

Exodus

This is the story of how the Israelites left Egypt,
how they made their exodus, their departure, from Egypt.
The Book of Exodus

Chapter 1

After about 300 years,
when the Israelites had grown to a huge number,
the Egyptians began to see the Israelites as a danger to Egypt.

So they forced the Israelites into slavery
and made their life miserable.

The Egyptians forced the Israelites
to make bricks and build cities.

But the more the Israelites were oppressed,
the more they increased in number.

So the Egyptian king told the Israelite midwives
to kill all new-born boys.

But the midwives let the baby boys live
and God was pleased with the midwives and blessed them.

Pharaoh then ordered all Israelite baby boys
to be drowned in the river.

Dear God, please stop people, especially children,
from being used as slaves

Chapter 2

One Israelite mother hid her baby boy for three months.

When she could no longer hide him, she put him in a basket and placed the basket among reeds near a river bank.

The basket was found by Pharaoh's daughter when she went to bathe in the river.

She felt sorry for the baby and decided to keep it.

The baby's sister saw all this happen and asked Pharaoh's daughter if she'd like a nurse for the baby.

Pharaoh's daughter agreed, and so the baby's mother was paid by Pharaoh's daughter to be the baby's nurse.

When the child was weaned, he was taken to Pharaoh's daughter who treated him like her own son.

She named the baby Moses.

When Moses became a man, he visited the Israelites and saw their hard life.

He saw an Egyptian hit one of the Israelites so he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand.

But people found out; and so did Pharaoh who decided to kill Moses.

Moses then fled to the land of Midian.

The priest of Midian had 7 daughters.

One day when they drew water for their father's sheep they were driven away from the well by some shepherds.

Moses protected them from the shepherds and helped them get water from the well.

Their father, Jethro, was grateful to Moses and invited him for a meal.

Moses then stayed with Jethro who gave him his daughter Zipporah for a wife.

Dear God, please protect all new-born babies,
especially baby girls

Chapter 3

The Israelites begged God to free them from slavery in Egypt.

God heard their cry and called Moses to be their leader.

God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and said to him

"I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

I have heard the prayers of my people in Egypt.

I now send you to Pharaoh to win the freedom of my people."

Moses asked what was God's name.

God replied "I Am who Am.

Tell the people 'I Am has sent me to you'."

Dear God, God of life, God of Abraham, we praise you Lord

Chapter 4

Moses said to God

"What if the people won't believe you sent me?"

God said "Throw your staff onto the ground."

When Moses threw his staff onto the ground, it became a snake.

"Catch it by the tail" said God.

When Moses caught it by the tail, it changed back into a staff.

Moses said to God "I'm a poor speaker."

God said "Aaron your older brother can be your mouthpiece.

Now go back to Egypt. It's safe to go back now;

the people who wanted to kill you are dead."

Back in Egypt, Moses and Aaron gathered the Israelite leaders and told them all that God had said.

The elders rejoiced that God was going to help them.

Dear God, God of Moses and Aaron, we praise you Lord

Chapters 5, 6

Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said
"God says: 'let my people go into the desert to worship me'."

Pharaoh not only refused to let them go;
he also made their life more difficult
by forcing them to gather their own straw for making bricks.

The people complained to Moses and Aaron
for having made their life more difficult.

So Moses prayed to God for help
and God said he would force Pharaoh to let the people go.

Dear God, please don't let me make life difficult
for other people

Chapter 7

Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh again
and showed him Aaron's staff changing into a snake.

When Pharaoh's magicians were able to do the same thing
Aaron's staff swallowed up the magicians' staffs.

But Pharaoh's heart stayed stubborn
and he wouldn't listen to Moses and Aaron.

So God told Moses and Aaron
to go to the river the next morning.

When they saw Pharaoh there
Aaron struck the river with his staff
and the river and all water throughout Egypt turned into blood.

But Pharaoh still would not let the Israelites go.

Dear God, please soften stubborn hearts
that make life difficult for other people

Chapter 8

After seven days, God told Moses and Aaron to go to Pharaoh again, this time causing a plague of frogs to cover the land when Pharaoh again refused to let the Israelites go.

