

# HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

**Exodus 1 - 5**  
Leader's Guide

# Hearing the Word

## Exodus 1-5

### Leader's Guide

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*Nigel Barge, June 2015*

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#### **Resources**

The *New Bible Dictionary* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, published by Inter Varsity Press  
The *New Bible Commentary* 21<sup>st</sup> century edition. A commentary on every Bible book, IVP  
[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

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# *Hearing the Word: A Tool for Bible reading*



## **LOOK** – What does it *say*?

- 1) The Text
  - a) What questions does it raise - *Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?*
  - b) What surprises you?
- 2) The Context?
  - a) the surrounding text
  - b) the Book of the Bible
  - c) the whole Bible
  - d) the place in the Bible Story



## **LEARN** – What does it *mean*?

- 1) What type of writing is it?
- 2) Answer the questions
- 3) Summarise the passage



## **LISTEN** – What is the *message*?

- 1) Which is the main point?
- 2) Which is the key verse?



## **LIVE** – How should we *respond*?

- 1) What does it show about God, (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) :
  - a) His nature and character?
  - b) His grace\*
  - c) Jesus / his salvation\*\*
- 2) What should I do?

\* God's undeserved generosity is evident throughout the Bible, and it is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

\*\* The Bible, from 'the fall' onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through his Son. Thus, *all* the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27).

# Reading NARRATIVE

In seeking to hear the Word of God throughout the Bible, we need to take into account the *type of literature* in which each part is written. Exodus is mainly narrative (story), the most common type. To approach narrative correctly we need to keep in mind the following principles.

## 1 In General: It is *God's story*

The whole Bible recounts the story of God's dealings with humankind. After creation and the fall in Genesis, the rest describes how God works out his unfolding plan of salvation for humanity in Jesus. The OT prepares for the arrival, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The NT recounts these and looks forwards to his return at the end of time. It is *all* about Jesus. Therefore:

- a) Every part relates to Him (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).

So as we read, we should be asking – ‘what does this show about Jesus; what is He doing?’

- b) Everything is relevant.

In a film every scene plays some part in the overall story. Often we are shown things in the early stages that make no sense until later. The Bible is the same. So as we read Bible narrative – knowing how it ends – we should be asking ‘what relevance has *this* part of the story to the *main* story?’

## 2 In particular: ‘Follow the camera angle’

A film director focuses the viewer's attention on particular shots to tell ‘his story’. In the same way each narrator in the Bible is selective about what to tell us. They leave out much general detail, only giving us what is relevant to what they are trying to convey.

As we read we should therefore be asking the question, ‘Why is he telling me this and in this particular way?’

## 3 Warts and all

Human beings often get things wrong. The Bible narrative faithfully records errors, even by people who are elsewhere commended. For instance, Moses murdered a man, King David committed adultery, and Peter, who was praised for realising Jesus was the Christ, was minutes later roundly scolded when he tried to stop Jesus being the Christ through suffering! (Exodus 2:12; 2 Samuel 11; Matthew 16:16-23)

So we can't treat every thought or action in a narrative as something to copy, just because ‘it's in the Bible’. We must ask the Holy Spirit to use the rest of Scripture to discern good examples to follow, and bad ones to avoid.

# Introduction to the PENTATEUCH

The first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) are called the Pentateuch (*lit* five-volumed). It has six main sections:

- a) The start (Genesis 1-11)** ‘Genesis’ means beginnings. It covers creation, humanity’s rebellion, the ensuing separation from God, and God’s promises to mend the broken relationship. The main human characters are *Adam* and *Noah*.
- b) The founding fathers (Genesis 12-50)** *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob* are the Patriarchs. Jacob has twelve sons, including *Joseph*. God’s Covenant with Abraham includes living in a promised land, Canaan, but during a famine, God uses Joseph to take his covenant people from Canaan to safety in Egypt.
- c) Deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 1-18)** starts where Genesis ends, but decades later. The Egyptians had turned the Hebrews into slaves (Exodus 1). God uses *Moses* to rescue them, bringing them out of Egypt with a remarkable series of events.
- d) The Law (Exodus 19ff, Leviticus, Numbers 1:1 - 10:10).** In the fourth, legislative, section at Mount Sinai God gives Laws, the plan for a place of worship called ‘The Tabernacle’ or ‘Tent of meeting’, a system of sacrifices, and priests to administer it, using a tribe descended from Jacob’s son, *Levi*.
- e) The wilderness (Numbers 10:11 onwards).** The twelve tribes wander in the Wilderness, nearing the Promised land but fearing to enter. God appoints *Joshua* as Moses’ successor, and allocates the land to the twelve tribes.
- f) The ‘second Law’ (Deuteronomy)** (*lit* the second [giving of the] law) holds the final speeches of Moses. He re-tells the Exodus events, expands on the 10 commandments (ch 5), points out the very different consequences of obeying and disobeying (ch 28), blesses the 12 tribes who are about to enter Canaan, then dies.

## Introduction to EXODUS

### Title

The title means ‘Way Out’. It’s from the Greek translation, the Septuagint.

### Author

Jewish/Christian tradition says it was *Moses*. He was born into a Hebrew family, but brought up as an Egyptian prince (Exodus 2:1-10). The first five books of the OT are also known as ‘the books of Moses’. That does not mean Moses wrote every word (he wasn’t even born in Genesis), but was responsible for the writing being collected and preserved. He is the main human character in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

## **The Date of writing**

We do not know the date of Jacob's family moving to Egypt and there are no external sources to give us a date for the exodus. Some scholars reason it may have happened between 1282 and 1203 BC.

## **The structure of Exodus**

The book divides into two parts:

- a) The rescue from Egypt (ch 1-18)

This describes how the Hebrews were delivered from Egypt by the hand of God and brought out to Mt Sinai in the wilderness.

- b) The giving of the Law (ch 19-40)

At Mt Sinai, God makes a covenant with the Hebrew people.

## **The Theology of Exodus**

Exodus is all about God and aspects of God's nature. He is the God who:

- a) controls history, Exodus 1
- b) is holy, 3:5;
- c) remembers, 2:24; 24:3-8;
- d) acts to save and to judge, 3:8, 4:14; 20:5; 32:10, 33-35;
- e) has a righteous anger that may be averted 32:30-34;
- f) speaks 3:4-22;
- g) is transcendent 33:20;
- h) lives among his people 40:34.

## **The name for God**

The Lord God has a personal name (just as we have Christian names). This name came prominently to the fore in Exodus, when the Lord revealed its significance to Moses (3:13-15, 6:2-8). *The Message of Exodus, Alex Motyer, IVP*

In Hebrew it has four consonants, YHWH. Scholars think it is pronounced 'Yahweh'. Jews regarded this name as so holy, they did not want to say it aloud, in case they took it 'in vain'. Instead, they said 'Adonai', meaning 'The Lord'. Most English translations of the Bible show it as THE LORD, i.e. using small capitals. (It cannot be 'Jehovah', a word invented when translators unwittingly combined the consonants of YHWH with the vowels of Adonai, and then used the third letter *twice* to give the O and the V!)

YHWH comes from the verb 'to be' and can be translated, *I am who I am* or *I will be who I will be* or *I am he who is*.

The Hebrew verb 'to be' has the sense of 'to be present (and active)'. It is dynamic not static. As more and more of God's character is shown to men by his words and acts, his 'name' continually takes on a richer meaning. The crown and fulfilment comes in the NT when God's greatest word to man is

spoken (*The Word became flesh* John 1:14) and his greatest saving act is completed (*Finished!* John 19:30). Thereafter, God will be fully known as ‘the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Romans 15:6) and as the giver of his Holy Spirit (John 14:26).

## **Exodus and the Bible**

In the book of Exodus, God reveals more of what he is like than people then knew. It describes the interaction between God and his people, including their many faults, and how God rescues them. It points forward to the greater rescue achieved by the Lord Jesus Christ, and how we are to trust and obey him.

### **i) in the Old Testament**

From the exodus from Egypt onwards, Israel interpreted it as being the highest example of God’s grace, faithfulness and power. In Israel’s later life it dominated all thought. Its Importance is seen in that:

- a) Chs 1-15 give the greatest examples of saving acts by God.
- b) The institution of the Passover is at the heart of the book.
- c) It enshrines the giving of the law, supremely the Ten Commandments.
- d) The book contains the account of the building of the Tabernacle, forerunner of the Temple.
- e) Moses stands as the prototype of all prophets in Israel (Deut. 18:18).

