

# Exodus 1–6:1

## Israel Increases Greatly in Egypt

**1:1** These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, 3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, 4 Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. 5 All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt. 6 Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. 7 But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

## Pharaoh Oppresses Israel

8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9 And he said to his people, “Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. 10 Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” 11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. 13 So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves 14 and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.

15 Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 16 “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” 17 But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. 18 So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and let the male children live?” 19 The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” 20 So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied

and grew very strong. <sup>21</sup> And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. <sup>22</sup> Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.”

## The Birth of Moses

**2:1** Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. <sup>2</sup> The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. <sup>3</sup> When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. <sup>4</sup> And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. <sup>5</sup> Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. <sup>6</sup> When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, “This is one of the Hebrews' children.” <sup>7</sup> Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, “Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” <sup>8</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, “Go.” So the girl went and called the child's mother. <sup>9</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, “Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed him. <sup>10</sup> When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, “Because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water.”

## Moses Flees to Midian

<sup>11</sup> One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. <sup>12</sup> He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. <sup>13</sup> When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, “Why do you strike your companion?” <sup>14</sup> He answered, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid, and thought, “Surely the thing is known.” <sup>15</sup> When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses

fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17 The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock. 18 When they came home to their father Reuel, he said, "How is it that you have come home so soon today?" 19 They said, "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock." 20 He said to his daughters, "Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread." 21 And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. 22 She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land."

### God Hears Israel's Groaning

23 During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

### The Burning Bush

**3:1** Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." 4 When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6 And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

7 Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, 8 and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." 11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" 12 He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

13 Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. 16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, 17 and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.'" 18 And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' 19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. 20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. 21 And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, 22 but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry,

and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.”

### Moses Given Powerful Signs

**4:1** Then Moses answered, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’” <sup>2</sup> The LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A staff.” <sup>3</sup> And he said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. <sup>4</sup> But the LORD said to Moses, “Put out your hand and catch it by the tail”—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand—<sup>5</sup> “that they 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.” <sup>6</sup> Again, the LORD said to him, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. <sup>7</sup> Then God said, “Put your hand back inside your cloak.” So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. <sup>8</sup> “If they will not believe you,” God said, “or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. <sup>9</sup> If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

<sup>10</sup> But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” <sup>11</sup> Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? <sup>12</sup> Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” <sup>13</sup> But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.” <sup>14</sup> Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. <sup>15</sup> You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. <sup>16</sup> He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and

you shall be as God to him. 17 And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs.”

### Moses Returns to Egypt

18 Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, “Please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive.” And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.” 19 And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.” 20 So Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand.

21 And the LORD said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. 22 Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, 23 and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me.” If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.’”

24 At a lodging place on the way the LORD met him and sought to put him to death. 25 Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, “Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!” 26 So he let him alone. It was then that she said, “A bridegroom of blood,” because of the circumcision.

27 The LORD said to Aaron, “Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.” So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. 28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which he had sent him to speak, and all the signs that he had commanded him to do. 29 Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. 30 Aaron spoke all the words that the LORD had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 And the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped.

### Making Bricks Without Straw

**5:1** Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’” <sup>2</sup> But Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.” <sup>3</sup> Then they said, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.” <sup>4</sup> But the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens.” <sup>5</sup> And Pharaoh said, “Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!” <sup>6</sup> The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen, <sup>7</sup> “You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves. <sup>8</sup> But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. Therefore they cry, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God.’ <sup>9</sup> Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words.”

<sup>10</sup> So the taskmasters and the foremen of the people went out and said to the people, “Thus says Pharaoh, ‘I will not give you straw. <sup>11</sup> Go and get your straw yourselves wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced in the least.’” <sup>12</sup> So the people were scattered throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. <sup>13</sup> The taskmasters were urgent, saying, “Complete your work, your daily task each day, as when there was straw.” <sup>14</sup> And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, “Why have you not done all your task of making bricks today and yesterday, as in the past?”

<sup>15</sup> Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, “Why do you treat your servants like this? <sup>16</sup> No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, ‘Make bricks!’ And behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people.” <sup>17</sup> But he said, “You are idle, you are idle; that is why you say, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.’ <sup>18</sup> Go now and work. No straw will be given you, but you must still deliver the same number of bricks.” <sup>19</sup> The foremen of the people of Israel saw that they were in trouble when they said, “You shall by no means reduce your number of bricks, your daily task each day.” <sup>20</sup> They met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for

them, as they came out from Pharaoh; <sup>21</sup> and they said to them, “The LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”

<sup>22</sup> Then Moses turned to the LORD and said, “O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? <sup>23</sup> For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all.”

### God Promises Deliverance

**6:1** But the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.”