Then God got Aaron to strike the ground and the dust turned into mosquitoes which attacked people and animals throughout Egypt.

But still Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go.

Next there was a plague of flies which afflicted every place except the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived.

Pharaoh then said the Israelites could go and he asked Moses to pray for the flies to stop.

But once the flies stopped, Pharaoh changed his mind and would not let the Israelites go.

Dear God, please help all world leaders
to listen to your voice

Chapter 9

Through Moses, God kept saying to Pharaoh "Let my people go to offer me worship."

But Pharaoh kept refusing to let the people go.

So God sent three more plagues : all the Egyptian's animals died, then all the Egyptians were covered with boils, then the land was hit by a fierce hailstorm.

During the hailstorm, Pharaoh said the people could go. But as soon as the storm stopped, he changed his mind again.

Dear God, please help us not to ignore your voice

Chapter 10

Pharaoh's advisers urged him to let the Israelites go.

They said to him

"How much longer is this affair going to go on?

Let the Israelites go before Egypt is ruined."

Pharaoh agreed to let the men go,

but not the rest of the people.

So God sent two more plagues on the Egyptians:

locusts which devoured all the plants and trees

and then three days of total darkness,

except in the land where the Israelites lived.

But even after the above nine plagues,

Pharaoh still wouldn't let the Israelites go.

Dear God, stubbornness can sometimes be a good thing,
but please don't let me be stubborn
if that will hurt other people

Chapter 11

One last time God sent Moses to Pharaoh, with this message:

"Tonight at midnight, God's angel will pass through Egypt.

All the first-born in the land of Egypt will die,

except the first-born of the Israelites."

Dear God, please bless everyone in Egypt!

Chapters 12, 13

God said to Moses and Aaron "From now on, this month is to be the first month of your year.

On the evening of the 14th day of this month each family must kill and eat a one year old male sheep or goat. Some of its blood must be put on your front door.

You must eat it in a hurry, with a belt round your waist, sandals on your feet and a staff in your hand.

This night I will go through the land of Egypt and strike every first-born Egyptian.

But when I see the blood on your doors I shall PASS OVER your homes and you shall be unharmed.

Each year you must remember this night. Each year you must observe this feast of the Passover. You also must consecrate all first-born to me."

That night God indeed struck dead the first-born of all the Egyptians, including the son of Pharaoh

There was great mourning in Egypt and Pharaoh finally agreed to let the Israelites go.

The Israelites now numbered about 600,000 men, having been in Egypt exactly 430 years.

As the people travelled, God went before them in the form of a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night.

Dear God, please help me understand
the full meaning of the Passover story

Chapter 14

Not long after the Israelites left Egypt
Pharaoh again changed his mind.

He decided to catch the Israelites
and make them return to Egypt.

The Israelites were near the edge of the Red Sea
when they saw the Egyptians approaching.

The Israelites cried out in fear
but Moses said to them "Do not be afraid.
God will do the fighting for you."

God then told Moses to stretch out his staff over the sea.
After he did so, a strong wind blew all night
and caused the waters to part.

Then the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground,
with walls of water on both sides.

The Egyptians gave chase and also went into the sea.

When the Israelites had crossed to the other side
Moses again stretched out his staff over the sea
and this time the sea returned to its normal flow,
drowning all the Egyptians.

The people offered thanksgiving and praise to God.

Dear God, please rescue people in trouble,
just as you rescued the Israelites
when they were in trouble

Chapter 15

The Israelites used this prayer to thank and praise God:

"The Lord has covered himself in glory,
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and my song, he is my salvation.

This is my God, I praise him. The Lord is his name.

Lord, when you blew over the waters,
they piled high on two sides.

Lord, only you are God, there is no other.

Lord, you are our king for ever."

Dear God, you are my strength and my salvation

Chapter 16

As the Israelites traveled through the desert
they began to complain about not having enough food.

So God rained down bread, manna, from heaven
in the form of a coating of dew

which appeared on the ground each morning,
as well as flocks of quails which came every evening.

For forty years the Israelites ate manna and quails,
bread and birds.

Dear God, thank you for the food we have each day

Chapter 17

In one place where there was no water
the people grumbled against Moses :

"Give us water to drink or else we will die."