### **ii) in the New Testament**

The cross of Christ is as important to the Christian, as the Exodus was to the Israelite. The following references point to this:

- a) When Moses and Elijah are with Jesus at his transfiguration they discuss his coming death: the word translated ‘departure’ in Luke 9:31 is ‘exodus’.
- b) Jesus was crucified at the time of the Passover festival (Luke 22:13).
- c) Paul calls Jesus the Passover lamb (1 Cor 5:7) *compare also* John 19:33,36 with Exodus 12:46.
- d) Jesus viewed his death as a new covenant sacrifice (1 Cor 11:23, cf Exodus 24:6).
- e) The old covenant led to The Law; the new covenant, prophesied by Jeremiah (31:31) led to the law of love (eg in Romans 13:8).
- f) The old covenant is fulfilled in Christ (Matthew 5:17).
- g) The song of the redeemed in heaven is the song of Moses and the Lamb (Revelation 15:3).

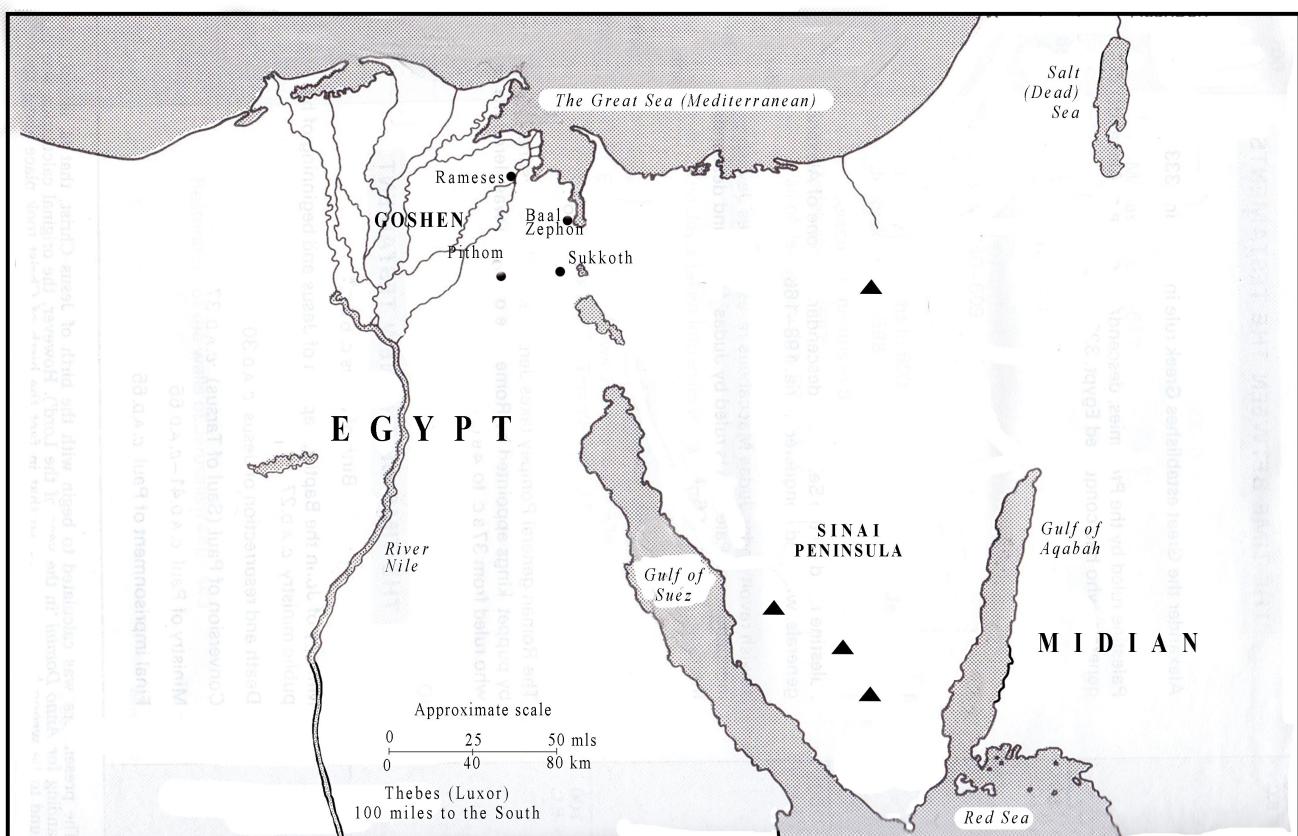
# The Map is approximate.

The River Nile falls only marginally over the last 100 miles, splits and re-joins more often than shown, and keeps changing course. Look on-line for Sea level rise, Nile River Delta of Egypt, to see that the land nowadays falls only 2 metres in the last 30 miles.

The location of the towns is equally uncertain.

*Mount Horeb* (first mentioned in Exodus 2:1) could be any of the four peaks shown; since the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD, the most southerly has been known as *Moses' Mount*.

In Study 4 (p24), Moses takes his father-in-law's flocks to the 'back' side of the 'desert'. Semitic peoples face East when giving directions, so *back* is West. We don't know exactly where he started out from, but 'back'/West suggests he rounded what we now call the Gulf of Aqabah then headed NW, or SW.



### Background information and Word List

The Hebrew begins in v1 “**And** these are the names...” making it clear that Exodus is not a new book but simply the continuation of the Genesis story. A considerable time had passed since Joseph’s death. At the shortest reckoning, Moses was the fourth generation after Levi (Numbers 26:58), but he may have lived hundreds of years later (Exodus 12:40; cf Genesis 15:13).

Forced labour was an old principle in Egypt, as in all of the ancient world. The towns of *Pithom* and *Rameses* are associated with Pharaoh *Rameses II* (c. 1290-1225 BC).

1	<i>sons of Israel</i>	for one last time, this means Jacob’s immediate family; from here on, the phrase means the whole people of God.
5	<i>seventy</i>	may be a round number or a sacred figure; it is only an exact count of Jacob’s family if we omit daughter, Dinah.
7	<i>fruitful, multiplied greatly, became exceedingly numerous</i>	deliberate repeating of three verbs used in Genesis 1:21,22.
	<i>land</i>	Either the region of Goshen ( <i>see map</i> ); or the whole land of Egypt.
10	<i>leave the country</i>	more likely, <i>rises over</i> or <i>take possession of</i> (cf Genesis 2:6).
11	<i>oppress</i>	<i>bring them low</i> or <i>beat down</i> .
	<i>Pithom, Rameses</i>	( <i>see map</i> ); cities in Goshen.
15	<i>Shiprah, Puah</i>	the names mean <i>beauty</i> and <i>splendour</i> .
16	<i>birthstool</i>	‘two stones’ on which women crouched when giving birth
	<i>boy, girl</i>	words in Hebrew are <i>son, daughter</i> .
22	<i>the Nile</i>	<i>lit: The River.</i> Vital to life in Egypt. Worshipped as a god.

### Bible connections

*See also* Acts 7:17-19

Israel in Egypt by God’s plan	<i>see</i> Genesis 15:12-14; 46:1-4
Suffering of God’s people	<i>see also</i> Acts 14:22
Pharaoh’s genocide plans	<i>see also</i> Herod in Matthew 2:16
11 <i>slaves</i>	originally had been shepherds (Gen 47:6,27)
13/14 <i>work/labour</i> <i>heb= abad</i>	also ‘service’ to God (3:12...8:1...12:31 etc)
17/21 <i>fear God</i>	6x in OT: Gen 22:12; 42:18; Ex 1:17,21; 18:21; Deut 25:18

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 Why do they start a new book here?  
Why are the names Israel and Jacob used in the same sentence?
- 5 Why 70?  
Why does it say that Joseph was already in Egypt if the next verse says he is dead and several hundred years have passed?  
How long did it take for the 70 to 'fill the land'?
- 7 Why did they multiply so?
- 8 How did the preceding King know Joseph?
- 10 Why was there fear that the Hebrews would leave and not overpower them to make them stay?
- 11 Why did they put them to forced labour if they were fearing an increase in numbers?
- 12 Why did they increase in numbers the more they were oppressed?  
Why did the Egyptians dread the growth of the Hebrews?
- 15 Why were there only two midwives for all the Hebrews (c 500k men?)  
Why are they named?  
Why is Pharaoh dealing with the women personally?!
- 16 Did he expect them to kill the babies?  
Why was the order not to kill the girls? The population would have been kept down without reducing the workforce.
- 17 What did 'fear God' mean?
- 19 What happened to all the Hebrew babies that they didn't deliver?  
Why did God reward (21) a lie?
- 20 How was God kind to the midwives?
- 22 Why throw them into the Nile to kill them - what if you lived miles from the Nile?  
What surprises or confuses you?
- 6 Why so little mention of the c 400 years?
- 21 If all women fear God, will he give them a family?

