

The Story of Moses

Introduction

Long ago, in the land of Egypt, lived the Egyptians and the Hebrews. The Egyptians treated the Hebrews very badly and used them as their slaves. This is the story of how the Hebrews escaped from slavery.

Chapter 1 The Secret

A young Hebrew mother, called Jochebed, was trying to keep a secret. The king, called the Pharaoh, said that all Hebrew baby boys should be thrown in the river to drown! Jochebed had three children: Miriam was seven, Aaron was three, and the youngest was a baby boy, just three months old.

One morning, there was a knock at the door. 'This is terrible!' gasped Jochebed. 'What's wrong?' asked Miriam. 'We can't hide the baby any longer,' said Jochebed.

Jochebed and Miriam went down to the river. Jochebed put the baby's basket in the rushes at the side of the river. Miriam stayed to see what would happen next.

Some young women came down to the river. It was Pharaoh's daughter and her friends. Pharaoh's daughter suddenly stopped. 'What is that?!' she exclaimed. 'Go and get it for me!'

When she looked in the basket, she gave a gasp of surprise. 'It's one of the Hebrews' children!' she said. 'I can't let this baby die! I'm going to keep it. I will call him Moses, because I took him out of the water'.

Just then a small girl came up. 'Shall I get someone to feed the baby for you?' she asked. And so it happened that Jochebed looked after the baby, and when he was old enough, he went to live in Pharaoh's palace.

Chapter 2 Moses the Killer

Moses grew into a fine young Egyptian prince. He had everything he could want.

He saw the Hebrew slaves working on his grandfather's palaces and pyramids. He knew that his own family had been slaves. He tried not to think about it.

One day, Moses saw an Egyptian slave master hitting a Hebrew slave.

Suddenly he knew what he had to do. He killed the slave master and buried the body in the sand.

The next morning Moses saw one man hitting another man. 'Stop fighting!' he said. 'Who are you to tell me what to do?' the man replied. 'Are you going to kill me, like you killed the slave master?'

Chapter 3 Running Away

Moses froze in horror. Then he rode out of town as fast as he could and across the desert. He got to another country, called Midian, and stopped at a small village.

Moses was resting by the village well when seven young women came up. The women got water for their sheep, but then five young men pushed the women out of the way.

Moses jumped up. 'What do you think you're doing?' he said. He helped the young women get more water for their sheep.

Moses went to stay with the young women and their father. He married the eldest, Zipporah. They had two sons and were very happy. Moses helped to look after the family's sheep.

Chapter 4 The Burning Bush

Moses was out with the sheep, on a mountain far from home, when he saw a very strange thing. A small thorny tree was on fire. Flames leapt up from the branches and the wood glowed with the heat. Yet all the leaves were still green and the branches were still solid wood.

Moses went to have a closer look. Suddenly there was a voice from the tree. 'Moses! Moses!' said the voice, 'Take off your shoes, Moses. This is holy ground. I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob'.

'I have seen the suffering of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cry. I have come to take them out of Egypt. I will take them to a good land of milk and honey. Moses, you will take my people out of Egypt.'

Moses took a deep breath and said, 'Who am I to take the Hebrews out of Egypt? When the Hebrews ask who sent me, what shall I say? The Hebrews won't believe me or listen to me. And I can't speak well!'

'I AM THAT I AM', said the voice. 'Tell them that I AM has sent you. I will be with you. Aaron your brother will speak for you. Go back to Egypt. The men who wanted to kill you are dead.'

Chapter 5 Persuading Pharaoh

‘What!’ Pharaoh shouted, ‘Have time off, to go into the desert and worship their God? The Hebrews are just lazy! From now on we won’t give them straw to make bricks! They will have to get the straw themselves! But they will still have to make just as many bricks.’

Each day, Moses and Aaron went to see Pharaoh. Each day, Pharaoh said no. Each day, God made something happen, to try to change Pharaoh’s mind.

All the water in Egypt turned to blood.
Frogs came up out of all the rivers, streams, and puddles in Egypt.
Lice covered all the people and animals.
Everything was covered in flies. Everything except the Hebrews.
All the cattle died.
Boils covered all the Egyptians and their animals.
Thunder and lightning began.
Hail destroyed almost all the plants.
Then the sky went dark at noon. Egypt was dark for three days.

But Pharaoh still said no.

Then Moses said to Pharaoh ‘All the first-born children will die. The first-born child of Pharaoh. The first-born child of the servants. The first-born calves of the cows.

Chapter 6 The Angel of Death

Moses said to the Hebrew people. ‘Each family must kill a lamb. Put some of its blood on your front door. The angel of death will come and kill all the first-born children of the Egyptians. But when the angel sees blood on a door, it will pass over the house.

That night, Pharaoh went to his son’s room. His son lay dead.

Everywhere, there was the sound of crying.

Pharaoh said to Moses and Aaron. ‘Get out. You, and all the Hebrews, and your sheep and cattle, get out. And pray for me.’

Chapter 7 The Slaves Go Free

Quickly, the Hebrews got their things together and left. They were in such a hurry they did not have time for their bread dough to rise.

They had got close to the sea, when they looked back and saw Pharaoh’s army coming after them.

'Moses and Aaron, what have you done?' they shouted. 'Have you taken us out of Egypt to die here? Better to be slaves in Egypt than to die here!'

Moses put his hand out to the sea – and a dry path appeared. The Hebrews went quickly across the sea to the other side.

Pharoah's army went in after them. The water fell back and drowned Pharoah's army.

Moses led the Hebrews on into the desert. At last, they were free.

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