

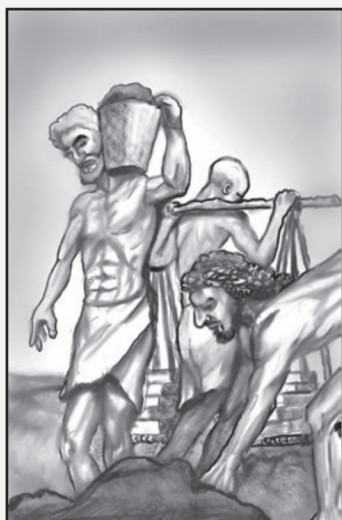
Moses: The Early Years



SABBATH—JUNE 28

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Exodus 1:1–7; Genesis 37:26–28; Exodus 1:9–21; Exodus 2:1–10; Exodus 2:11–25.

MEMORY VERSE: “The people of Israel were sad in their spirit because of being servants. They cried for help. And because of their hard work their cry went up to God. God heard their crying and remembered His agreement with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God saw the people of Israel and He cared about them” (Exodus 2:23–25, NLV).



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THE BOOK OF EXODUS is filled with stories about people who were forced to do hard work. These people, the Hebrews, were powerless. The Egyptians didn't think the Hebrews were very important. So, the Egyptians hurt the Hebrews and were mean to them. The Egyptians used the Hebrews to do work that wasn't fair. The Egyptians made the Hebrews their slaves. Today, there are people everywhere who don't have anyone to support, protect, or help them. These people feel that no one remembers them or cares. They are forced to live as slaves. These same people today can feel hope when they read the book of Exodus, because the same God who saved the Hebrew people can save them, too.

The book of Exodus talks about the hard times that are part of life. Everyone can feel hope when they read about how God saves His suffering people. God hears our cries, sees our tears, and comes to help. God helps the people who trust in Him. With faith, we must accept God's offer of help. The book of Exodus shows us what Jesus will do for us all. He will lead us to the “Promised Land.”

GOD'S PEOPLE IN EGYPT (Exodus 1:1–7)

The book of Exodus is named the “shemot” in the Hebrew language. “Shemot” means “names” in English. The book of Exodus starts with these words: “When Jacob (Israel) went to Egypt, his sons and their families went with him. Here are the names of those sons” (Exodus 1:1, ERV). Next, we read the names of Jacob’s family.

Read Exodus 1:1–7. What important Bible truth do these verses teach us?

The book of Exodus starts with information that helps us remember God’s promise to bless Jacob. When Jacob and his family moved to Egypt, they were only 70 people (Genesis 46:27; Exodus 1:5). “But the Israelites had many children, and their number grew until the country of Egypt was filled with them” (Exodus 1:7, ERV). At the time that the Israelites left Egypt, “there were about 600,000 men old enough to go into battle. The women and children went with them” (Exodus 12:37, NIV).

Read Exodus 1:8–11. How was life in Egypt for the Israelites before Moses led them out of the country?

The book of Exodus tells us Israel’s time in Egypt was hard and unhappy. The story starts with the Egyptians making the Israelites their slaves. The Egyptians forced the Israelites to work hard. The Egyptians were mean to the Israelites. The book of Exodus ends with God in the Holy Tent at the center of the Israelite camp (read Exodus 40). The rest of the book of Exodus shows how God fights for His people and wins. God saves His people from slavery in Egypt. He opens the Red Sea. He beats the strongest army at that time. We see God win the fight against evil.

The story tells us that the more the Egyptians forced the Israelites to work hard, “the more they grew” in number (Exodus 1:12, ERV). What lesson does this part of the story teach us? It teaches us that God is in control. He will save His people, even when we feel we have no hope.

A new king controlled Egypt. This king didn’t respect Joseph or what he did for Egypt in the past. How does this story help us understand that good times can end fast and that life may not always be easy?



The story starts with the Egyptians making the Israelites their slaves.

HEBREW HISTORY: FROM JOSEPH TO MOSES (Genesis 37:26–28)



Pharaoh also gave Joseph a nice linen robe [clothes] and put a gold chain around his neck.