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?  
surrounding passage,

- 6 Joseph died in Egypt before (some of?) his brothers Genesis 50:24.
- 14 Bitter lives but with the promise of deliverance Genesis 50:24.  
individual book
- 14 Hebrews oppressed but didn't cry out to the Lord till - 2:23-25.
- 15 Women named cf nameless elders? 3:16, 18; 4:29.
- 17 fear God (18:21)

## whole Bible

- 1 These are the names of the sons of Israel Genesis 46:8.
- 5 Seventy sent out by Jesus Luke 10:1.
- 6 Joseph died Gen 50:26.
- 7 one day is as a thousand years Psalm 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8.  
Fruitful... increase...fill Gen 8:17; 9:1,7; 17:20; 28:3; 35:11; 47:27; 48:4  
c 400 years in Egypt Genesis 15:13.  
those who honour me, I will honour 1 Samuel 2:30.
- 14 Bitter Ruth 1:20.
- 12 multiplied and spread - same words used in Genesis 1:22; etc.
- 15 beauty and splendour cf goodness and mercy Psalm 23:6.  
Named since they were honoured cf Judges 13:17.
- 16 extreme unless there is physical gain? 1 Timothy 6:10.
- 17 feared God Genesis 22:12; 42:18; Job 1:1; cf Luke 18:2,4; Heb 11:23.
- 22 The river / in Egypt where people worshipped other gods Joshua 24:14.  
thrown Egyptian soldiers in the sea Exodus 15:4 Hebrews 11:29.  
cf the Devil - Apollyon (lit = 'the destroyer') Revelation 9:11.  
cf kill all the boys under 2 years cf Matthew 2:16

## Bible story

The family of Jacob have become the people of Israel in Egypt but are subject to evil oppression by the Pharaoh.

## **LEARN**

- 1) What type of literature is this? **Narrative**
- 2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
  - 1 This is beginning a new phase of the nation of Israel.  
It shows the transition between family and nation.
  - 5 Complete number - perfect  $7 \times 10$ .  
It says he is in Egypt to show that he is counted in the seventy.  
It took 400 years to fill the land.
  - 7 They multiplied because God was with them.
  - 8 The preceding King knew/revered Joseph by his reputation.
  - 10 There was fear they would take possession of the land.
  - 11 They put them to forced labour to control them / their numbers .
  - 12 They increased because God was with them (though it didn't feel like it!).  
The Egyptians dreaded the Hebrews because God was with them!
  - 15 There were two in charge cf 1:19b.  
They are named as they are honoured.  
Pharaoh deals personally as this is a matter of utmost national importance.
  - 16 Yes. He expected them to kill the babies?  
Killing the males removed 'the rulers' Genesis 3:16.
  - 17 'Fear God' meant acknowledge and trust in the God of Israel.

- 19 The Hebrew babies survived and thrived.  
Why did God reward (21) a lie?
- 20 God was kind to the midwives by helping them deliver babies.
- 22 Throwing them into the Nile was an act of worship of the Nile god.

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

6 c 400 years because God was waiting ? (Gen 15:13-16)

21 If a woman 'fears God', will he always give her a family - NO!

4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Jacob's family, 'Israel', were in Egypt for 400 years during which time the work/legacy of Joseph was forgotten. God increased them greatly in number. Pharaoh responded by enslaving the Hebrews, forcing them to serve (worship) him. As the numbers continued to increase, he commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill the boys at birth. Fearing God more than Pharaoh, they did not, for which God blessed them. Pharaoh then enlisted the Egyptian people to kill the Hebrew baby boys by throwing them into, i.e. offering them to the Nile.

## **LISTEN**

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Though God's enemy seeks to destroy / disempower His people, God prospers them.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v12

'But the more they were oppressed the more they multiplied and spread ..'

## **LIVE**

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

6 God is in no hurry to work out his purposes

7 God's way will be fruitful, and so will his people

11 God allows his people to be oppressed

b) His grace?

12 The more they were oppressed the more they multiplied

c) Jesus and His salvation?

17 The fear of God led to the salvation of many

20 God is 'kind' to those who 'fear' Him

2) What should I do?

- 10 Acknowledge -there is a 'shrewd' enemy of God's plans and of His people.  
Expect opposition from God's enemies.
- 12 Note - The enemies of God dread God's people.
- 13 Be aware - The 'king of this world' demands all our work.
- 15 Be aware -A primary ploy of our enemy is to set one against another.
- 16 Note - The evil one's ploy is to remove people who exercise power for good.
- 17 Fear God above all others.
- 19 Note -There are times when God would not have us tell 'the whole truth'.
- 22 Be assured - Evil intent is ultimately exposed.

### Background information

Moses' parents were both descended from Jacob's third son, Levi (Gen 29:34). They are named Amram and Jochebed (Exodus 6:20). Moses was their third child: Aaron was three years older than Moses (7:7) and their sister Miriam was older still (2:4), though still a child under 12, so not working.

Egyptians depended on the flooding of the Nile, and worshipped a god thought to be responsible for this.

### Word List

3	<i>papyrus</i>	in effect a miniature Nile boat <i>see</i> Isaiah 18:2.
	basket	same word is translated 'ark' in Genesis 6:14,15 etc.
	Pharaoh	term for the king of Egypt.
	reeds	would grow in shallow water where current could not carry basket away.
4	sister	named as Miriam in 15:20.
5	Pharaoh's daughter	If the Pharaoh was Rameses II, he had up to sixty daughters! He also had hunting lodges all over the Nile delta.
	bathe	Possibly an act of worship to the god of the Nile?
10	Moses	Egyptian name meaning <i>son</i> or <i>beget a son</i> . Sounds like Hebrew <i>moseh</i> meaning <i>pulling out</i> .

### Bible connections

*See also* Acts 7:20-22; Hebrews 11:23

1 Levites – service in Temple Priests part of Tribe Numbers 3:12;8:6-26;  
Deuteronomy 10:8,9

2 Three day's journey 3:18; darkness in land 10:22; feasts per year 23:14

## LOOK

### 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 Why is Levite marrying Levite important?
- 2 Why 'when she saw it was a fine child'?  
Why three months?
- 3 Why could she 'hide him no longer'?  
Why put the basket in the water?  
What did she expect to happen?
- 4 Why put his sister to watch him?
- 5 What is the purpose of mentioning the attendants?

Why did she see it first?

6 How did she know it was one of the Hebrew babies?

7 How did the young girl know when to speak?

9 Why did she offer to pay her for it?

10 How much older?  
 Why did he only become a son then?  
 What did 'become her son' mean?  
 Why 'I drew...' when it was really her servant (5)?  
 Why did she give him a 'Hebrew' name?  
 What surprises or confuses you?  
 How on earth was a circumcised Hebrew baby accepted as a son of the Egyptian princess (cf a Jewish Baby and Hitler's family!!)?

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

### Surrounding passage

3 Son in the Nile - Obedient to Pharaoh's command 1:22.  
 10 the child grew older within the people of Israel

### Individual book

1 Levites - discipline with Moses after golden calf Exodus 32:26  
 Levites recorded materials for the tabernacle Exodus 38:21.  
 2 Moses was a prophet/ priest of God for the people Ex 19; 20:19.  
 4 His sister - Miriam the prophetess Exodus 15:20.

### Whole Bible

1 Father and Mother (Amram & Jochebed) Ex 6:20, Numbers 26:59.  
 2 'Became pregnant and gave birth to' occurs 15 times in Genesis. This is the 16th and last use in the five books of Moses (Pentateuch)  
 A baby - 'saviour' Luke 2:11.  
 After 3 months Mary went home (from Elizabeth's) Luke 1:56.  
 3 His parents hid him in faith Hebrews 11:23.  
 Obey civil law where possible Romans 13:1-7.  
 Put him among the reeds/conform - cf dying for the people John 11:50.  
 God chose the foolish things (a Hebrew baby) 1 Corinthians 1:27-29.  
 Sister and brother 7:7.  
 6 'Felt sorry' - while we were yet sinners Christ died for us Romans 5:8.  
 The king was attracted to Esther Esther 2:17.  
 7 The Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what to say Luke 12:12.  
 I have been crucified with Christ Galatians 2:20.  
 Being paid to 'mother' cf inherit Matthew 19:29; Revelation 21:7.  
 Dual identity: Egypt/Israel cf Jesus is both God and Man Phil.2:6-8.  
 10 Drawn out of the water cf Noah / baptism 1 Peter 3:21.  
 Cf Adopted into God's family Romans 8:15-17.

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 Moses was to lead the Israelites / to be a prophet/ priest for them before God.

2 The mother's call in God's plan was at first natural / inadvertent.

3 Three months - the divine intervention (3 is a significant number!)

4 She couldn't hide him any longer since all babies cry.

She put it in the water obeying the letter of Pharaoh's command.

If she was following the Lord's leading - complete unknown?

5 His sister being so young does not draw attention to herself.

The attendants were guards / the Hebrew girl would speak to them first.

