

## *Norwood's Notes: Brief Summaries of Bible Stories*

These "notes" are intended to provide a general overview of the basic stories of the Bible in the hope of building greater biblical knowledge and encouraging Bible reading and study. For more information, visit [www.UjimaChurch.org](http://www.UjimaChurch.org)

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### **5. Highlights from Exodus 4 – 15, "Moses and the Exodus"**

Moses had fled from the king of Egypt to the land of Midian when he was forty years old. Now, forty years later, Moses obeyed the command he received from the Lord and returned to Egypt on a mission of deliverance, taking with him his Midianite wife, Zipporah, and their two sons. The Lord also sent Moses' older brother Aaron to meet him on the way and to serve as Moses' spokesman. The brothers first went to the elders of the people of Israel, letting them know that the Lord was about to deliver them from their oppression in Egypt (Ex 4). Moses and Aaron then told the Pharaoh of Egypt that the Lord God (the one who calls himself "I AM," which in Hebrew is "YAHWEH"), commanded that the people of Israel be let go to worship him in the wilderness. The king's angry response was not only to refuse their release, but he also punished the Hebrews, requiring that they maintain their mandated quota of bricks, but now without the supply of straw they previously received. The Hebrews were bitter toward Moses and Aaron over the additional suffering brought by Pharaoh's anger at the brother's request (Ex 5). But, God was working his plan.

The Lord sent Moses & Aaron back to Pharaoh to repeat His command and to display His power with wondrous signs, starting with Moses turning his staff into a mighty serpent. God then sent plagues upon the Egyptians. He turned the river Nile and all of the canals, ponds, and even water in containers to blood (Ex 7). He sent a plague of frogs, then a plague of gnats, then a plague of flies (Ex 8). The livestock of Egypt died in the fifth plague and boils arose on the Egyptians in a sixth plague, and thunder, hail and fire came from heaven in a seventh plague (Ex 9). The eighth plague was of locusts destroying the vegetation and the ninth plague was three days of pitch darkness over the land (Ex 10). Although Pharaoh, in moments of fear and regret, would beg Moses for relief from each of the Lord's punishing plagues, he would continuously turn again to sinful disobedience and refuse the Lord's command to let the Hebrews go. This was all part of God's plan to get the glory as He delivered Israel while also proving that the false gods the Egyptians worshiped were mere powerless idols.

The Lord God told Moses that the tenth plague would be the final one, causing Pharaoh to drive the people away. Moses was to prepare for their release in two ways. First, the Hebrews were to ask the

Egyptians to give them their gold and silver jewelry and for some of their clothing, so the Hebrews would depart the land of Egypt with the wealth of the Egyptians (Ex 11). Second, the Hebrews were to have a sacred ceremonial meal, called the "Passover." In addition to the special Passover meal, which would be celebrated for all time as an annual memorial of their deliverance, the blood of a lamb was to be spread on the door frame of all who believed in the Lord. It would be a sign of faith that protected them from the final plague of the death of the firstborn.

That night, the death angel passed over the homes which had the sign of blood, but the firstborn of all humans and animals who were not under this sign of protection, died... even Pharaoh's own firstborn (Ex 12). Afraid for their lives, the Egyptians sent the Hebrews out of their land, giving them gold and silver jewelry and even clothing, so the Hebrews left Egypt as though they had plundered the Egyptians. The Lord chose not to lead the Hebrews on the most direct route to the land promised to their ancestors, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, but instead guided them as a pillar, or column, of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, traveling through the wilderness toward the sea (Ex 13). Moses also took the ancient bones of Joseph, the eleventh son of Jacob, to bury his remains among their ancestors, as Joseph had requested.

Again, Pharaoh's heart turned, and he pursued the people with his army and elite chariots and horsemen. The Hebrews were terrified as they were trapped between Pharaoh's forces on one side and the sea on the other. The people complained to Moses, but God was working His plan. The pillar of cloud moved to protect the Hebrew camp, coming between them and the Egyptian forces. The Lord told Moses to lift his staff and stretch out his hand over the sea, and when he did, the Lord caused sea to be divided in two by a strong wind that blew through the night, exposing a strip of the sea floor. The people of Israel walked across the dried sea floor, with walls of water on their right and left. When the Egyptians pursued, the Lord told Moses to stretch out his hand again, and when he did, the waters returned and covered the Egyptian forces that had tried to follow the Hebrews upon the dry sea floor (Ex 14).

The Lord saved the people of Israel by His mighty power, delivering them from oppression in Egypt and from the forces of Pharaoh. The people saw the might of the Lord God and believed in Him and that Moses was the Lord's servant. Moses led the people in a song of praise to the Lord, recounting God's mighty deeds of deliverance. The prophetess Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, picked up a tambourine and also sang praises to the Lord for His triumph over Pharaoh's army; and, the women followed her with tambourines and dancing (Ex 15).

The Passover meal, the mark of lamb's blood on the doorframes, and the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, all point to the divine plan of deliverance that would come through Jesus Christ over 1000 years later.