Jacob's family left Canaan after a terrible famine or food shortage (Genesis 46). When the family arrived in Egypt, the Egyptian king was friendly and nice to the Hebrews because of Joseph and everything he did for the Egyptians.

"Pharaoh [the king of Egypt] said to Joseph, 'I now make you governor over all of Egypt.' Then Pharaoh gave his special ring to Joseph. The royal seal [the king's special stamp] was on this ring. Pharaoh also gave Joseph a nice linen robe [clothes] and put a gold chain around his neck. Then he [Pharaoh] told Joseph to ride in his second chariot [war wagon]. Pharaoh's officials [Egyptian leaders] said, " 'Let him be the governor over the whole land of Egypt!' " (Genesis 41:41–43, ERV).

What was the secret to Joseph's success in Egypt after arriving as a slave? Read Genesis 37:26–28 and Genesis 39:2, 21 for the answer.

The new king didn't respect or honor Joseph or how he helped Egypt in the past (Exodus 1:8). This new king was Ahmose (1580 B.C.–1546 B.C.) Next, Amenhotep the First became king (1553 B.C.–1532 B.C.). Amenhotep the First was afraid of the Israelites. So, he forced them to work hard and to do jobs that weren't fair. Later, Thutmose the First (1532 B.C.–1514 B.C.) ordered all the Hebrew male children to be killed. Thutmose's daughter was Hatshepsut (1504 B.C.–1482 B.C.). Hatshepsut was the princess who adopted Moses to be her son. Thutmose the Third (1504 B.C.–1450 B.C.) for some time was coleader with Hatshepsut. Thutmose the Third was the pharaoh during the Exodus or the time when Israel escaped from Egypt.

We believe the Exodus happened in March 1450 B.C. (Read the following verses to learn more about the Exodus: Genesis 15:13–16; Exodus 12:40, 41; Judges 11:26; and 1 King 6:1. Also read Acts 7:6 and Galatians 3:16, 17.)

Exodus 1 covers a long period in Israel's history: from Joseph's time to Pharaoh's order to kill the Hebrew baby boys. While some people disagree about the exact number of years that things happened, what matters most is that God remembered His people. Even when bad things happen, God is always there. We can trust Him to help us, too.

THE HEBREW NURSES (Exodus 1:9–21)

In Exodus 1, we learn that the Jews moved to Egypt. After a time of amazing success and peace, the Israelites became slaves. For sure, many Hebrews felt hopeless because of their suffering. But God didn't leave His people alone without any help. For sure, God's people, at times, felt that He abandoned them. But when they suffered, God came to help with His mighty strength. Our Lord encourages His followers in all ages and times with these words: " 'Call to me in times of trouble. I will save you, and you will honor me' " (Psalm 50:15, ICB).

What important work did the loyal midwives do? A midwife is a special nurse who helps women during childbirth. Why did God include their stories in the Bible? Read Exodus 1:9–21 for the answers.

Do you notice that the book of Exodus doesn't tell us the names of any of the Egyptian kings? The Bible names them only pharaoh, which means "king." The Egyptians believed that pharaoh was a god on earth and the son of the sun god, Ra (or the god Osiris or Horus). The Egyptians believed that Ra was the most powerful Egyptian god, because he was the sun god.

But this "god" wasn't powerful enough to force the midwives to kill the Hebrew baby boys. The Bible tells us the names of the two midwives: Shiphrah and Puah (Exodus 1:15). These women honored and respected the Lord. Pharaoh's evil command didn't scare them into obedience because they respected God more than the orders of a human king (also read Acts 5:29). So, God blessed Shiphrah and Puah with large families of their own. This story is a powerful story about being loyal to God. These women may not have been Bible experts. But they knew what was right. More than that, they chose to do the right thing.

When Pharaoh saw that his evil plan failed, he commanded the Egyptians to kill all the male Hebrew babies. Pharaoh ordered the Egyptians to throw the babies in the Nile River as an offering to Hapi, the god of the river. Pharaoh gave this order to defeat the Israelites in two ways: (1) he wanted to kill all the male Hebrew babies. And (2) he wanted the Hebrew women to become part of the Egyptian people and have only Egyptian babies. Then the Hebrews would no longer be a danger to the Egyptians.