Moses asked God for help

and God told Moses to strike a large rock with his staff.

When Moses did this, water flowed from the rock.

In another place the Israelites were attacked by the Amalekites.

Moses prayed while Joshua led the people in battle.

As long as Moses kept his arms raised up in prayer,
the Israelites were winning.

But when Moses let his arms down,
the Amalekites started winning.

So Aaron and Hur got Moses to sit on a rock
and they supported his hands until sunset.

Joshua and the people then won the battle.

Dear God, please help us understand the power of prayer

Chapter 18

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, heard about all
that God had done for Moses and the Israelites,
so he visited Moses in the desert.

Jethro saw that Moses was struggling
to do so much administration by himself.

Jethro suggested that Moses appoint men to help him:
leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

Moses accepted this advice
and appointed judges as Jethro suggested.

These judges handled all small issues
and referred only difficult cases to Moses.

Dear God, please make us willing
to share responsibilities with other people

Chapter 19

The Israelites kept traveling and came to Mount Sinai (Mount Horeb).

Through Moses, God told the people to prepare themselves for a special revelation from Heaven.

Three days later a thick cloud covered the mountain accompanied by lightning and thunder and a trumpet blast which grew louder and louder.

God then called Moses to the top of the mountain and gave him "The Ten Commandments".

Dear God, please make us willing to hear your voice

Chapter 20

The Ten Commandments given by God to Moses:

- 1: I am the Lord your God.
Do not worship anyone or anything else.
- 2: Use my name with respect. Do not insult my name.
- 3: Make the Sabbath Day a holy day each week.
- 4: Honor your father and your mother.
- 5: Do not kill.
- 6: Do not commit adultery.
- 7: Do not steal.
- 8: Do not tell lies.
- 9: Do not lust after someone else's wife.
- 10: Do not desire what belongs to someone else.

Dear God, please help us
to put these commandments into practice

Chapter 21

Laws announced by Moses:

"When you buy an Israelite slave,
you may keep him for only six years.
In the seventh year he is free to leave or stay.

Put to death anyone who kills someone in cold blood,
anyone who curses or strikes his father or mother.

If someone injures another person,
the compensation will be according to the formula
eye for eye, tooth for tooth, burn for burn, injury for injury."

Dear God, please help people not to seek revenge

Chapter 22

Laws announced by Moses:

"If a man seduces a virgin, he must marry her.

A sorceress must be put to death.

Anyone who has intercourse with an animal must die.

Do not discriminate against foreigners,
for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.

Do not be harsh to widows and orphans.

Do not demand interest if you make a loan to a poor person.

Always remember you are a people consecrated to God."

Dear God, please help us not to hurt other people

Chapter 23

Moses told the people:

"Don't be unfair to anyone, friend or foe.

Work for six days, then rest on the seventh day.

Work your land for six years,

then let the land rest and recover in the seventh year.

Three times a year you must celebrate special feasts:

the Feast of Unleavened Bread,

the Feast of Harvest,

the Feast of Ingathering.

On these three feasts

all men must present themselves before the Lord."

God's promise:

"I will send an angel before you to protect you
and bring you to the land I have prepared for you.

Eventually you will possess this special land
and take it over from the peoples who live there now."

Dear God, please help everyone love you

Chapter 24

God invited Moses, Aaron, Nadab

and 70 other men to see him face to face.

They saw God face to face and ate and drank in his presence.

Under God's feet the ground was like a pure blue jewel.

God then invited Moses to go up the mountain.

A cloud covered the mountain

and for 6 days the glory of the Lord settled on the mountain.

On the seventh day God spoke with Moses inside the cloud.

Moses stayed on the mountain for about 40 days.

Dear God, thank you for times of prayer

Chapter 25

God said to Moses:

"Build me a sacred tent so that I may live among the people.

Let everyone follow the promptings of their heart
in making contributions for the building of the temple.

Make a sacred chest (ark) to hold the stone tablets on which
are the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod and some manna.

Also make a table for the bread of offering,
and a golden lamp-stand."

Dear God, thank you for churches
and other special places for prayer

Chapters 26, 27

God said to Moses:

"Make a cover for the sacred tent.