6 She saw it first in the providence of God.

7 She recognised the baby as Hebrew because he was circumcised.

8 God's timing/prompting?

9 She offered to pay, as she did not know this was the woman's own child.

10 How much older? - the age is not mentioned so not important.

'Her son' meant he became a prince of Egypt.

He grew up a Hebrew, becoming an Egyptian prince.

'I drew...' because others had acted on her instruction.

She gave him a 'Hebrew' name to (proudly) show his origins (NB this was a Jewish tradition?)

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

A circumcised Hebrew baby was accepted as a son of the princess because she had the authority to do so.

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

A child was born to the tribe who would be priests. God's hand was on the child. He was placed in the reeds near where Pharaoh's daughter bathed.

She saw him and while respecting his heritage, adopted him as her own son. She named him in her language as her son, but God purposed that he would save His people.

## LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

God has provided a Jewish saviour who is welcomed by the faithful peoples of the earth.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v10

She named him Moses saying I drew him out of the water

# LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

1-10 God works his plan out, often unseen / unacknowledged

b) His grace?

9 The Lord returns our/His life to us and 'pays' us to look after it!

c) Jesus and His salvation?

(1-10) God fulfils His plan of Salvation : - A Levite (1) .....A son..... fine child (2)..... his sister saw (4)..... Pharaoh's daughter ..... saw.....(5).... she opened it.....felt sorry (6) his sister asked (7) ..... Pharaoh's daughter 'nurse for me' (9) ..... Pharaoh's daughter 'Moses' (10)

(2) He starts with a baby (cf Mt 1:20,21)

2) What should I do?

3 Obey the law where possible.

Entrust my dearest 'possession' to the Lord.

4 Act faithfully then watch to see what the Lord will do.

Be assured - God's plans are held by a thread (she felt sorry for him) - of diamond!

7 Follow the prompting of God's Spirit - whoever I am!

10 Be confident - My 'real' identity is always / ultimately within the people of God.

## Background information

Moses was brought up as a prince of Egypt, with the education and riches of Egypt at his disposal. Thanks to his mother he was also brought up in the wisdom of Israel. He knew who he was, where he had come from and what he believed. That was crucial to give context to the forthcoming revelation by God. 'This is not a new God, but the same God who revealed himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Goshen, where the Hebrews were confined, was 500 km north of the then capital of Egypt, Thebes (modern city of Luxor), where Pharaoh was based.

## Word List

11 <i>grown up</i>	Acts 7:23 says he was 40 years old
<i>Went out</i>	<i>Goshen where the Hebrews were was 500 Km north of capital of Egypt of the then Thebes</i>
<i>watched them</i>	Hebrew means 'saw with emotion' of Genesis 21:16
11-13 <i>strike</i>	Egyptian...(11), Moses....(12) ....your fellow (13)
13 <i>one in the wrong</i>	a law court term, of 9:27
15 <i>Midian</i>	location uncertain; may be Sinai Peninsula, the Arabah (area south of Dead Sea), or east of Gulf of Aqaba
18 <i>Reuel</i>	The Hebrew means 'friend or shepherd of God'. The same person is called Jethro (which is Arabic) in 3:1.
21 <i>Zipporah</i>	name of a small bird
22 <i>Gershom</i>	sounds like Hebrew for 'an alien here'
23 <i>long period</i>	7:7 says he was 80 years old when he spoke to Pharaoh
<i>king of Egypt died</i>	uncertain which king; perhaps Set I or Rameses II
<i>concerned</i>	'took notice of them' (New RSV)

## Bible connections

*See also* Acts 7:23-29; Hebrew 11:24-26

15 by a well *see also* Genesis 29:10; John 4:6-7

23-25 prayer makes a difference *see also* Daniel 9:23; Jeremiah 33:1-3

24 God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac & Jacob *see* Genesis 17:4; 22:16-

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 11 How many years later was this?  
Where was the place he went out to?  
Why had he gone to see the slaves at work  
Why does it add 'one of his own people'
- 12 Why did he kill him?  
Why does it say saw no one when the Hebrew was there?
- 13 How did he know one was in the wrong?
- 14 Why did he speak such 'cheek' to a prince of Egypt  
What had he done?
- 15 How did Pharaoh hear of this?  
Why did Pharaoh try to kill Moses?  
Why did he flee to Midian  
What is a priest of Midian?  
Why 7 daughters?  
Why were they looking after the sheep?
- 19 Why did they identify him as an Egyptian  
What does 'invite him to have something to eat' mean?
- 21 What does 'agreed to stay with the man' mean  
Why was he not married?
- 22 Where would he have not been an alien?
- 23 Why 'King' and not Pharaoh?
- 24 Why did God 'hear' and 'remember' only after a long time?

What surprises or confuses you?

It took God over 400 years - to be 'concerned about them'

## 2) The Context

Surrounding passage,

- 11 when the child became older.. he became her son 2:10.  
His own people - 'This is one of the Hebrew babies' 2:6.

Individual book,

- 13 The one in the wrong 9:27....
- 14 Who made you ruler / gave you authority cf 5:2.  
Cf Attitude is rejection of leadership 5:19-21; Ex 17:3.
- 15 cf Moses' own people tried to kill him 17:4; till all those who tried to kill Moses were dead 4:19.
- 16 Priest of Midian - came to recognise Moses (Abraham's) God 18:10-12.

Whole bible,

11 grown up - in kings palace Daniel 1:4.  
 Cf Jesus - missing out childhood and young adulthood Matt 1,2; Luke 1,2.

12 Be sure your sins will find you out Numbers 32:23.  
 My ways are not your ways... Is 55:8 kill one Egyptian vs deliver a nation!  
 Able to do immeasurably more than you ask or imagine Eph 3:20.

14 'who made you ruler' = rejection of Moses Acts 7:35.  
 Moses the judge cf Ex18:13.  
 Cf Joseph the ruler Gen 41:41.

15 tried to kill, cf roaring lion 1 Pet 5:8.  
 Midian - possibly part of or same as the Ishmaelites (both tribes descended from Abraham) Judges 8:22-24; Gen 16; 21:8-20; 37:28.

16 seven is the perfect / divine number Gen 2:2.

19 entertain angels unawares Hebrews 13:2.

21 cf Jesus unmarried at age of 30 Luke 3:23.  
 Marriage to a non-Israelite? 12:38; Rom 2:28-29.

22 the promised land was where he would be home, not an alien? cf Genesis 17:8.

23 then we cried out to the Lord Deuteronomy 26:7.  
 God knows but expects us to pray Matt 6:5-8, 32.

24 a long time - a day is as a thousand years Ps 90:4; 2 Pet 3:8.  
 At just the right time when we were powerless Christ.... Rom 5:6.

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

11 Moses was 40 years old when this happened (Acts 7:23).  
 Where was the place he went out to?  
 Moses must have travelled to Goshen?  
 It adds 'one of his own people' (x2) to emphasise his identity.

12 He killed him (struck Him in anger) to destroy the evidence of his intervention.  
 It says he saw no one because the Hebrew ran away?

13 It must have been evident (bullying?)

14 He spoke thus as he must have viewed Moses as an Israelite not an Egyptian.  
 He had murdered an Egyptian while defending a Hebrew nb Egyptian disposable?

15 Pharaoh heard of it, as it must have been widespread knowledge amongst the Hebrews.  
 Pharaoh tried to kill Moses as he recognised he had 'changed sides'.  
 He fled to Midian as it was the next 'country'.  
 A priest of Midian is a descendent of Ishmael, son of Abraham  
 Seven is God's perfect number - he was in God's hand.

They were looking after the sheep - (in God's plan) waiting for Moses.

19 They identified him as an Egyptian as he looked/sounded/spoke like one  
'Invite him to have something to eat' means welcome him.

21 Agreed to stay with the man' means this was implied in the welcome?  
He was not married, cf Jesus?!

22 He would not have been an alien in the promised land?

23 The terms 'King' and' Pharaoh' are used interchangeably.

24 A long time is as a day - the Lord has his reasons.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

He 'took notice of them' at the right time for them / His purposes - when they repented/ cried out to Him.

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Moses identified with a fellow Hebrew and killed an Egyptian, which pitted him against Pharaoh / Egypt. He fled to Midian where God arranged a meeting with the daughters of the priest. He stayed with them, marrying his daughter and having her son though aware this wasn't the end of his journey. Meantime the people cried to God and he took notice of them...

## **LISTEN**

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

God is committed to His people and fulfils his promise in His time when they are ready.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v. 24

God heard the groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

## **LIVE**

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

11 The Lord is in no hurry.

15 It took God over 400 years - to be 'concerned about them'

25 God takes notice of our state and responds in His time

b) His grace?

24 God will always respond on the basis of His Covenant promises.

c) Jesus and His salvation?

