

# MOSES: FROM PHARAOH'S PALACE TO THE BURNING BUSH

God's people Israel were slaves in Egypt. They cried out to God for deliverance, and He heard them. He chose Moses to do this job. Here is the beginning of Moses' story from Exodus 1-4.

by Shelby Faith

The story of Moses in Egypt began many years before he was born. Back then a relative named Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt. After several years Joseph gained favor with the Pharaoh and was made a powerful ruler, next to the Pharaoh in command.

Joseph's father, Jacob, and his family came to Egypt during a famine. They stayed there and prospered. Jacob's name had been changed to Israel (Genesis 32:28). His family and their descendants became known as Israelites. They were also called Hebrews.

After many years Joseph and all his brothers died. But the Israelites continued to increase and grew great in number. They became very powerful throughout Egypt (Exodus 1:6-7).

Then there arose a new Pharaoh over Egypt who did not know Joseph. He told the Egyptians that the people of Israel were becoming too powerful. "We need to do something so that they don't take over our land." So they made slaves of the Israelites and worked them hard to build their buildings and cities.

For many, many years Israel served as slaves, and their lives became difficult and miserable.

## QUIZ TIME

Why did Pharaoh make the Israelites slaves?

## THE BIRTH OF MOSES

Even as slaves, the children of Israel still grew great in numbers. The more they were mistreated by the Egyptians, the more they multiplied. The Pharaoh came up with a plan to keep them from increasing. He gave a command that all sons born to Israelites be killed.

Moses' parents already had a son, Aaron, and daughter, Miriam, before this command was given.

Soon the mother had another son. When she saw this beautiful baby, she hid him for about three months.

## A FLOATING BASKET

When his mother could no longer hide him, she made a small basket from the grasses growing along the river. She sealed it with asphalt and pitch so it would float. Then she placed her baby into it and put it near the river's bank. His sister, Miriam, watched from a distance to see what would happen.

## QUIZ TIME

Who found Moses floating in a basket near the river bank?

Soon the Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to bathe. Her maidservants were with her. She saw the basket floating near the river's bank and sent her maid to get it.

As she opened it up, she saw the baby. The baby began crying. She felt sorry for the baby and knew he was a Hebrew child.

Miriam came to her and asked, "Should I find someone from among the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" Pharaoh's daughter told her to go and find such a woman. Miriam returned to her mother and told her what had happened. She came quickly.

Pharaoh's daughter said, "Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." Moses' mother gladly took the baby—her son—home and nursed him.

## RAISED BY PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER

The child grew, and when he was old enough to be weaned from his mother, she brought him back to Pharaoh's daughter. He became the son of the Pharaoh's daughter. She called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."

So Moses was born to a Hebrew mother but raised by Pharaoh's daughter. He had a good life and was well educated. He also knew his real family history and knew he was a Hebrew by birth.

## VISITING HIS PEOPLE

When Moses was older, he went out one day and saw some Hebrew slaves working. As he watched, he thought about how hard they had to work. Then he saw an Egyptian beating one of them.

Moses became angry and looked around to see if anyone was watching. Then he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand.

When Pharaoh heard about this, he wanted Moses to be killed. Moses feared for his life. He ran away to a land called Midian.

In Midian he met and married a woman called Zipporah, and they had two sons. He spent many years working for her father taking care of his sheep.

## THE BURNING BUSH

One day Moses was tending his father-in-law's sheep near Mount Horeb. Suddenly he saw a bush burning. He was surprised. The bush was on fire but was not being burned up. He asked himself, "Why isn't this bush burning up?"

Just then a voice came from the bush, saying, "Moses, take off your sandals. You're standing on holy ground. I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I have seen the misery of My people in Egypt and heard their cries. I will bring them out of slavery from the Egyptians and bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey.

"I will send you to Pharaoh so that you may lead My people out of Egypt. Pharaoh will not let them go. But I will strike Egypt with My wonders, and after that he will let My people go."

## QUIZ TIME

What was so unique about the burning bush?

Moses asked, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

God answered, “I will be with you.”

Then Moses said, “But when I come to the children of Israel and say, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me,’ they will ask me Your name. What shall I tell them?”

And God said, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “You shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM’ has sent me.”

“Go to Egypt and gather the elders of Israel together. Say to them, ‘The LORD God of your fathers appeared to me, saying, “I have seen what is being done to My people in Egypt.”’ Then go to the Pharaoh of Egypt and say to him, ‘The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us travel three days into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to our God.’ Pharaoh will not let you go. But after I do My wonders, then he will let you go.”

Moses then told God, “The elders may not believe me, or they may say that You have not appeared to me.”

God said, “What is in your hand?”

Moses answered, “A rod.”

God said, “Throw it on the ground.”

So he threw it on the ground, and it became a snake.

Moses was afraid and ran away. Then God said, “Grab it by the tail.”

Moses came back and reached out his hand and caught it. It became a rod again.

“By this sign the elders will know that I have appeared to you,” God said. “If they don’t believe you, I will give you other signs that will cause them to believe you.”

## QUIZ TIME

What miracle did God give Moses to help convince the elders to believe him?

## MORE EXCUSES

Moses still did not want to return to Egypt. He was trying to find a reason to not go. He said to God, “I don’t speak well.”

Then God said, “I will teach you what to say.”

Moses said, “Please send someone else.”

Then God became angry with Moses. He said, “Aaron, your brother, speaks well. Now you will speak to him and tell him what to say.”

Moses finally realized that he was going to have to obey God and go back to Egypt. *God had chosen him.* (This was the reason Moses had been saved from being killed as a baby. God was going to use Moses to help deliver the Israelites from slavery.)

## QUIZ TIME

What reason did Moses give God for not wanting to return to Egypt?

## BACK TO EGYPT

He returned to his father-in-law and said, “Please let me return to my family in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive.”

He told Moses, “Go in peace.”

Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey. Moses took the rod of God in his hand. They began the long journey back to Egypt.

## QUESTIONS

Here are some questions to think about or talk about as a family:

1. Do you think it may have seemed strange to Moses to know he had a Hebrew slave family, while he was being raised in the royal household of the Pharaoh of Egypt?
2. If you were Moses, would you have wanted to know your parents, sister and brother?
3. Why do you think Moses got angry when he saw one of the Hebrew slaves being beaten?
4. Would you have been surprised to see a bush burning without being burned up? Would you have been surprised to hear a voice coming from the bush?
5. Would you like to have a stick that would turn into a snake when thrown down? Would you be afraid of it? Do you think this was a miracle?
6. Why was Moses afraid to return to Egypt?
7. Should we always obey God, no matter what He asks us to do?



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