Make the cover's support frames of acacia wood.

Make a veil of purple, violet and red
behind which to put the sacred chest.

Make an altar out of acacia wood.

Make altar vessels out of bronze.

Make a sacred courtyard to go around the tent.

Place a sacred flame outside the veil
and keep the flame burning from night till morning."

Dear God, thank you for churches
and other special places for prayer

Chapters 28, 29

God said to Moses:

"Your brother Aaron and his sons
will be priests in my service.

Make sacred vestments for them:
breastpiece, ephod, robe, tunic, turban and sash.

You must anoint Aaron and his sons
and consecrate them to serve me as priests."

Dear God, please bless and protect all sacred ministers

Chapter 30

God said to Moses:

"Every morning offer one lamb as a sacrifice for the people.

Every evening offer another lamb
as a sacrifice for the people.

I will meet the people of Israel
in the place consecrated to my glory.

I will remain with the people of Israel and be their God.
They will know that it is I who brought them out of Egypt."

Dear God, you created us, we are your people

Chapter 31

God said to Moses:

"The Israelites must make the sabbath a holy day each week,
because the sabbath is a sign between you and me.

Do not do any ordinary work on the sabbath.

Work for six days, then rest on the sabbath.

Consecrate the sabbath to me."

God's words were inscribed on two stone tablets.

Dear God, please help us to make Sunday a holy day

Chapter 32

Moses stayed on the mountain about 40 days.

During this time the people told Aaron to make them a god out of gold.

Aaron made a golden calf and the people worshipped it.

On the mountain, God said to Moses

"Go down now,

because the people have been unfaithful to me.

I will punish them, but of you I will make a great nation."

Moses pleaded with God not to punish the people.

When Moses, carrying the two tablets, came down the mountain

he saw the people partying before the golden calf.

He threw down the tablets and broke them.

He smashed the golden calf.

The men of the tribe of Levi were then commissioned to go through the camp and kill many men.

About 3,000 men were killed.

Dear God, please don't let us ever worship
anyone or anything except you

Chapter 33

The Israelites continued their journey through the desert.

Wherever the people camped, Moses would put the Sacred Tent outside, some distance from the camp.

Whenever Moses went out to the Tent, the pillar of cloud came down on the Tent and God spoke with Moses face to face, just like friends speak to each other.

The Israelites would go out to the Tent for Moses to consult God for them.

Dear God, thank you for your friendship

Chapter 34

Again Moses went up the mountain and stood before God. God described himself: "I am the Lord, a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness."

When Moses came down from the mountain the skin on his face was radiant after speaking with God.

Dear God, we praise your tenderness and compassion

Chapter 35

Moses encouraged the Israelites to give willingly and generously in building the Tent of Meeting. Everyone whose heart was moved to help brought their gifts for the Lord.

Dear God, move our hearts to help other people

Chapter 36

The Israelites were so generous towards building the Tent that Moses was told by the craftsmen: "The people are bringing more than is needed for the Lord's Tent."

The skilled workers made the tabernacle, the framework and the veil for the Tent of Meeting.

Dear God, please give me a generous heart

Chapters 37, 38

The skilled workers next made the ark, then the table for the bread offerings, then the lamp-stand and the altar of incense.

Next they made the altar of sacrifice, the bronze basin and the courtyard with its special curtains.

Dear God, please bless all skilled workers

Chapter 39

The skilled workers made the high priest's vestments: his ephod, his breastpiece, his robe.

Vestments were also made for the ordinary priests.

When everything for the whole Tent was finished, Moses examined all the work.

He saw what a good job the workers had done.

Moses then blessed all the workers.

Dear God, please help me always to do a good job

Chapter 40

God said to Moses:

"On the first day of the first month, consecrate and start using the Tent of Meeting.

Use chrism to anoint all the furnishings.

Anoint Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests."

Moses did everything that God asked.

Then a cloud covered the Tent and the glory of God filled the sacred site.

At every stage of their journey in the desert, the Israelites would continue their march whenever the cloud rose from the sacred site.

A fire shone within the cloud at night.

Dear God, please guide us on our way through life

This has been the story of how the Israelites left Egypt ,
and how they made their exodus from Egypt.

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