## 24 Jesus is the fulfilment of the Covenant

- 2) What should I do?
- 12 Trust that a blunder may in the hands of God be preparation for His Work  
Be sure my sins will find me out.
- 14 Be confident that God given authority is recognised (in His time) by His people.
- 15 Be aware that the enemy of our souls desires to kill us.
- 18 Expect to find God's people in the most unlikely places.
- 19 Beware lest you are 'entertaining angels unawares' (Heb 13:2).
- 22 Note - We live as aliens in a foreign land.
- 23 It is appropriate to express our groans and prayers to God.

# Study 4 Moses and the burning bush Exodus 3:1-22

## Background information

God meets with Moses to commission him to bring his people out of Egypt. To counter Moses' disbelief, God tells Moses his name, which is already used in Genesis. Moses will not bring a new or unknown God to his people, but a fuller revelation of the God whom they already knew.

## Word List

1 *was tending...* Hebrew suggests this was his habitual occupation  
*Jethro* see note on 2:18  
*far side* *ie* West, weeks away from home- seeking good pasture?  
*Horeb* *aka* Sinai; location unknown, traditionally Gebel Musa in S of Sinai Peninsula

3 *angel of the LORD* literally, 'messenger of Yahweh'. This was probably an ultra reverent way of speaking of God's own presence *cf* Genesis 18:1; 19:13. Could it be an appearance of Jesus Christ, in advance of his incarnation in the NT?

5 *Do not come any closer* 'stop coming near as you are doing' (*cf* Jn 20:17)  
*take off your sandals* sign of worship  
*holy* first use of word in Bible – only time it refers to a place

8 *a land* part of the great promise to Abraham Genesis 13:15  
*flowing with milk and honey* proverbial description of the hill country of Canaan; milk would mostly be from goats and sheep  
*Canaanites...Jebusites* These 'nations' of Canaan were not mutually related to each other, unlike the 12 tribes of Israel.  
To be driven out in 4<sup>th</sup> generation when sin had reached full measure (Gen 15:16)

12 a *I will be* play on Hebrew YHWH  
12b *sign to you* 'you' is singular  
12c *you will worship* 'you' is plural

14 *I AM WHO I AM* YHWH see note on The Name of God on page 3

16 *I have watched* lit 'I have been watching...' nb continually, at all times

18 *3 days* A major trip with formal consequences (*cf* Jonah 3:3)  
*sacrifices* a reference to the covenant sacrifice (Ex 24)?

20 *Wonders* Heb. Not suspension of natural order but God's marvellous use *of it*.

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 Why was Jethro name changed from Reuel  
Why did he lead his flock to the far side of the desert?  
Why is Horeb called the mountain of the Lord?
- 2 Why does it say the angel of the Lord when it meant the Lord (4)?  
Why did he use his name twice?
- 3 Why did the Lord not speak to him at first - why draw him in?
- 4 What if Moses had not gone over to see?!!  
Why did Moses say 'here I am'?
- 5 What did he mean - it is holy ground? - Is it still holy?!
- 6 Why did he introduce Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?  
Why was he afraid to look at God?
- 7 When did he hear? Had he only now heard the cry of his people?
- 8 Where has he come down from?  
Why 'the home' of not the land of?
- 9 Why only now did the cry of the Hebrews reach him?
- 10 When did the Lord expect him to go - immediately?  
Why did the Lord not give him any indication of how he was going to do it?
- 11 Why did Moses concentrate on himself?
- 12 What difference would it make that God was with him?  
Why would his success in bring them to the mountain (Horeb) be the sign of God's action?
- 13 Why does he say 'suppose I go'?  
What does the question, 'what is his name' mean?
- 14 What does the name, 'I am who I am' mean?
- 15 Why does the Lord appear to repeat himself?
- 16 If he had seen why hadn't he acted sooner?
- 17 When did He promise to bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey ?
- 18 Why did he know the elders would listen to him?  
Why a three day journey?  
Why did he want them to tell a lie?
- 19 What was 'a mighty hand'?
- 20 How did he know they would let them go?
- 21 How would he make the Egyptian people 'favourably disposed'?
- 22 How likely was it that the Egyptians should allow themselves to be 'plundered'?

What surprises or confuses you?

Why has the Lord just woken up to the plight of His people?

Why does he say '3 days' if he wasn't planning to return?

## 2) The Context

### Surrounding passage,

- 1 Moses aged 80 7:7, had been in Midian for 40 years. He died aged 120 Deuteronomy 34:7
- 7 'My people' by God grandly supersedes Moses' 'his own people' 2:11.
- 11 Who am I - not his attitude previously? 2:11-13.
- 18 'Hebrew' a name understood by Egyptians / Pharaoh 2:11.

### Individual book,

- 6 No one shall see God's face and live Ex 33:20.
- 11 'Who am I?' - lack of faith.... angers the Lord Ex 4:14.
- 12 Worship God on this mountain 5:1.
- 18 Three days - with women, children, flocks etc! Exodus 10:9.  
Pharaoh's progressive reply - 'within Egypt 8:25; not too far away 8:28;  
adults only 10:1; all but flocks 10:24.'
- 21 Favourably disposed Exodus 11:3; 12:36; cf only other use in the Bible:  
Genesis 39:21.

### Whole Bible

- 1 Tending the flock - abhorrent to Egyptians Gen 46:32-34; 47:1-6.  
His father in law's flock (cf Jacob's personal wealth after 14 yrs, Gen 30:25-43).
- 4 'Moses, Moses' cf Samuel, Samuel 1 Sam 3:10; Simon, Simon Luke 22:31;  
Here I am 1 Samuel 3:4.
- 5 God lives in unapproachable light 1 Timothy 6:16.  
Confidently approach God Hebrews 10:19-22.
- 6 Abraham, Isaac & Jacob ie 'same yesterday today and forever' Heb 13:8.  
Hid face from God Genesis 32:30; Judges 13:22.
- 7 Crying out - persevering prayer Luke 18:1-8.  
Suffering - inevitable part of being God's child Jn 15:18ff; Rom 5:3; 8:17;  
Philippians 1:29; 3:10; 1 Peter 1:6, though not know why or how long (cf Job)
- 8 the land promised Genesis 15:13-21; Gen 50:24; Hebrews 11:22.  
'Eye has not seen ... what the Lord has prepared for those who love Him'  
1 Corinthians 2:9.
- 9 'I have seen' (Ps 121:3-7.
- 10 cf I am sending you John 20:21; Luke 10:3.
- 11 'Who am I?' - polite acceptance of honour? 1 Samuel 18:18; 2 Sam 7:18?  
an acknowledgement of weakness 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 2:3; 2 Cor 12:7-10.  
Moses the 'most humble man in all the earth' Numbers 12:3.  
By faith Moses... Hebrews 11:24, 25.
- 12 Lo, I am with you to the end of the age Matthew 28:20.

This will be the sign Luke 2:12.  
 Cf to Joshua Josh 1:2-6  
 All powerful Eph3:20  
 Without faith it is impossible to please God Hebrews 11:6

13 Whose name? polytheistic, pantheistic, syncretistic cf 1 Kings 18:22-24  
 (El Elyon - God most high Gen 14:18-22; 'El Shaddai - God Almighty  
 Genesis 17:1; 28:3; El Ro'i - God who sees me Genesis 16:13; El Bethel -  
 God of Bethel Genesis 31:13. )  
 'weakness, fear and trembling' 1 Corinthians 2:3.

13 His name? - the great God cf Isaiah 40:18-31; Job 38:1-11; Psalm 19:1;  
 Romans 1:20 - greatly to be praised! Psalm 96:1-6.

14 Yahweh - Not just what He does but who He is - creator/sustainer of all  
 'in Whom we live, move and have our being' Acts 17:28, sustained by His  
 powerful Word Hebrews 1:3.  
 ('I Am who I am /I cause to be what I cause to be.')  
 The one true God - I am the way the truth and the life John 14:6.

18 Elders will listen to you - in general! cf Numbers 14:1-4; Hebrews 3:7-13;  
 Acts 7:35-40.  
 Three days cf Genesis 30:36; 40:12; Exodus 15:22.  
 A command to lie? cf Abraham and Jacob? Genesis 12:13 & 27:24.  
 God's Word will accomplish Isaiah 55:11.

22 Slaves not to be sent away empty handed Deuteronomy 15:12-18 cf  
 Ephesians 4:8.

## LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?  
 1 Jethro is the Arabic for Reuel.  
 He led his flock there 'by chance', led by God (200 km from Midian home).  
 Horeb was called the 'mountain of the Lord' in retrospect - it is where God revealed himself.
- 2 'The angel of the Lord' is a reverent way of speaking of the Lord.
- 3 The Lord did not speak to him at first because he required a step towards Him.
- 4 If Moses had not gone over, he would not have seen!  
 He used his name twice as a sign of endearment and good will.  
 Moses said 'here I am' as an expression of faith.
- 5 It was holy in the sense that God had chosen to reveal himself there.
- 6 He introduced Himself like that to show that he had not / will not change.  
 He was afraid to look at God for he might die.
- 7 He heard the cry from the start but now was the time to act.
- 8 He had come down from heaven.  
 the 'home' of Canaanites etc. who were living there but didn't own it.

