

Israel In Egypt

Key Verse:
“...You will be
My witnesses...
to the ends of
the earth.”

Acts 1:8b

Extra: What do you think of Satan’s challenge to God’s plans?

Level 5 lesson 9

Read: Exodus 1

A GREAT STORY

Some of you may have heard of Leon Uris’ famous novel, ‘The Exodus.’ It’s a gripping story and has become something of a modern classic. Today though, we’re going to begin looking at the ‘real thing’ in the Book of Exodus in the Old Testament of the Bible! Let’s ask God to give us wisdom and insight as we study His Word together, and to learn some helpful lessons from the experiences of God’s chosen people the Israelites. Through these people God planned to teach the other nations all about Himself.

Many of you will know the story of how Joseph came to be in Egypt, sold as a slave by his own brothers; under God’s mighty hand, he rose to eventually become Prime Minister of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. After a time, Joseph brought his father Jacob and his brothers down to Egypt to live, because of a terrible famine in their land. God gave Jacob the new name Israel, and all his descendants became known as the ‘Children of Israel,’ or ‘Israelites.’

A GREAT CHANGE

Many years went by, and the ‘Israelites’ increased greatly in numbers. They were popular with the ruling authorities, and became very powerful and wealthy. If this had continued, they may well have been happy to settle down in Egypt for good. Worse still, they could have forgotten God’s plans for them and have gradually forgotten the land of Canaan that God had promised. God was not about to forget them though!

So, soon after Pharaoh’s death, a new Pharaoh took the throne of Egypt and things began to change greatly! He didn’t know Joseph or the good things he’d done. All he noticed was how many Israelites there were and what a threat they could be to him.

It wasn’t long before the Israelites lost their privileged position of wealth and prosperity, and were turned into slaves!

GREAT TROUBLE

Pharaoh set cruel slave-masters over them and forced them to build the famous cities of Pithom and Ramses, where many Egyptian treasures were stored. Yet instead of their hardship destroying and weakening them, the Israelites grew even more in number! Seeing this, Pharaoh applied even more pressure. The poor Israelites must have suffered terribly at this time!

Seeing that even this did not work, Pharaoh came up with an even more cruel and wicked plan. He ordered the Hebrew midwives, who helped with the births, to kill all Israelite baby boys but to keep the girls alive. What a callous, evil man!

However, these women respected and honoured God and refused to carry out the King’s orders. This was a very risky thing to do. Notice though, that God rewarded them for their faith and courage (v20,21).

Unable to see his evil order carried out, Pharaoh then ordered his own people, the Egyptians, to do it instead. But this didn’t work either! This reminds us of the massacre of the innocent children at the time when the Lord Jesus was born, recorded in Matthew 2. Behind the scenes in both cases, of course, we can see the evil hand of Satan at work to oppose God’s plans.

Here in Exodus, Satan tried to break the line of Christ’s ancestors so Jesus would never even be born. While later in Matthew, he tried to kill Jesus at His birth. God is greater and more powerful than Satan or any human king, so none of Pharaoh’s wicked plans could prevent the Israelites increasing in numbers and getting stronger.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Write down 3 things that the introduction tells us about the Children of Israel.	.....
2. Why do you think all the plans of the new King didn’t work?	.....
3. Why did God allow the Israelites’ fortunes to change?	.....
4. Why did the midwives disobey Pharaoh’s order?	.....
5. What did Satan hope to achieve by opposing God’s plan?	.....

My Name is Age

Moses: A Worker for God

Key Verse:

“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.”

Hebrews 11:24

Extra: How does God prepare people to be His workers today?

Level 5 Lesson 10

Read Exodus 2

ANXIOUS BEGINNINGS

Into this hostile environment, a little Israelite boy was born one day. His parents had to keep their baby out of sight though, because of Pharaoh’s terrible edict that all Israelite boys were to be killed at birth. For three months they managed to keep him hidden, but when it became impossible to hide him any longer, his mother and father came up with an audacious plan. They made a basket of papyrus reeds, waterproofed it with tar, and placing their dear little baby boy inside it, they hid it among the reeds down by the bank of the River Nile. This was a tremendous act of faith, because by doing this, they were trusting God to look after their little boy (see Hebrews 11:23).

