


EXODUS

BY JAMES YOUNG

 **LIVING WAY**
BIBLE STUDY



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Our purpose is to help equip believers to live joyfully in God's redeeming love and to share with others God's plan of salvation.

It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit will use this study to help you grow in your knowledge and appreciation of our God and His Word.

*“But grow in the grace and
knowledge of our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ.”*

2 PETER 3:18

STUDY STRUCTURE



Personal Study



Small Group Study



Leader's Overview



Author's Commentary

LIVING WAY BIBLE STUDY SUGGESTS THIS FOUR-STEP METHOD

1. **PERSONAL** – The student prays for guidance from the Holy Spirit and answers the Personal Application (P. A.) questions at home using only the Bible (no commentaries).
2. **SMALL GROUPS** – The class meets for an opening and divides into small groups of 8–10 people. The small group leader guides the group through the P. A. questions, encouraging each to share their answers and discuss further as time allows.
3. **THE MESSAGE** – The lecture or message is given by a pastor or layperson who has researched the material and presents the study, giving personal insight and augmenting, but not duplicating, the author's comments.
4. **THE NARRATIVE** – The author's comments or narrative, along with the P. A. questions for the next lesson, are given out at the end of the class. At the next class meeting, before answering the P. A. questions, the small groups may choose to review the author's comments of the last lesson and share what each has highlighted as meaningful or important.

With this four-step method the student has the opportunity to study the particular section of Scripture covered by the lesson from four different approaches. This emphasizes the Bible text and gives the student an understanding and ownership for each section studied.

Each lesson should be stapled together according to the number of the lesson in the right-hand corner of the page. The P. A. questions for the next week should be attached after the author's narrative for the current week, as they will be the home study for the next class session.

The first meeting of the class is an introduction to the study. Since the members of the small groups have no P. A. questions to discuss at the first meeting, they may use the time to get acquainted or to tell what they hope to receive by studying this course. At the first meeting, the lecturer presents background information about the course, using the Introduction lesson as a guide.

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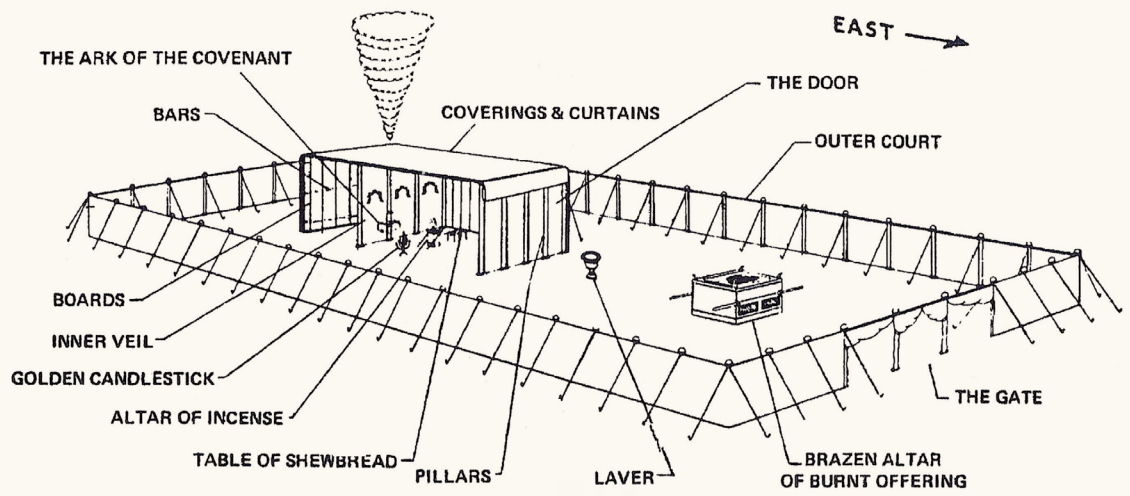
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Working Tabernacle

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

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Introduction to the Old Testament

The Bible is the greatest work of literature, history and theology ever written. In its production, preservation, proclamation, and effect on peoples' lives it stands alone as the most unique book ever written. As you explore this life changing book you can't help but be amazed at the unity of message and purpose. There is unity in its diversity of authors, time span, and literary forms. The Old and New Testaments smoothly blend to create a bold sweep from eternity past to eternity future, from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell. In these 66 books we discover our past, understand our present, and attain hope for our future.