9 He was aware but now the time was to act,

10 Yes. The Lord expected him to go immediately.  
The Lord did not give him any indication but it was enough that he had declared it.

11 Moses concentrates on himself as his faith in God was weak.

12 The difference was total if God was totally sovereign.  
It would be a sign, as only God could do it.

13 He says 'suppose I go' as he was not yet convinced.  
'His name' signifies his identity / authority.

14 'I am who I am' / I cause to be -the eternal one / the creator and sustainer.

15 The repetition is to reinforce God's message?

16 He had to wait till Moses / Pharaoh /the people were ready?

17 'A land flowing with milk and honey' shows fertility of soil and vegetation.

18 He knew the elders would listen to him because he was God.  
A three day journey out, a day sacrificing 3 days back = 7?  
He wasn't lying - it signified an end / complete change (cf resurrection?)

19 'A mighty hand' means superior / compelling force.

20 God had said 'when you leave'.

21 'Favourably disposed' implies active compliance; in fact, it was bowing to superior force.

3) How do you resolve what surprised or confused you?

He had been fully aware but awaiting the right time.

Three days signified total change - the Pharaoh understood this.

4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Moses was watching his father-in-law's flock near Horeb. God attracted his attention, engaged his faith and revealed himself to him as The / Their God who had decided that now was the right time to free His people from Egypt. As the eternal Creator and sustainer of all things he commanded Moses to tell the elders of his plan and promised him that the elders would listen. He was to tell Pharaoh to let the people go but was warned that Pharaoh would not comply until God had inflicted wonders on them. Following those, they would leave Egypt having been freely given riches.

# **LISTEN**

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

The eternal, creator, sustainer God chooses His means to save His people, in His time.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v 10

So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt.

# **LIVE**

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

4 God uses my name twice when he is speaking to me?

6 God never changes; he is always the same.

7 The Lord sees, hears and feels all our pain.

10 God speaks and it is done.

14 God is the eternal one, our creator and sustainer.

16 God alone is our authority.

17 The Lord's promise / His Word is enough.

18 God's Word is effective; it will accomplish.

b) His grace?

9,10 We are released by simply turning to God.

21 God will ensure you have the means to fulfil His call.

c) Jesus and His salvation?

22 Jesus leads the captives out, 'plundering' Hell

2) What should I do

1 Note -How ever far I am from 'the action', God can use me.

2 If I think God may be speaking, move nearer in faith.

5 Note - Mortal man cannot approach God.

8 Expect that the destiny for God's people is 'a land flowing with milk and honey'.

10 I should seek God's commission for myself - it is all that He requires.

12 Rely on God's fellowship - it is all we need.

19 Note - Adversity does not mean God's word has been misunderstood!

### Background information

God very patiently meets Moses' objections and equips him for the task.

The crowns of the kings of Egypt were adorned with the 'uræus', a cobra; a cobra crown was also associated with the sun god, Re.

Leprosy was prevalent in Egypt and reckoned incurable.

The Nile god, 'Hapi', was worshipped and the river was at the very heart of Egypt's existence – every year the flood-waters washed, cleansed, renewed and increased Egypt's soil, giving it its famed fertility and hence great wealth and power. It also teemed with fish and fowl.

The signs are given so 'that they (the Israelites) may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob has appeared to you (Moses)' (5)

### Word List

2	<i>staff</i>	probably the familiar shepherd's crook of Psalm 23:4 .
6	<i>lepros</i>	Hebrew word was used for various skin diseases.
9	' <i>blood</i> '	Poisonous for fish and man (7:17, 18.)
10	<i>Lord</i>	Moses is using ' <i>adonai</i> ' meaning sovereign, master, lord. <i>I am slow of speech</i> literally, 'heavy of mouth'.
14	<i>Then the Lord</i>	alternatively 'Although the Lord ...' cf Gen 42:8) – ie The provision of Aaron was a result of grace not anger?
15	<i>teach</i>	<i>Hebrew 'torah'</i> , name given to the first 5 books of the Bible.
16	<i>mouth</i>	mouthpiece.

### Bible connections

12	help you speak	Isaiah 50:4; 51:16; Jeremiah 1:6-9; Matthew 10:19-20.
15	God knows our needs before we ask	<i>see</i> Matthew 6:8 .
16	as if you were God to him	not like Joseph, Genesis 50:19; but like Paul, 2 Corinthians 5:20.
18	This staff /God's staff	4:20 .
	Used to perform miracles	7:17; 9:23; 10:13; 14:16; 17:6.

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 Why is Moses asking this?  
Who is 'they' - Egyptians or Israelites?
- 2 Why did the Lord ask him what was in his hand - was it not obvious?
- 3 Why throw it on the ground?  
Why did it become a snake?
- 4 Why take the snake 'by the tail'?
- 5 Why should turning the staff into a snake make them believe that God (the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) had appeared to him?
- 6 Why did the Lord give him another sign - was the one not enough?  
What was the significance of his hand turning leprous?
- 8 Why might they not believe the first but believe the second miracle?
- 9 Why give them a third miracle?  
What was the significance of water turning to blood?
- 10 Why did Moses only protest about his speech now, not in 4:1?
- 11 What was the Lord's assurance?
- 13 Whom did Moses have in mind?
- 14 Why did the Lord's anger burn against him?  
Why was Aaron referred to as 'the Levite' (Moses was one too?)
- 15 Why did Moses put words into his mouth (why didn't God do it directly?)
- 17 Why this staff?

What surprises or confuses you?

14-16 Why did God persist with Moses?

## 2) The Context

Surrounding passage,

- 1 A direct disbelief of God's promise (3:18).  
'They' are the Israelites (4:30).  
Who made you ruler and judge (2:14).
- 15 Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh (5:1).

Individual book,

- 2 Moses and 'the staff of God' (17:9)
- 5 God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (3:6, 15, 16)
- 9 cf the first plague of the Nile being turned to blood (7:14-24)
- 14 Aaron the Levite (cf 2:1)
- 16 Moses to Aaron cf God to a prophet (Ex 7:1)

Whole Bible

- 3 Snake - the personification of evil (Genesis 3:1)
- 4 The will pick up snakes with their hands (Mark 16:18)

5 In Jesus' cross, the powers and authorities were made a spectacle of. (Colossians 2:15)

6 Leprosy sign not used in front of Pharaoh. Used with Miriam, Numbers 12

8 John the Baptist performed no signs (John 10:41); Jesus refused to give them (Matthew 12:38- 42), yet elsewhere God insisted (Isaiah 7:10-14).

10 His power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).  
 Fear and trembling (1 Corinthians 3:3).  
 Weak in speech (2 Corinthians 10:10).  
 Cf Paul though the least (Ephesians 3:8).

12 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13).

13 Here I am, send me (Isaiah 6:8).  
 Jesus willingly accepted baptism / his death for us (Luke 3:21-23).

14 anger - slow to anger but abounding in love (Psalm 103:8).  
 your brother - a 'buddy' cf (Luke 10:1a).

15 He will speak the words you give him cf the Holy Spirit (Luke 12:12).

## LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 He is implying that he doesn't believe in God?  
 'They' are the Israelites (4:30,31).

2 The Lord asked him what was in his hand to engage him in the miracle.

3 Throwing was an obvious gesture - an act of faith.  
 It become a snake as a symbol of evil?

4 Taking the snake 'by the tail' (a normally dangerous act) showed complete power over it.

5 This demonstrates that the God of Abraham, the creator God, has power over the evil one(?)

6 He gave another sign for He purposed to reveal himself.  
 His hand turning leprous showed God had power over sickness (?)

8 The second miracle showed the first was not a fluke?

9 The third miracle completed God's revelation.  
 The significance of water turning to blood was bringing to nothing the power of 'Habi' the Egyptian river god.

10 Moses only protests about his speech now, not in v1, because of the immanence of the command / he is clutching at straws to avoid the call!

11 The Lord's assurance was that as Creator He would carry it out.

13 Moses has no one in mind; he has been away for 40 years!

14 The Lord's anger burns against him because of his lack of faith.  
 He was referred to as 'Aaron the Levite' to underline that the Lord meant his brother.

15 Moses was to put words into Aaron's mouth, for God was clear it was Moses who was the prophet.

17 'This staff' was Moses' staff = God had purposed to use him.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

**14-16 God persisted with Moses because He had chosen him.**

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Moses doubted that the Israelites would believe in God's promise to use Him to release His people from Egypt. So the Lord gave him three signs for them - his staff turning to a serpent, his hand turning leprous and the Nile's water turning to blood. Furthermore he doubted his own ability to speak, so tried hard to evade God call.

