

Shemot Exodus - Shemot (1.0-6.1)

It was because of God that Joseph was able to bring 12 sons of Israel and their households to Egypt: Reuben, Shimeon, Levi, Yehudah, Yissachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher. They grew and prospered.

Then a new Pharaoh rose to power. He knew nothing of Joseph and feared the Hebrews would turn against him and made them slaves, crushing their spirits with hard labor and even ordered all newborn Hebrew boys killed.

A man from the house of Levi married a Levite woman who birthed a boy. When it was clear she could hide him no longer she made a basket, placed her son inside and placed the basket in the reeds by the bank of the Nile. And the baby's sister stood nearby to watch.

As soon as Pharaoh's daughter came to bath, she saw the basket and looked inside. A crying baby! She took pity on him, saying "It is a Hebrew boy."

The baby's sister came towards Pharaoh's daughter and spoke up, "Shall I get a Hebrew to nurse him?"

"Yes," she said, so the sister fetched her mother who was paid thereafter as a nursemaid. She returned him as an older boy and Pharaoh's daughter adopted him as her own son, and named him Moses for "I drew him from the water."

Moses lived as royalty and matured. He saw his Hebrew brethren and their slave burdens. One day when he saw an Egyptian beating his Hebrew brethren, he killed the Egyptian. And the matter became known and Pharaoh sought to kill him and Moses fled into the desert.

Moses stopped at a well where the seven daughters of Jethro, Midian's high priest, were watering their father's sheep. He saw shepherds trying to chase the girls away. But Moses scattered them away and offered to water their flock. When their father heard, he invited Moses to his home. Later Moses married his daughter Zipporah who bore a son Gershom.

That Pharaoh died and a new crueler one came and the Hebrew people cried out because of their slavery. God heard their cries and sufferings and

God remembered God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to bring the Hebrews to Canaan. God saw the Children of Israel; and God knew.

Moses was a shepherd for his father in law. One day he was guiding the sheep into the wilderness and arrived at Horeb, the mountain of God. There, an angel of God appeared to him in a flame of fire in a thorn bush. He saw and lo! the thorn bush was on fire but did not burn out.

Moses went closer to the bush to study this great sight.

When God saw Moses going to look, God called to him from within the bush and said, "Moses, Moses."

And Moses responded, "Here I am."

God said, "Take off your shoes for you are standing on ground with a holy destiny."

And Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look directly toward God.

God said, "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. I hear My people crying and see them suffer under cruel slave masters. I am ready to rescue them and bring them to My promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Therefore go. I will send you to Pharaoh and bring My people,

Israel, out from slavery in Egypt."

Moses said, "Who am I to go to the Pharaoh and lead the Israelites out from Egypt?"

And God said, "Because I will be with you! And this is for you. It will be the sign that I have sent you. When you bring the Children of Israel out of Egypt, all of you will become servants of God upon this mountain."

Moses said, "Indeed, they will ask for Your Name."

And God said, "I Shall Be As I Shall Be." Now speak to the Children of Israel and say, "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God Eternal has dispatched me to you." Then tell the elders My Plans. They will hearken to your voice. Then, go together to Pharaoh and say, "God, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us and we need three days in the wilderness to make offerings to God."

But, already I know, the Pharaoh will not let you go, even by threat. Then I will stretch out My hand and strike down Egypt with all My miracles and you will leave Egypt, not with empty hands, but with their gold and silver."

Moses replied, "But what if they do not believe me?"

God showed Moses how to perform signs and turn a rod into a serpent, and make his hand turn leprous like snow, then turn it back to normal. Moses then said to God, "O my Lord, I am not a man of speech."

God said, "Who makes a mouth for man, who makes one dumb or deaf, sighted or blind? It is I, God! I will be with you and your brother Aaron shall speak for you."

So Moses, with Jethro's approval, placed his wife and sons on donkeys and left for Egypt with a staff in his hand. God said, "You shall perform these signs with this staff but Pharaoh's heart will be hardened and the day will come when you will say to him, "God said, 'Israel is My son, My first-born. Let My first-born go or I will kill yours.'"

Afterwards God told Aaron, Moses' brother to go to the wilderness and he met Moses at the mountain of God. Moses told Aaron all the Words that God had said and the signs he was to perform.

Then Moses and Aaron gathered the Hebrew elders and Aaron spoke for Moses, who, with his staff, performed the signs God taught him before the eyes of the people. And they believed God had remembered the Children of Israel and seen their sufferings, and they bowed their heads.

So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "God, the God of Israel, said, "Let My people go so that they may celebrate a festival for Me in the wilderness."

The Pharaoh replied, "Who is God? I do not know God and I will not let Israel go." That same day Pharaoh ordered his slaves to find their own straw to make their same quota of bricks.

The people were furious at Moses and Aaron, "Now Pharaoh will kill us with work".

And Moses returned to God and said, "My Lord! For what purpose have You made misfortune the lot of this people? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name, the Pharaoh has abused the people more."

And God said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: with force he will let them go and drive them out of his land."

Questions: 1) Who do you turn to when you are burdened? 2) Moses wanted proof to show God spoke to him. What proof would you give to show God exists? 3) Do you prefer the translation "God Almighty" or "God All-Sufficient"?

Illustration ideas: Moses in the basket... the Hebrews slaves... Moses fleeing to the desert... shepherd Moses... the burning bush... Moses going to Pharaoh...