The Old Testament consists of 39 books, the same as found in the Hebrew Bible, which were composed between 1400 BC and 400 BC. They are placed into three major divisions: the Historical, the Poetical Books, and the Prophetical Books. They include:

HISTORICAL (17)

Pentateuch

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

History to the Exile

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles

POETICAL (5)

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

PROPHETICAL (17)

Major Prophets (5)

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

Minor Prophets to the Exile

Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah

History of the Return from Exile

Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

Prophets of the Return from Exile

Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Books of the Old Testament

The Old Testament for many is an ancient book that has no real purpose and meaning to a New Testament believer. However, as we begin our study of Exodus, we will see that the Old Testament has much to say to the 21st century believer. For in the Old Testament, we see redemptive history that lays the foundation upon which the New Testament is built. There is a progressive revelation in the Scriptures, and what is anticipated in the Old Testament is unfolded in the New. The Old points ahead and the New points back to the central event in all history, the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. In fact, we will discover that on every page of God's living Word, in both the Old and New Testament, Jesus Christ is the central character and His message of salvation through faith for all is the central message.

Introduction to the Pentateuch

The Five Books of Moses are variously known as the Law, the Torah (Hebrew for Law), the Law of Moses, the "five-fifths of the Law," and the Pentateuch. The word Pentateuch is derived from the Greek words penta (five) and teuchos (scroll or book).

In the Pentateuch God reveals His plan to use Israel as His chosen people and the cradle of His self-revelation, which was to reach its summit in the gift of the Messiah, our Savior Jesus Christ. Recorded are the creation of the universe and man; the Fall into sin; the promise of the Redeemer; the degeneration of the human family; the Flood; the calling of Abram to found the nation of Israel; slavery of that nation in Egypt and its deliverance under the leadership of Moses; the ordering of Israel's spiritual, social and economic life; the journey through the wilderness to the border of Canaan, the Promised Land; Moses' final blessing under God and calling the nation to faithfulness to the Lord Jehovah.

Both Hebrew and Christian tradition from the earliest times ascribed the authorship of the five books of the Pentateuch to Moses. Recent archaeological finds have verified that writing was common to the Mosaic era. Throughout the Pentateuch there are references to Mosaic authorship. (Exodus 17:14, 24:4, 34:27; Numbers 33:2; Deuteronomy 31:9, 24)

Mosaic authorship is verified by the other Old Testament books, such as Joshua 1:7-8; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Chronicles 34:14; Ezra 3:2; Nehemiah 8:1; and Malachi 4:4.

The New Testament also gives convincing proof for Mosaic authorship in these verses: Matthew 8:4; Mark 7:10, 12:26; Luke 16:29-31, 24:44; John 1:45, 5:46; Acts 3:21-22, 26:22; and Romans 10:5.

An Introduction to the Man Called Moses

Moses is the man most often mentioned in the Old Testament. He was the leader of the Hebrews in their escape from Egypt. He was also the man who received the Ten Commandments and the Old Testament Law from God.

Moses was the son of Hebrew slaves in Egypt. Just after he was born, the Pharaoh ordered that all male Hebrew babies were to be killed. Moses' mother made a waterproof basket, placed her

baby son in it, and hid it in the rushes near the shore of the Nile River. She told her daughter, Miriam, to watch and see what might happen to the baby. The basket and baby were found by an Egyptian princess, who adopted Moses. She hired Moses' mother to take care of him while he was young. In this way, Moses grew up understanding the beliefs and customs of both the Hebrews and the Egyptians.

When Moses was 40 years old, he had to flee from Egypt because he killed an Egyptian while trying to defend an Israelite slave. Moses lived in the wilderness another 40 years. Then God spoke to him from the burning bush. God told Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt to a Promised Land, that He, the great God of Israel, would provide.

Moses said he could not lead because he was not a good speaker. But God told him his brother Aaron would be his helper and do the speaking. It took ten terrible plagues sent by God on Egypt before Pharaoh said the Israelites could leave. Even then he changed his mind and sent his army to bring them back. God defeated Pharaoh by opening the Red Sea for the Israelites to go through safely, then closing it on the Egyptian army that tried to follow them. So, the Israelites escaped.