The Lord was angered at the questioning of his sovereignty, but in his grace provided his brother Aaron to be Moses' spokes-person.

## **LISTEN**

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

**God enables a person to fulfil their calling**

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

**'I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do' (15)**

## **LIVE**

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

2 The Lord engages with our natural attributes.

The Lord has / gives us complete power over the serpent (Satan).

5 The Lord remains the same.

7 The Lord has power over all disease.

9 The Lord has the power of life and death.

11 The Lord created us; He can surely enable us.

14 The Lord may be angry with us.

15 The Lord knows what the future will be.

b) His grace?

5 God reveals Himself to those he chooses.

17 The Lord provides the means for us to achieve His purposes.

c) Jesus and His salvation?

13 In Jesus's baptism he offered Himself as our saviour

2) What should I do?

1 I may acknowledge and express my doubts / fears to God.

10 Note - Human inadequacy is no excuse for exception from use by the Lord.

13 Don't try and sidestep the Lord's purpose by deferring to others.

## Background information

Moses courteously asks his father-in-law's permission to go back to Egypt. He sets out with his wife and sons, and the staff of God in his hand.

## Word List

23 *Worship*      *in NIV, Heb 'abad'* Normally translated – 'work/ serve'.

24/25 *him/his*      The Lord met with *him* (ie Moses' first born, Gershom) .... touched *his* (Moses first born's) feet

*His feet*      euphemism for his (Gershom's) genitals

25 *flint knife*      as used in Joshua 5:2. Such stones are common in desert.

*Her son*      Gershom (2:22) - nearly 40 years old? (see below vs 18)

*Bridegroom of blood* - blood relative (spoken to Gershom).

27 *desert*      better 'the grazing land'.

## Bible connections

18 Moses was 40 when fled from Egypt Acts 7:23, 80 when he returned 7:7.

19 'All who wanted to kill you are dead.' *cf* Matthew 2:20.

21 God will 'harden Pharaoh's heart'; *cf* Pharaoh will harden his heart (8:15) Pharaohs heart was hardened (7:13) nb In Hebrew God is in control, and humans are responsible for their choices.  
 'God will harden...' repeated at (7:3). But not at first:      *see* sequence:  
 7:13, 22-23; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7 – so 9:12.  
 Another chance 9:27-28, 34-35; - so 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10.

22 first-born son First mention of this theme of 'belonging to God' in Exodus 13:2, *cf* Genesis 22  
 God is entitled to choose, select and elect *cf* Ephesians 1:3-6; James 1:18; Romans chapters 9-11

24 The penalty for non-circumcision was 'cut off from people' Gen 17:14  
 God using illness as a warning *cf* Genesis 12:17; 20:17

26 circumcision, sign of God's covenant with Abraham *see* Genesis 17:10  
 true circumcision is an inward, not outward matter, *see* Jeremiah 9:25-26; Romans 2:29.

27 Kissing =welcome/recognition of family Gen 29:13; 33:4; 45:15; 48:10.  
 A preferred translation of Vs 24-26 - "At a lodging place along the way the Lord met with him (Moses' son Gershom) and was about to kill him. But Zipporah (his mother) took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin and touched his genitals with it. "Surely you are a blood relative to me" she said. So the Lord let him alone. At that time, she said 'blood relative', referring to circumcision." (NB this was the difference between the firstborn who would be killed and those who would be 'passed over' in Egypt.)

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 18 Where did he go back to?  
What did he expect - might they all have died?  
Why did he not tell him that God had sent him back 'to bring ..the Israelites out of Egypt'?
- 19 When did he say that to Moses?
- 20 Why did he take the staff of God in his hand?
- 21 Why would God deliberately 'harden' Pharaoh's heart?
- 23 Why does God only mention the last plague - the firstborn son?  
If the Lord knew Pharaoh was going to ignore the first 9 plagues, why did he 'go through the motions' anyway?
- 24 Who was about to be killed?  
Why was he about to be killed?
- 25 Why did his mother and not his father carry out the circumcision?  
Whose feet were touched?
- 26 Why did she call him 'a bridegroom of blood'?
- 27 What did 'kissing him' mean?
- 28 Why did God not also tell Aaron about what Moses was to say and do?
- 30 Why did Aaron tell the Israelites what the Lord had told Moses?
- 31 What purpose did the signs have?  
What did they believe?  
Why only now did they 'bow down and worship'?

What surprises or confuses you?

Why is this incident with Zipporah's son Gershom, reported?

## 2) The Context

Surrounding passage,

- 18 Jethro in Midian 3:1  
'see if any are still alive' = Understatement ?- cf Go for a 'three day journey' 3:18 .  
'Go. I wish you well' contrast with Pharaoh, 'I will not let Israel go' 5:2.
- 19 Pharaoh tried to kill Moses 2:15.
- 20 Take this staff in your hand so that you can perform miraculous signs 4:17
- 21 All the wonders - staff to snake, hand leprous, water to blood 4:2 -9.
- 27 Mountain of God (Horeb) 3:1,where the people would worship God 3:12.
- 30 Aaron told them 4:16.
- 31 the Lord was concerned 3:7.

### Individual book,

- 18 Six hundred thousand men Exodus 12:37
- 20 Staff of God 17:9)
- 21 Harden Pharaoh's heart 7:3; 14:4,17
- 23 I will kill your first born 11:5

### Whole Bible,

- 18 Sought permission from Jethro unlike Jacob, Genesis 31.
- 19 He will direct your path, Proverbs 3:5,6.
- 22 First born son (Jesus) Luke 2:7.
- 24 cf Inn Luke 10:34.
- 25 cf circumcised on 8th day, a Hebrew of Hebrews, Phil 3:5
- 30 Blessed are those who do not see 'the signs' yet believe. John 20:29.

## LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

18 Moses went back to Midian.

God had told him that all who wanted to kill him were dead.

He didn't tell him as he lacked faith / was not sure?

19 'In Midian' appears to be after his return from Horeb.

20 He took the staff as an act of faith / because God told him 17.

21 God would not deliberately, but may have incidentally, 'hardened' Pharaoh's heart?

23 He only mentions the last plague as he knows that Pharaoh won't release them earlier.

Who knows? / He knows!

24 Moses son was about to be killed?

He was he about to be killed as he would be a first born in Egypt and uncircumcised.

25 His father was being disobedient so his mother did what was required ?  
Gershom's 'feet' were touched?

26 She called him a blood relative for now he was truly a Hebrew

27 'kissing him' meant the acceptance / welcome.

28 God didn't tell Aaron because the Word of God was to come through Moses.

30 Aaron spoke for him because Moses had opted out!

31 The signs appeared to be the means through which they believed.

They believed that Moses was sent to Pharaoh to bring (God's) people out of Egypt.

They only now 'bowed down and worshipped' because they believed.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

This incident is reported to show that the one chosen to lead the people of God must be faithful and obedient to Him as God expects His people to be to him / the leader.

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Moses, assured by God, took his family back to Egypt. The message to Pharaoh was let my 'first born', Israel, go to serve me. It will be refused at the cost of the first born of Egypt.

Moses' own first born had not entered into God's covenant of Circumcision; a mistake by Moses but a fact remedied by his mother, who saved his life.

God brought Moses and his brother Aaron together at Mt Horeb; they went to Egypt where Moses gave the Israelites God's instruction through Aaron. They saw the signs, believed in God's grace to them and they bowed and worshipped.

## **LISTEN**

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

The Lord requires integrity in His Work

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

'Surely you (Gershom) are a blood relative to me (Zipporah).' So the Lord let him alone' 25,26.

3) How do you think it does this?

Moses was going back to Egypt to release the Hebrews from slavery, but he had not been faithful to God's promise in his own family (did he know it?). His own son was not circumcised. God had promised Moses that Pharaoh would only let 'His son', the Hebrews, go by killing the firstborn.

Moses own firstborn son would die with the uncircumcised Egyptians. The Lord resolves this before Moses returns to Egypt. Moses' son is about to die (be killed by God). Moses wife (faithfully) intervenes, circumcises her son and so saves his life.

## LIVE

- 1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
  - a) His nature and character?
- 21 The Lord expects His Word to be obeyed.
- 22 The Lord knows the future.
- 23 God's Word is the way it will be.
- 27 The Lord works 'behind the scenes' to achieve His purposes.
  - b) His grace?

19 The Lord prepares the way for His people

- c) Jesus and His salvation?

26) The "outsider's" faithful action saves God's children

- 2) What should I do?

18 Don't push once the Lord has promised / decreed; I don't have to!  
Go with God's plan even if in the first instance it means loss.

