion is to behold with faith, discover in reality, and finally, to release them to Him. Our portion is to have influence that will remain.