As Moses led the children of Israel to freedom, God gave him the Ten Commandments – the civil and ceremonial laws by which God would rule His chosen people. As Moses led the children of Israel to the borders of Canaan, they did not believe that God would actually give them this land. This unbelief caused the children of Israel to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. Throughout this time Moses led his people, going to God for direction, guidance and strength. It was during this time that Moses also disobeyed the Lord and consequently was not allowed to lead Israel into the promised land.

Just before Moses turned the leadership over to Joshua, he gave a great speech. He reminded the Israelites of how God led them through their years in the wilderness and how they had often failed to obey God. He reminded them of the Ten Commandments and other instructions God had given them. He emphasized that God expected love and obedience from them, not grumblings and complaining. He told them how important it was to build God's Word into their lives and to teach it to their children. Most of the book of Deuteronomy is a record of this final speech. Moses died at the age of 120 and was buried by God in the land of Moab.

The major events in the life of Moses can be found in:

1. Childhood and early life (Exodus 2:1-10)
2. The Burning Bush (Exodus 3:2, 4:17)
3. Led Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 12)
4. Giving the Law at Sinai (Exodus 19-40)
5. Farewell Speeches (Deuteronomy 1-33)
6. Death (Deuteronomy)

Moses' life can be divided into 40-year periods:

1. 40 years in Pharaoh's palace in Egypt
2. 40 years in the desert in Midian
3. 40 years in the wilderness as the leader of Israel

For in the Old Testament, we see redemptive history that lays the foundation upon which the New Testament is built. There is a progressive revelation in the Scriptures, and what is anticipated in the Old Testament is unfolded in the New. The Old points ahead and the New points back to the central event in all history, the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

An Introduction to Exodus the Second Book of the Pentateuch

Genesis closes with Jacob's death and his family in Egypt. At this point, Israel is an extended family of 70 souls (Genesis 46:27) beginning a new life in Egypt. Exodus opens some 430 years later with the people of Israel numbering about 3,500,000 and in slavery.

The word Exodus means "the way out" and tells of redemption by blood and power. The message of Exodus is given briefly in Hebrews 11:23-29. It states: "By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned."

A working outline for Exodus might be:

- I. Description of Bondage (Chapters 1-6)
 - A. Bondage in Egypt (1-2)
 - B. Call of Moses for deliverance from Bondage (3-6)
- II. Deliverance from Bondage (7-18)
 - A. The Plagues (7-10)
 - B. The Passover (11-12)
 - C. Red Sea Crossing (13-15)
 - D. Journey to Mt. Sinai (16-18)
- III. God's Revelation to His Chosen People
 - A. Ten Commandments (19-20)
 - B. Book of the Covenant (21-24)
 - C. Plans for the tabernacle (25-27)
 - D. Priests and Levites (28-31)
 - E. The Golden Calf (32-34)
 - F. Completion of the tabernacle (35-40)

On every page of God's living Word, in both the Old and New Testament, Jesus Christ is the central character and His message of salvation through faith for all is the central message.

KEY VERSE: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." (Exodus 20:2)

DATE: Probably composed during the 40-year wilderness journey, between 1445 BC and 1405 BC.

Personal Application


EXODUS 1:1-22

Pray for guidance of the Holy Spirit as you prepare to read the first chapter of Exodus. Contemplate its content, reflect on the questions, and supply the answers in the spaces provided.

ISRAEL IN EGYPT (Exodus 1:1-7)

1. Acquaint yourself with a map showing the route of the Exodus from Egypt to Canaan.
2. Who was called Israel and why? (see Genesis 32:24-32 and Genesis 35:9-15)
3. List the sons of Jacob and find on the map where their land was located. What does this tell you about God and His promises?
4. Read Genesis 28:10-15. How does Exodus 1:7 begin to fulfill this promise to Jacob?
5. What does verse 8 teach us about the importance of teaching our children the living Word of God?
6. Share some examples from your past which show that if we do not continue to teach and talk about important truths or events that these things will be lost to subsequent generations.

Exodus 1:8-14

7. What happened because the new Pharaoh who came to power did not know or understand the role Joseph played in the life of Egypt?
 8. Do you think it would have made a difference if the King had Joseph as a counselor? Why?
 9. What was the King afraid of?
- 

10. Can you relate to this fear the King was expressing? If you wish, share this fear with your group.
11. In your own words describe the affliction the children of Israel were experiencing.
12. What do the following verses have to say about suffering and blessing? 2 Corinthians 1:4-5, Romans 5:3-4
13. Read Genesis 15:13 and compare it to Exodus 1:12. What do you learn about God from this comparison?
14. What were the names of the two cities the Israelites built for the Egyptians?