20 If I hear the Word of God, commit everything to it (eg Moses' family)  
Take 'the Lord's staff' (His Word) for His work.

22 Note - Israel was / is the Lord's first born.  
Note - There are consequences for disobeying the Word of God.

25 If I don't obey the Word of God (like Moses failed to circumcise Gershom) God will use someone else (as He used Zipporah).

27 I should obey God's prompting. Heed His Word.

28 Believing in God involves sharing His Word with His people.

29 All God's people need to know everything that He says to Moses / in His Word.

31 Note - to know the Lord is personally concerned about you, is the basis of our worship.

## Background information

After a positive reception from the Israelites, Moses goes to Pharaoh with his request to let the people go; but he only succeeds in making conditions even harder for them; so not only Pharaoh but now even the people reject Moses!

## Word List

1 *thus says the Lord* First use in Bible of this prophetic messenger form.  
*a festival in the desert* Near-eastern style of making requests – understate at first (NB no mention anywhere of a return).

6 *slave drivers* Egyptian taskmasters.  
*foremen* Israelite ‘gangers’.

7 *straw* When a grass crop is harvested, it is hay, good for fodder.  
When the seed-heads have been detached from a harvested cereal crop, the remaining yellow stalks are straw.

*making bricks* from earth, sand and water, in correct proportions.  
Chopped to regular lengths, straw is placed in a mould with the mud. This reinforces the brick, helps it to dry evenly, and increases the brick’s insulative properties.  
Straw can also be used to *cover* bricks when laid out to dry in full sun: if the outside dries too quickly, trapping moisture inside, the bricks go to mush when fired in a kiln.

9 *lies* i.e. alleging either that Moses and Aaron are lying when claiming God had promised to deliver the Israelites, or that God himself was lying!

12 *stubble* The short stalks left in the field after crops have been harvested. A poor substitute for straw.

## Bible connections

1 ‘Thus says the Lord’ A form of words that the Prophets would use, much later, e.g. Amos 1:3. In the Pentateuch, it appears only in Exodus: 4:22; 5:1; 7:17; 8:1,20; 9:1,13; 10:3; 11:4; 32:27.

21 The people’s response *cf* Mark 4:16-17.  
Suffering and Christian maturity *see* 1 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Peter 2:20b-25 4:12-13; James 1:2-4; Hebrews 12:7.

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 After what?  
Why do they only ask to leave for a festival?
- 2 Who was 'the LORD'?
- 3 Why does he called Him the God of the Hebrews?  
Why do they say that the Lord may strike them down ( Israelites or Israelites + Egyptians) 'with plagues or with the sword'?
- 4 Why did the King address them both by name?
- 6 Why 'that same day'?
- 7 Why did the Pharaoh make their conditions so much harder / impossible?
- 8 Why does He call them 'lazy'?
- 9 What were 'the lies' that they might have paid attention to?
- 14 Why did they ask the question? (They knew the answer.)
- 15 How did they gain access to appeal to Pharaoh?
- 17 Why does Pharaoh say 'lazy'?  
What does Pharaoh mean by 'keep saying 'let us go ...' 8,17
- 20 Why were Aaron and Moses 'waiting for them'?
- 21 Why did they use the LORD'S name that had been revealed to Moses?  
What did he mean - 'put a sword in their hand to kill us'?

What surprises or confuses you?

Why do they ask for only a 3-day festival?

## 2) The Context

surrounding passage,

- 1 'Thus says the Lord' - also Exodus 4:22; 7:17; 8:1, 20; 9:1,13; 10:3; 11:4; 32:27.  
my people 3:7,10  
The LORD 3:15  
For Israelites - 'Bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt' 3:10.  
For Pharaoh - 'A three-day festival to the Lord' 3:18.
- 4 Pharaoh's heart hardened 4:21.
- 7,17 'Lazy' - only other use in OT is in Proverbs eg 10:4.
- 9 Lying words cf promise of deliverance 4:30.
- 15 Appealed to Pharaoh cf 4:31.

individual book,

- 1 festival in the desert Ex 10:9  
Pharaoh's concessions - sacrifice within Egypt 8:25; not too far away 8:28; adult males may go alone 10:11; all but the flocks may go 10:24.
- 5 Israelites = numerous 1:10.
- 15 Cried out to Pharaoh (cf to God 2:23)
- 21 die in Egypt, not brought out of Egypt 3:10

Whole Bible,

- 1 chose this day who you will serve Josh 24:15
- 2 'Who is the Lord'? Prov 30:9
- 4 'trouble makers' cf Acts 17:5-9; 19:21-34
- 8 False accusations Matt 5:11.  
Moses .... 'disgrace for the sake of Christ' Heb 11:26.
- 13f The impossible demands of the slave driver cf Romans 7:22-24.
- 19 Conviction of Holy Spirit John 16:8.
- 21 'May the LORD look and judge; cf Genesis 16:5.  
A judgement against Israel for covenant violation Amos 5:18-24.

## LEARN

- 1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
  - 1 After they had told the Israelites and they had received God's plan  
The request is set in minimal terms to start with
  - 2 'the LORD' ('I AM' was the name of God revealed to Moses) - not known by Pharaoh.
  - 3 'Hebrews' was the generic name recognised by the Egyptians.  
They say this to show how serious they are.
  - 4 The King addresses them by name because he knew who they were.
  - 6 'That same day' to show Pharaoh's purpose and intent.
  - 7 He did this because he wanted to crush the Hebrews.
  - 8 He calls them 'lazy' to provoke them.
  - 9 The lies were to do with the Lord promise of release from Egypt.
  - 14 They questioned to provoke the Hebrews.
  - 15 This was a common right of all people of access OR the situation was serious. The Hebrews were organised. Pharaoh dealt with their leaders.

17 Pharaoh says 'lazy' to provoke the Hebrews / to justify himself.  
Pharaoh keeps saying it because he understand the issue - release of the Hebrews.

20 Aaron and Moses were 'waiting for them' because they were not included / they understood the importance of the meeting.

21 They use the LORD'S name because they believed/accepted His revelation to Moses.  
He meant they had given Pharaoh an excuse to work them to death.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?  
The request is under-stated as was the custom. Pharaoh understood that their request was for much more. They would serve YAHWEH only in the land He

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.  
Moses and Aaron make the initial request to let the Israelites go. Pharaoh refuse and increases their labour to intolerable levels'. He rejects the appeals of the Israelite foremen who, though accepting Moses' revelation of 'the LORD' (21; 3:15), presume they have got it wrong by the opposition of Pharaoh.

## **LISTEN**

1) What is the lesson or the main point?  
The world does not understand the Lord's gracious call to his people'.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v. 8  
'They are lazy; that is why they are crying out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God'.

## **LIVE**

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?  
a) His nature and character?

5 God's Kingdom grows in spite of opposition.

6 God is never hurried / outflanked

b) His grace?

1 The Lord commands our freedom; we don't earn it!!

c) Jesus and His salvation?

21 The saviour 'came to his own but his own did not receive Him.' John 1:11

2) What should I do?

2 Be aware -The world does not acknowledge / recognise the LORD

3 Declare God's word - I never have to make God's Word more believable.

Note -There are consequences for all for disobeying the Word of God

5 Note - the forces of darkness are activated by the advance of God's Kingdom.

6f Be aware - It is impossible to satisfy the demands of the evil one.

8 Be aware - People make false accusations about the people of God.

14 Note - God's people are unreasonably oppressed by the world's forces.

17 Don't argue with the evil one - there is no reasonable appeal against him!

19 Note - We can never satisfy the demands of the evil one

21 Be aware - Adversity, even from God's people, is not necessarily an indication that I am doing wrong in God's eyes.

Even when my own people doubt you, have confidence in God's Word

# Sharing the Word

## Use

*'Hearing the Word'* can be used alone, with one other person, or in a group

## Preparing for a group

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.

Write down your own questions and answers \*

## A format

If you have 45 mins together, you might like to try dividing it up like this.  
(If longer or in a large group, you can extend the times)

1) Drink, bite to eat, chat	(10 mins)
2) A Bible reading	( 2 mins)
3) A Bible study	
a. Any questions? (Whether answer is known or not!) (Don't answer any, till all questions noted!)	( 2 mins)
b. Any relevant cross references?	( 2 mins)
c. Discussion of answers	(13 mins)
d. Conclusion	
i. A Key verse and Main Point?	
ii. What does it show about God / Jesus?	
iii. What should I do?	
4) Sharing (Trials and joys – family, work, self)	( 5 mins)
5) Prayer	( 1 min)

## Remember!

As we gather round God's Word

- a) Listen to the views of others
- b) Make room for the novice. They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others' especially, 'seekers' in your sharing together.

\* The **process** is explained and practised in a four-hour course, suitable for all: **'An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**. Email: [office@tpc.org](mailto:office@tpc.org)

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