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MOSES IS BORN (Exodus 2:1–10)

Read Exodus 2:1–10. What did God do to protect Moses when he was born?



The princess Hatshepsut saved Moses' life when she drew or pulled him out of the river.

Moses' story is so exciting because he lived during the time that the famous 18th royal family controlled Egypt. One king during this time was Thutmose the Third. Thutmose is one of the most famous pharaohs or kings in ancient Egypt.

Moses was born at a time when the king wanted all Hebrew baby boys to die (read Exodus 1:22). At the same time, Moses was a "beautiful" baby (Exodus 2:2, ERV). The word written as "beautiful" in this verse comes from the Hebrew word "tob." "Tob" is more than outer beauty. This word is used to describe everything God made in the book of Genesis. God announced that everything He made was "good" or "very good" (Genesis 1:4, 10, 31).

Moses is the "good" child who will lead the Hebrews out of slavery. When Moses was born, who could guess his future? God has a special plan for this baby's life. God will use this "tob" (good) baby to keep His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God promised them hundreds of years before that He would give their future children the Promised Land (Exodus 2:24, 25).

Until that time, the Egyptian princess Hatshepsut adopted Moses as her son. Part of Moses' name means "son of" or "born from." We see this same meaning in the names of Ah-mose ("son of Akh") or Thut-mose ("son of Thoth"). In the Hebrew language, Moses' name is Mosheh, which means "to draw or pull out." The princess Hatshepsut saved Moses' life when she drew or pulled him out of the river.

We know only a few things about Moses' early life. After Hatshepsut saved and adopted Moses, he lived for 12 years with his real family (Exodus 2:7–9; also read Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 244). Then Moses got the best Egyptian education to get him ready to be the next king of Egypt (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 245). But the most important education Moses got was not from Egypt. His best education was about God's truth.

How much are you learning that is, in the end, useless for what really matters?

A CHANGE OF PLANS (Exodus 2:11–25)

What happened to Moses that changed his whole future? What lessons can we learn from this story? Read Exodus 2:11–25 for the answers.

What will Moses do? Will he follow the pleasures of Egypt? Or will he join his people in their suffering? Soon something happened that forced him to decide: he killed an Egyptian man.

“When Pharaoh heard about what had happened, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses escaped from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian. There he sat down by a well” (Exodus 2:15, NIV). After Moses killed the Egyptian, he had very little choice about what to do. He couldn’t stay in Egypt any longer. Hatshepsut’s plans for Moses to sit on the throne of Egypt and become a “god” came to an end. Moses would serve the true God. For sure, when Moses ran away, he had no idea what the future held for him.

“Soon the Egyptians heard about what Moses did. They told the story to the king and exaggerated what really happened. The Egyptians said that Moses wanted to lead his people against the Egyptians, destroy the government, and then sit on the king’s throne. The Egyptians said that as long as Moses lived, the kingdom wouldn’t be safe. Right away, the king decided that Moses must die. Moses learned about the danger and ran toward Arabia.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 247, adapted.

Moses lived 120 years (Deuteronomy 34:7). His life can be divided into three parts. Each part lasts for 40 years. The first 40 years Moses lived in Egypt. Much of those 40 years, Moses lived in the royal palace. The second 40 years, Moses lived in Jethro’s house in the land of Midian.

The first five books of Moses (and this quarter’s Bible study guide) tell us more about the last 40 years of Moses’ life. These books tell us the story about the special work God gave Israel to do. God wanted Israel to show the people on this earth His love and teach them about His holy law (read Deuteronomy 4:6–8). The people didn’t know God. They worshiped false gods.

Was it God’s plan for Moses to kill the Egyptian? If not, what does this story teach us about how God can correct any experience and use it to honor His name? How does Romans 8:28 help us understand this important Bible truth?



After Moses killed the Egyptian, he had very little choice about what to do.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Moses,” pages 241–251, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*. This chapter will give you an important understanding about the Bible verses we studied this week.