Exodus 1:15-22

15. The King tried to recruit two people to control the Israelite population. Who were these two people?

What did Pharaoh want these midwives to do?

16. Where else in Scripture do we find an account of someone trying to kill male Jewish children (Matthew 2:13-16)
17. Who is behind these attempts at murdering Israelite children? (John 8:44)
18. What do you think of the ethics of the midwives? (1:17-19)



- a. Is it ever right for us to distort the truth? (Joshua 2:1-5; Galatians 5:13-14)

- b. What happened because the midwives honored and obeyed God?

- c. What was Pharaoh's reaction? (v. 22)

19. In Exodus 1:17-21 we see that the midwives had a greater fear of God than of man. Is this good or bad? Share why you feel one way or the other. (Acts 4:19-20)

20. What do the following verses teach us concerning the fear of God?

- a. Proverbs 8:13

- b. Proverbs 16:6

- c. Deuteronomy 6:13

- d. Psalms 111:10

21. If you were reading this chapter for the first time, what hope would you have for Israel's continued existence as people apart from God's action?

22. Does God still control history? (Ephesians 1:21-22)

THE BOOK OF REDEMPTION

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The Book of Redemption

Exodus is a book of redemption. The name Exodus means “departure” or “the way out” and refers to the divine deliverance of the infant nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage. The central figure in the book is Moses, a gifted leader, military genius, statesman, shepherd, and man of God. Under his direction, the people leave Egypt and travel to Mt. Sinai where they receive their charter as a nation (the book of the covenant) and their new center of worship (the).

It is interesting to note that in over 400 years since the close of Genesis, the descendants of the patriarchal family have experienced good news and bad news. The good news is that they have grown into a people numbering several million. The bad news is that they have become oppressed slaves in the land of Egypt. God will hear their cry and grant them deliverance. He will re-establish His covenant with them and they will learn of His might, power and mercy.

As we begin our study of Exodus, it should be noted that Exodus is a sequel of Genesis. The death of Joseph concludes Genesis and in Exodus 1:6, we read, “Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died.” Exodus 1:7 picks up the Genesis narrative over four centuries later with these words: “but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them.”

In these words, we note the fulfilment of God’s promise

*We are reminded
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to Israel in Genesis 46 where He said that Israel would increase and multiply and become a great nation in the land of Egypt. Again, we are reminded of God's faithfulness to His people, a truth that can bring us much peace and joy.

What a tremendous lesson we can learn from these opening verses of Exodus 1. We have a continual responsibility of teaching the Word of God to each generation. If we neglect to teach God's living Word, the time will come when it will be forgotten. Here we gain a good understanding into our sinful natures. Satan wants to lull us into thinking that there is no need for daily study and sharing of the Word, for he knows that natural unregenerate man is by nature bent on "doing his own thing." Unless we speak about the past we will not learn from our mistakes. We will not know the great things that God has done on our behalf and we will not be able to experience the joy, power, and victory of having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every society, every group needs to take this responsibility seriously, teaching values to their children. If we do not teach our children, they will never know our values.

A Coca-Cola executive in Texas once stated that a certain percentage of income from each bottle is spent for advertising. It was noted that he should not have to advertise such a well-known product. He said, "When was the last time you saw a can of Arbuckle coffee? It was a popular brand when I was a boy, but today it is not around. They thought that they did not have to advertise."

A New Pharaoh

"Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt" (1:8). As a result, the children of Israel were forced into hard labor building the treasure cities of Pitham and Rameses. During this time, they were afflicted and faced many hardships. Again, we find unity of Scriptures as we recall God's words to Israel in Genesis 15:13. "Then the Lord said to him, 'Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years.'" Three things are predicted in this verse: 1) The Israelites were to be strangers in a strange land; 2) they were to be servants, that is, slaves; 3) and they were to be afflicted. All these predictions had come true.

