

The Exodus

Contributed by [Spencer Ruskin](#)

Source: Original

Leader: The Twelve Tribes of Israel — Jacob's sons and their families — came into Egypt. And though in time Joseph and all of his generation died, the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, until the land was filled with them.

Reader: There came to power in Egypt a new king who had never heard of Joseph. He said unto his people, "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Let us deal wisely with them lest it come to pass that they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us."

Reader: Accordingly they put taskmasters over the Israelites to wear them down by forced labor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And the Egyptians were grieved because of the children of Israel.

Reader: And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive."

Reader: A woman of the house of Levi conceived and bore a son, and seeing what a fine child he was, she kept him hidden for three months. When she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him, coating it with bitumen and pitch, and she laid it amongst the reeds at the river's edge.

Reader: Downriver, the daughter of the Pharaoh was bathing. Among the reeds she noticed the basket, and she sent her maid to fetch it. She opened it and saw the child, and the babe wept. She had compassion on him, saying, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

Reader: As the child grew, he became as a son to the Pharaoh's daughter. And she called him Moses, which means "to draw out", for she drew him out of the water.

Reader: One day when he was grown, Moses witnessed an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one of his kinsmen. And seeing no one about, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. The Pharaoh learned of this, and tried to have Moses put to death, but he fled.

Reader: While in exile, Moses married a Midianite woman, who bore him a son. When wandering the desert, at the age of 80, he encountered God in the form of a burning bush. Giving him signs with which to prove his words, the LORD instructed him to return to Egypt and free the Hebrews.

Reader: Moses came before the Pharaoh, and said unto him, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto our God in the wilderness." The Pharaoh refused and, incensed, gave his taskmasters new orders that very day. "Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, let them go and gather straw for themselves. But you will exact the same quantity of bricks from them as before."

Reader: The Israelites grew distraught, and they met with Moses, saying "You have brought us into bad odor with Pharaoh and his officials. You have put a sword into their hand to kill us."

Reader: Moses went once more before the Pharaoh to ask of him, "Let my people go". Moses cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants and it became a serpent. But the Pharaoh called upon the wise men and the sorcerers: the magicians of Egypt, and with their enchantments, they did likewise with their staves. Unimpressed, the Pharaoh once more refused.

Reader: Moses went again before the Pharaoh. He lifted up his staff and smote the waters of the river in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants. All the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. The fish died, and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water. But the magicians of Egypt did likewise with their enchantments, and the Pharaoh remained obstinate.

Reader: Moses brought forth a plague of frogs from the river, and they swarmed over the land of Egypt. But by their enchantments, the magicians of Egypt were able to do the same. The Pharaoh said "Entreat Yahweh to take the frogs from me and my people, and I will let the people go." But when the frogs had died, he hardened his heart and refused to free the Hebrews.

Reader: Moses struck the dust of the desert, and they became swarms of lice that plagued the Egyptians. The magicians attempted to produce lice in the same way, but failed. They beseeched the Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go, but he would not listen.

Reader: Moses brought forth this time a plague of insects, beetles and biting flies. They swarmed over the whole of Egypt. Once again, as with the frogs, the Pharaoh bade Moses to lift this plague, promising to let the Hebrews go once he had done so. And so the insects left the land of Egypt, but once again the Pharaoh refused.

Reader: Next, Moses threatened a pestilence on the livestock of Egypt, but the Pharaoh would not be swayed. And so a terrible murrain settled on the animals of Egypt and they died, but the livestock of the Israelites remained healthy. But still, the Pharaoh remained obstinate.

Reader: Moses cast a handful of soot into the air, where it became a great cloud that filled the land of Egypt. Where it landed, on man and beast, it brought forth boils and sores. The magicians of Egypt could not compete with Moses in this, for they too were afflicted with boils. But the Pharaoh would not relent.

Reader: Moses stretched his staff toward heaven, and there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast. Again, the Pharaoh promised to free the Hebrews if the plague was lifted. But once again, though Moses removed the plague, the heart of the Pharaoh was hardened, and he would not let the children of Israel go.

Reader: Moses stretched his staff over Egypt, and brought an east wind which blew all that day and night. By morning the wind had brought a swarm of locusts. They covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened. They ate every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left, until there remained not any green thing through all the land of Egypt. Once more, the Pharaoh made his false promise, and once more, after the locusts had left the land of Egypt, he would not let them go.

Reader: Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They saw not one another, nor rose any from his place for three days. But the Pharaoh would not let them go.

Reader: But Moses went one last time before the Pharaoh, to tell him that all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, and there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt. But the Pharaoh would not listen.

Reader: Moses went amongst his own people, and instructed them to sacrifice a lamb and take the blood, strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. For the blood shall be a token upon the houses where ye are: and when the LORD sees the blood, He shall pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when He smites the land of Egypt.

Reader: And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians, for there was not a house among them where there was not one dead. And the Pharaoh called for Moses and said, "Rise up and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel, and go."

Reader: And he made ready his chariot, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them, he pursued after the children of Israel. As the Egyptians caught up to them, the Israelites grew afraid.

Reader: But Moses bade them be calm, and stretched out his hand over the sea, and the waters were divided. The children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground. The waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

Reader: The Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

The second cup of wine is filled.

Leader: We now spill a drop of wine in remembrance of each plague, for though they oppressed and subjugated us, the suffering of the Egyptians lessens our joy.

Spill a drop of wine on your plate for each plague.

All: Blood. Frogs. Lice. Flies. Murrain. Boils. Hail. Locusts. Darkness. Slaying of the firstborn.