So it was that soon after, when the Pharaoh’s daughter came down to the river to bathe, she saw the basket among the reeds and sent one of her maids to get it. We can imagine her surprise upon opening it to find the helpless baby boy! The Princess knew immediately it was a Hebrew baby, but his cries touched her heart deeply. At that moment, Miriam the baby’s elder sister, suddenly ‘appeared’ and offered to get someone to nurse the baby. The Princess willingly agreed and off ran the little girl to find the baby’s own mother! God responded to the faith of his parents and saved his life. God had His own plans for this little boy! He was to be Moses; God’s great deliverer, leader, and lawgiver for His people, the Children of Israel.

MOSES SINS

The years passed by. Pharaoh’s daughter eventually adopted him as her own son and named him ‘Moses.’ He grew up in Pharaoh’s own palace with all the rights and privileges of royalty. But Moses always knew where he came from and where he really belonged (see Key Verse). His mother had taught him about God and God’s plans for Israel. His loyalty and his concerns were always for his own suffering people of Israel.

One day, after he was grown up, he was out walking when he saw an Egyptian taskmaster cruelly beating a helpless Hebrew slave. Thinking that no-one was watching, he killed the Egyptian and buried his body in the sand. This was a terrible sin and certainly not a part of God’s plan for him.

The very next day, he saw two of his own people fighting. But when he told them off for fighting with one another, he was shocked when one of them responded, “Who do you think you are? Are you going to kill me too, like that Egyptian yesterday?” Someone HAD been watching! Before long, Pharaoh would surely know. Moses was now in great danger and must run for his life before it was too late!

SIN’S CONSEQUENCES

For 40 long years he lived as an exile, in the far-off land of Midian. But God had not given up on him. He was still preparing him to lead His people out of slavery. Moses eventually married a local lady, and God blessed them with a lovely baby boy of their own.

For eighty years God was at work in Moses’ life getting him ready for the job of leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt and into the Land of Canaan, which He had promised to their ancestors. Forty years were spent learning lessons in the royal courts of Egypt. Then, it took another forty years to learn different lessons, while looking after sheep out in the hills.

Meanwhile back in Egypt, Pharaoh died, but the next one treated the Israelites just as badly. God knew all about their suffering though, and had a plan to bring about their release! You can learn about how this all happened in the next few lessons.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Explain how Moses’ parents showed their faith in God (see also Hebrews 11:23)

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2. Why do you think Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter?

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3. What sins do you think Moses committed?

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4. Can you suggest any ways that sins like these can be avoided?

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5. In what ways do you think God was preparing His worker, Moses?

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God Commissions Moses

Key Verse:
“I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”

Romans 9:17

Level 5 Lesson 11

Extra: Explain what “I AM who I AM” means.

Read Exodus 3

AN AMAZING SIGHT

God was now ready to send Moses back to the land of Egypt to do the job for which He’d prepared him. One day, as Moses stood overlooking his flock of sheep, grazing contentedly on the slopes of Mount Horeb, something caught his attention. A small bush had suddenly burst into flame. With mounting curiosity he went over to investigate more closely and made a strange discovery. The bush although ‘on fire’ was not being burnt up!

Puzzled, he moved even closer to observe this bizarre phenomenon. He was startled to hear a voice address him personally from the flaming bush! “Do not come any closer Moses. Take off your sandals, for you are standing on Holy ground!” It was the voice of God and Moses hurriedly did as he was told, falling on his face in God’s awesome presence. Sometimes it is good to remind ourselves just who God is, and how we must always treat Him with awe and respect.

AN IMPORTANT CONVERSATION

God had some very important things to say to Moses. Firstly He told him that He knew just how miserable His people were as slaves down in Egypt. He had heard their prayers crying out to Him for deliverance. “So,” said God, “I have come down to rescue them... and bring them into a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey.” Moses was no doubt excited to hear this great news! But when God told Moses that he was to be the agent God would use to deliver them, Moses was not so thrilled! He began to splutter and tell the Lord that he was just an ordinary man and certainly not up to doing that sort of thing.

However the Lord replied, “I will be with you!”

Unconvinced, Moses had another excuse. The Israelites might not believe him: they’d want to know the name of the person that sent him.

God gave him a wonderful answer, “Tell them I AM WHO I AM. I AM has sent me unto you.” This was God Himself speaking, the Eternal, Living One, who is great and glorious!

He reminded Moses that He was the God of his fathers, the God with whom the Israelites had a special agreement. The One they could rely on completely.

A DIFFICULT TASK

God then told Moses he was to return to Egypt and gather the Elders of Israel together. He was to tell them that the Lord had appeared to him, that the Lord was concerned for His people, and that the Lord would set them free and bring them into their own land.