Prophetic Accuracy

Notice the accuracy of prophetic prophecy. When God speaks, He is ALWAYS 100 percent accurate. There are at least 600 years between the words spoken to Abram and the fulfillment in Exodus 1. Truly, we have a great God who is faithful to His Word.

Notice that the more the Israelites were persecuted the more they were blessed by God and their numbers increased. The same truth holds true today. Satan has tried throughout the centuries to persecute the Church into non-existence. But the opposite is true. The more the Church faces persecution the stronger

Satan wants to lull us into thinking that there is no need for daily study and sharing of the Word, for he knows that natural unregenerate man is by nature bent on "doing his own thing."

she grows. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:9: “But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’” Keep this thought in mind as you live your life in a fallen world. The more we face pain, problems, persecution, illness, the greater opportunity we have to grow in our relationship with God. For God has committed Himself to bless us in the midst of trials and tribulation. The blessing comes in the form of His presence as Christ noted in Matthew 11:28-30, where He said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

As the Israelites grew under the bondage and persecution and the King noticed the rapid growth of his slave nation, he spoke to two Hebrew midwives in an attempt to solve the problem. It is interesting to note the meaning of the names of these two women. Shiphrah means “beauty.” Puah means “splendor.” Have you ever noticed the silhouette pictures of Egyptian women? The Egyptians admired women who were beautiful. Perhaps this is why Shiphrah and Puah apparently occupied official positions in Egypt and were in charge of the nurses who were responsible for delivering babies.

Here again, we see another attempt of Satan to destroy the line leading to the Lord Jesus Christ. Satanic attempts to cut off the lives leading to Christ run all the way through the Bible from the Old Testament to the New Testament. But instead of destroying the line and the children, God uses this as an opportunity to raise up one of His greatest leaders. Great things are about to happen, and Satan continues to come up a loser.

I want to encourage you to keep this principle in mind. Satan has been defeated time and again throughout the history of mankind. The ultimate and final defeat came at the Cross on Golgotha. All those who believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord have victory, forgiveness of sins, and power to turn defeats into opportunities for ministry. For where God reigns and rules there is always His Spirit’s power at work.

May Paul’s words in Romans 8:26-28 not just be an intellectual exercise but a living reality: “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

The name Exodus means “departure” or “the way out” and refers to the divine deliverance of the infant nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage. The central figure in the book is Moses, a gifted leader, military genius, statesman, shepherd, and man of God.

Personal Application

EXODUS 2:1-3:22

Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as you prepare to read Chapters 2 and 3 of Exodus. Contemplate the content, reflect on the questions, and supply the answers in the spaces provided below.

THE BIRTH OF MOSES (Exodus 2:1-10)

1. Read Exodus 2:1-10 and make three observations concerning Moses' birth and early years.

a.

b.

c.

2. Do you think Moses' mother believed that her baby would be rescued?- (Hebrews 11:23)

MOSES' FIRST ATTEMPT TO HELP HIS PEOPLE (Exodus 2:11-22)

3. Read Exodus 2:11-15 and relate the story.

4. Record the additional facts about Moses from Stephen's sermon (Acts 7:20-29)

5. Moses took things into his own hands. Do you think that Moses acted in an appropriate manner? Why or why not?

6. What does Deuteronomy 11:26-28 teach us concerning things that are right or wrong within society?

7. Where is Midian located? How long was Moses in this desert? (Acts 7:30)

What do we learn about God and his dealings with man from the first 80 years of Moses' life?

GOD RESPONDS TO THE CRIES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL (Exodus 2:23-25)

8. As the children of Israel cry to God about their bondage, God hears their cry. What does this fact of God's character mean to you today? Look up the following verses and record some truths that you find.
- a. 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:13

 - b. Hebrews 2:17

 - c. Deuteronomy 7:9; 1 Peter 4:19

THE CALL OF MOSES (Exodus 3:1-22)

9. Read this chapter and record five things you learn about Moses.
- a.

 - b.

 - c.

 - d.

 - e.