The Bible says that “the nurses trusted God, so they did not obey the king’s command. They let all the baby boys live” (Exodus 1:17, ERV). Ellen G. White talks about the midwives and their faith in God. A midwife is a special nurse who helps women during childbirth. “The king of Egypt ordered the midwives to destroy the Hebrew male children when they were born. Their jobs made it easy for the women to do what the king commanded. Satan was behind the king’s order. Satan knew that a savior would be born among the Israelites. So, Satan hoped to destroy God’s plan to save His people. Satan caused the king to destroy the Israelite baby boys. But the midwives respected God. They refused to obey the evil command. The Lord honored their decision. He blessed them both with families of their own.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 242, adapted.

The good news is that God used loyal people to defeat Satan’s evil plans. We live in the land of our enemy, Satan. Jesus named Satan the prince or the leader on this fallen planet (Ephesians 2:2; John 14:30). Satan stole this kingdom from Adam. But when Jesus came to this earth, He beat Satan in His life, and with His death on the cross (Matthew 4:1–11; John 19:30; Hebrews 2:14). Satan is alive and working. But he will be destroyed (John 12:31; John 16:11; Revelation 20:9, 10, 14). In the meantime, God’s mercy can help us win the fight against all our troubles (Philippians 4:13). God’s mercy is our only hope.



But when Jesus came to this earth, He beat Satan in His life, and with His death on the cross (Matthew 4:1–11; John 19:30; Hebrews 2:14).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ❶ Why did God allow the Hebrews to live in Egypt as slaves? Why did God wait so long to save them? Israel suffered for a long time. But remember, the Israelites suffered only as long as they lived. How does this idea help us to understand better the topic of human suffering?
- ❷ Moses did not plan to kill the Egyptians. At the same time, how did Moses’ hotheaded behavior change what happened in the story? What if Moses chose not to kill him? Would that mean that the Hebrews wouldn’t escape Egypt? Explain your answer.

NO RATS FOR LUNCH

Peter enjoyed digging for rats in a mountain village in southern Zambia. The boy and his family ate the rats with porridge made from corn. Peter and his family also enjoyed eating pigs. Pork was always on their dinner table at Christmas. Peter and his family enjoyed bubble fish, too.

So, Peter was surprised when he learned that his favorite meat was forbidden in the Bible.

Peter heard about foods that were not clean for the first time when he traveled 20 miles from home to visit his brother. Peter's brother worked at a farm that some Seventh-day Adventist Bible workers owned. The Bible workers came from the United States. Peter stayed for Sabbath worship. The preacher talked about animals that were clean and not clean in Leviticus 11. Peter understood that he and his family were following a meal plan that didn't match the Bible's teaching.

After a while, the Bible workers started to hold meetings in Peter's elementary school on Sabbath afternoons. Peter went to these meetings. He walked two miles to arrive to the school.

Peter's parents weren't happy that their son went to the meetings. They tried to stop him from going. They told Peter that he was baptized when he was a baby. Father ordered Peter to work on the family farm on Saturdays. Peter didn't know anything about keeping the Sabbath. So, he did his farm chores as fast as he could in the morning. When he finished, he went to the meeting in the afternoon.

During Peter's high school years, he made new friends from Seventh-day Adventist families. Peter studied the Bible with them. Then he gave his heart to Jesus and was baptized in water. Peter stopped eating rats, pork, and bubble fish.

After a while, Peter's parents started to respect the seventh-day Sabbath. They understood why their son didn't eat meat that wasn't clean. Every Sabbath that Peter was at home, his parents encouraged him to be on time to Sabbath School.

Today, there's a Seventh-day Adventist church in Peter's town. Because of the Seventh-day Adventist message, many people in the town stopped eating meat that wasn't clean.

Peter is thankful that he learned about the health message when he was a boy. Peter learned to honor God with his food. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "So if you eat, or if you drink, or if you do anything, do it for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31, ERV).

Peter says, "I thank Jesus for saving me. I thank Him for Bible truth about foods that aren't clean." Today, Peter Siamikobo is a church leader and a teacher at a Seventh-day Adventist high school in Zambia.

INSIDE
Story
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



The boy and his family ate the rats with porridge made from corn.