Then Moses was to go with the Elders to Pharaoh with the following demand: “Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the Lord our God.” However, at this point God warned Moses that Pharaoh would not let them go. At least, not until God had shown just how powerful He was, through a number of wonders He would perform in Egypt (look back at the Key Verse).

Then the Egyptians would be glad for them to go; so glad, that they would load them up with gold, silver and fancy clothing – their payment for four hundred years of unpaid wages!!

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. What does the burning bush incident teach us about God?	.....
2. How could God’s promise to Moses, “I will be with you”, have been a help to him?	.....
3. What help would it be to the Israelites to be reminded of God’s name “I AM”?	.....
4. How could this also be of help to a young Christian today?	.....
5. Explain what you think the Key Verse means.	.....

Moses Returns to Egypt

Key Verse:
“I can do everything through Him [Christ] who gives me strength.”

Philippians 4:13

Extra: Think of a time when you have known God’s encouragement and help, and share it with us.

Level 5 Lesson 12

Read Exodus 4

MOSES’ OBJECTIONS

The more Moses thought about the job God had for him bringing the Children of Israel out of Egypt, the less confident he was! That wasn’t necessarily a bad thing, if only he had turned to God for help. Instead, he looked at the size of the task and compared that with his own abilities; and what he thought he could achieve on his own.

Naturally, his own abilities fell short and his heart filled with fears and doubts. He began to make excuses to God why he felt the task was beyond him. Firstly, he was afraid that the people wouldn’t believe him or even listen to him. And what if they did? How could he speak to Pharaoh or the nation since he was no orator or skilled speaker? It could all get really embarrassing, not to mention downright dangerous!

GOD’S SOLUTIONS

God was extremely patient with Moses (as He is with all of us) and graciously encouraged Moses by working three miracles and assuring Moses that he would be able to do these same miracles when required. These miracles were to be proof that God was sending him, an encouragement that God was working with him, and later on, a warning to the Egyptians that the Lord was working for His people.

First of all, God told Moses to throw his staff on the ground. Moses obeyed and it turned into a writhing snake! “Pick it up by the tail!” God instructed him. Carefully, Moses obeyed and the snake became his old staff once again! Of course, to the Egyptians, the snake was a symbol of both power and life. It pictured the goddess who they believed protected the Pharaoh himself. So, by this sign, God reminded Moses that He was more powerful than Pharaoh and the ‘gods’ of Egypt. Not only that, He was willing to make this power available to His servant Moses, too.

The second miracle of Moses’ hand turning leprous and then being made like new again, was another message of God’s superiority over Egypt’s ‘gods.’ The Egyptians considered leprosy a sure killer, but God showed that He and He alone, had the power of life and death.

The third miracle emphasised God’s message even more. By giving Moses power to turn the River Nile’s water into blood, God gave further proof that His servant was being given power to overcome the Egyptians, who worshipped the Nile as the very source of life.

MORE OBJECTIONS

Can you believe that even after all this Moses still doubted!!? He told God that he could not ‘think on his feet’ and was such a slow speaker: surely he was not the right man for the job. Graciously, God reminded him that He was the Creator: He had made Moses and it was no problem to give Moses the right words at the right time (v11). Still Moses was not convinced and asked that God send someone else! God was angry at Moses’ lack of faith, but agreed to let Aaron, Moses’ brother, accompany him and be the spokesman.

MOSES’ OBEDIENCE

At this, Moses agreed to go. With his father-in-law’s permission he packed up everything and set out. However, he almost died on the way, and was only saved when God’s command of circumcision was obeyed. Of course, this was because it was the sign, between God and His people, of their special agreement, and Moses should have made sure it was done! Along the way, Moses met up with his brother Aaron and together they returned to Egypt, met with the Elders of Israel; passed on God’s message and showed them God’s miraculous signs. When the Israelites heard that the Lord was concerned about them, they believed Moses’ message, and in thankfulness, bowed down and worshipped the Lord. The great battle with Pharaoh and the ‘gods’ of Egypt was about to begin!

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Why do you think Moses objected to doing the job God had for him?	.....
2. Why might it not be a bad thing for Moses to admit that he wasn’t able to deliver Israel?	.....
3. Give THREE reasons for the miracles.	.....
4. Write down THREE messages from God through these miracles.
5. Read the Key Verse: what do you think the Lord wants YOU to do?

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