10. What was God's response to Moses' reluctance to accept His call? (see 3:11-12 and 13:16)

11. What comfort does God's presence give to you today? Read these verses and write down some truths that the Holy Spirit brings to your heart.
- a. Matthew 28:20

 - b. Genesis 28:15; Exodus 33:14

 - c. Isaiah 43:2

 - d. Matthew 18:20
12. Have you ever accepted a call from God (perhaps through a request from a fellow Christian) when, like Moses, you felt inadequate? How did you handle the situation and what was the outcome?
13. It is interesting to note the name God gives to Himself in verse 14. What significance does Jesus make of this name "I AM?" For some help look up these verses and record what Jesus says about the name "I AM." (John 8:56-59)

THE BIRTH AND CALL OF MOSES — EXODUS 2:1-3:22

Lesson 3

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The Birth of Moses (Exodus 2:1-10)

Exodus is the great book of redemption. Nothing begins or ends in this account of deliverance of God's people Israel. It is simply a continuation of the story that started in Genesis and continues on into the books of Leviticus and Numbers.

Here in Chapter 2, we find Moses giving us information about his early life. We are struck by the modest account found here. Most of us would want to talk about our parents in detail, but Moses did not even mention his parents by name. His parents were ordinary Israelites, born in slavery as members of the tribe of Levi. That is all Moses tells us. Later, we are given their names as Amram and Jochebed. In this sketchy account we see the humility which Moses learned as he dealt with the living God. One of the dominant characteristics of western Christianity is our preoccupation with what we can do and accomplish. We would do well to read again Matthew 5:3-12, and learn, as Moses learned, the blessed condition of a Spirit-led humility.

Pharaoh's plot to exterminate the Israelites was not only frustrated by God but God also used it to implement His plan to liberate His people. Jochebed's ingenuity in circumventing Pharaoh's decree and the impulse of his kindhearted daughter to bathe in the Nile, combined to save the life of the future leader of Israel. Many would say, "What luck." But let it be known loud and clear, that there is no luck to be found in these Spirit directed events. Here we have the record of the Lord of history in action, moving unswervingly toward His announced goal. The Maker of heaven and earth hears even the cry of a child and comes to its help (Genesis 21:17). David therefore confesses: "From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother's womb you have been my God" (Psalm 22:10).

As we contemplate these events let us see the hand of a loving faithful God who hears our cries and will intervene in our lives to give us deliverance from those things that would destroy us. He has come to us in the water of our baptism for inner cleansing and identification

with Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord. He comes to us regularly in the bread and wine we eat and drink at the communion altar where we receive the forgiveness of all our sins. He comes to us daily as we study and meditate on His living Word. Yes, let us reflect on that baby floating down the Nile River protected by the hands of an almighty God. So, we too, as we float along the streams of this life, are also protected by God's mercy. The Psalmist said it this way: "He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart" (Psalm 91:4).

Moses was given the Egyptian name for "child": Mes, which sounded similar to a Hebrew word meaning, "to draw out." Eventually his name developed into "Moses" for he "drew out" his people from slavery. Although the identification of the Pharaoh of the oppression is a controversial subject and a matter of speculation, Pharaoh's daughter may have been the oldest daughter of Rameses II, or she may have been his sister. According to the Egyptian customs of the day her first born son had the right to the throne. Moses would have been the next Pharaoh had Rameses II and his queen remained childless. But God had other plans. Moses was "instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22) and was being prepared for a historic confrontation that would occur some 80 years later.

Moses' First Attempt to Help His People (Exodus 2:11-25)

The first forty years of Moses' life were spent in the courts of Pharaoh. Except for the time he was nursed and cared for by his mother, Moses was raised and trained like an Egyptian. He looked like an Egyptian, talked like an Egyptian, and acted like an Egyptian. He was recognized as an Egyptian when he went to Midian, as we shall see later in this book.

Moses was educated in the great Temple of the Sun which was the outstanding university of the day. We tend to underrate what the Egyptians knew and accomplished. Their astronomy was phenomenal. They knew the approximate distance to the sun. They worked on the theory that the earth was round, not flat. They knew a great deal about chemistry which is evidenced by the way they were able to embalm the dead. We have no process to equal it today. Their workmanship and ability with colors was fantastic. Their colors were brighter than we have today. In addition to all their other accomplishments, the Egyptians also had a tremendous library. (Notes taken from *EXODUS*, by J. Vernon McGee, Vol. 1, Pgs. 22-23.)

Moses, we are told, was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, yet he had empathy for his own people, the Israelites. When he saw one of his brethren being persecuted and beaten by one of the slave drivers, he broke the command of God (Genesis 4:9-15) and killed the Egyptian guard. The liberation of His people was God's will, but it was to be achieved in God's way and at His direction. Moses had no authorization or call to act as God's avenger. The means to a good end must also be good or the whole act is corrupted. In a world marked by confusion of right and wrong, we need to remember the second part of the commission given by our Lord in Matthew 28:20, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

After spending forty years in Egypt, Moses fled from Pharaoh to the land of Midian because Pharaoh wanted to kill him. The Midianites were one of the tribes descended from Abraham and Keturah who occupied the territory "eastward to the east country" (Genesis 25:1-6). For the next forty years Moses will live in this land, marry, have two sons and be prepared for the task that lies ahead.

As the drama unfolds God is about to deliver the children of Israel from their captivity. It is interesting that God did not choose to deliver the Israelites because they were superior to the Egyptians, or because they had been true and faithful to Him, or because they had not gone into idolatry. In fact, they had been unfaithful to God and served idols rather than Him. But God is faithful to His promises, and He loves people. He has saved you, not because you deserve it, or that you have something He needs. He saved you because He loves you unconditionally. As God reached down to redeem the children of Israel, so God is reaching down into your life to save you and grant you that peace, power and joy that comes from knowing Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord.

The Call of Moses (Exodus 3:1-22)

Chapter 3 opens with an 80-year-old Moses tending his flocks on the backside of the desert when he turned to see “the angel of the Lord” in the flame that came out of the bush. Here we find a special appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ as He appeared to Old Testament believers. He came to call Moses to deliver His people from the bondage of Egypt. In commenting on this section Walter R. Roehrs in the *“Concordia Self-Study Commentary”* comments: “When Moses wanted to initiate the liberation of his people (2:11-15), God’s hour had not yet come; when God called him to act, Moses demurred. It had to become clear to Moses that God was not a convenient source of power which he could tap to promote his own ambitions. To be useful to God, Moses had to abandon all self-determination and put himself at the disposal of God’s will. Once he had done so, God could transform all his inadequacies into channels of His power. And God was very patient in overcoming Moses’ hesitation to surrender his self-will. For every evasive objection, He supplied an assuring answer:

- (a) ‘Who am I...?’ 3:12
- (b) ‘Who are You?’ 3:14
- (c) ‘They will not believe.’ 4:3-4
- (d) ‘I am not eloquent’ 4:12
- (e) ‘Send ... some other person’ 4:14
- (f) ‘I am of uncircumcised lips.’ 7:1 ff.

Moses was given the Egyptian name for “child”: Mes, which sounded similar to a Hebrew word meaning, “to draw out.” Eventually his name developed into “Moses” for he “drew out” his people from slavery.

God’s later emissaries to His people were no different. The prophets too had to learn not ‘to confer with flesh and blood’ when God claimed them for His service (Jeremiah 1:6-10; Isaiah 6:1-8; Amos 7:14-15). God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. What he is looking for today are people who will trust in His Word and not in man’s wisdom. God is calling you to ministry, just as he called Moses. Through you He wants to reach out to people with His love, mercy and grace. May we be open to this exciting and dynamic life changing truth.

God backs up His call with His name, “I Am.” This is the Hebrew form for the verb “I Am.” By supplying its four Hebrew consonants YHWH with the vowels of the word for LORD (the word that was substituted when God’s name later came to be considered too sacred to pronounce), the designation “Jehovah” came into use. Throughout the Hebrew Bible there were three basic words used to describe God: Elohim, which is translated God; YHWH (Jehovah), which is translated LORD; and Adonai, which is translated Lord. Of the three, YHWH (Jehovah) was the highest and most formal way of addressing God. It carried the idea of the eternal one who is uncaused, unconditioned, independent, self-sufficient, almighty, only one true God. It came to be known as the ultimate name of the God of Israel. Jesus referred to Himself in the same way in John 8:56-59. In His “I Am” statements, He is claiming for Himself deity. He is God. This link-up can be helpful as we testify to those people who reject the deity of Christ.

The time had come for the fulfillment of Joseph’s promise as stated in Genesis 50:25 “God will surely come to your aid.”

The stage is set for one of the most dramatic confrontations between God and fallen man. Pharaoh and his magicians are about to encounter God’s mercy and judgment in a life-changing manner. As we study this confrontation, we will learn many interesting and practical lessons that will be invaluable to our walk with the Lord.