

good  
NEWS BIBLE

The book of

EXODUS

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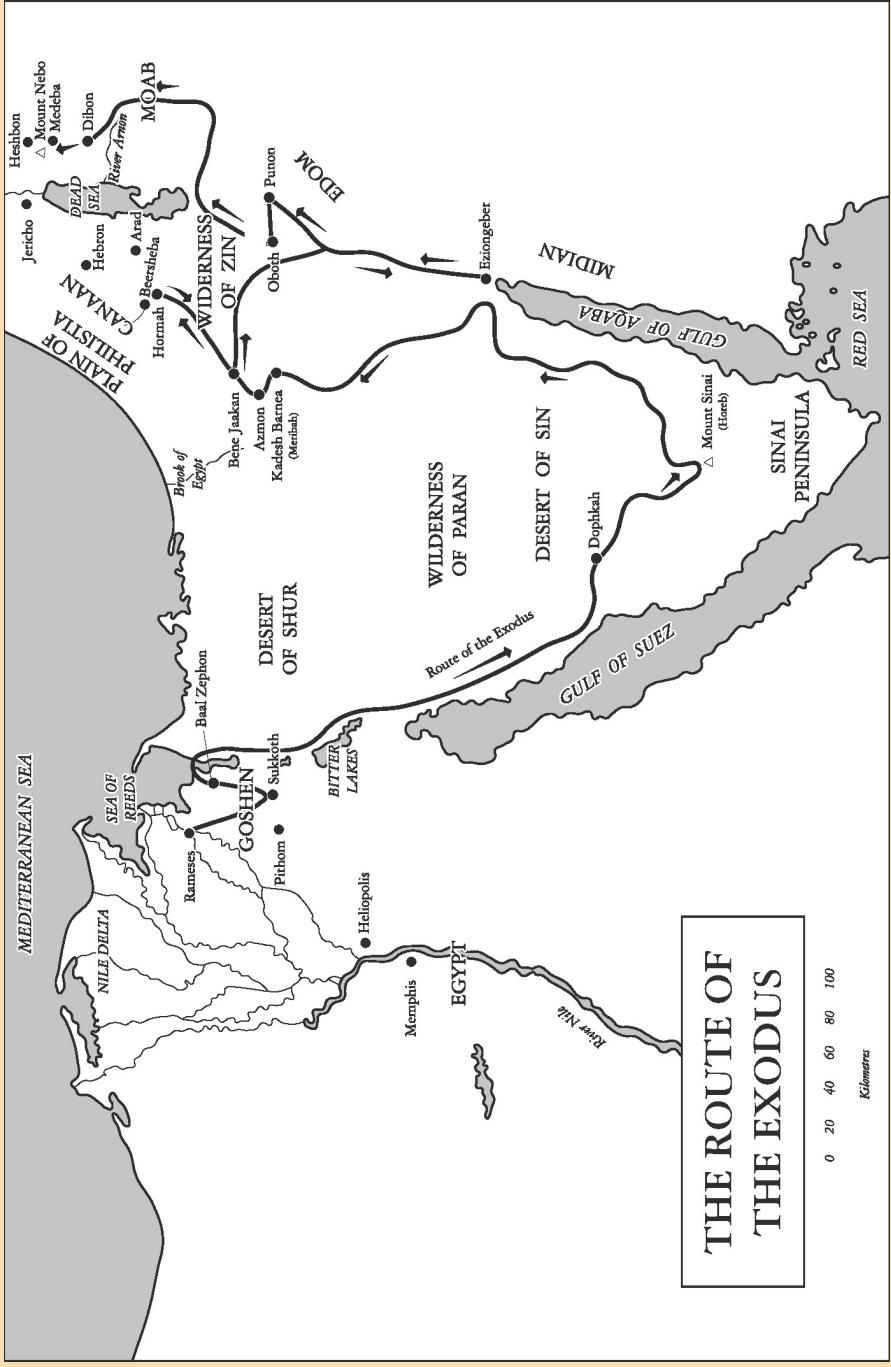
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# THE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS

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# Exodus

## **A magnificent rescue**

**What's it about?** Exodus charts God's rescue of his people from slavery. This story has been central to Israel over the centuries and is commemorated in the festival of the Passover.

**Who wrote it?** It's traditionally thought to have been written by Moses, the main character in the book. Some think that the first five books of the Bible, including Exodus, are the result of centuries of oral storytelling.

**Why read it?** It's the foundational story of God's people and plays a big part in the Christian story.

**What's it to me?** At the Last Supper, Jesus used the Passover to describe his own sacrifice. He has come to rescue all people.

# Chapter 1

## **The Israelites are Treated Cruelly in Egypt**

<sup>1</sup>The sons of Jacob who went to Egypt with him, each with his family, were <sup>2</sup>Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, <sup>3</sup>Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, <sup>4</sup>Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

<sup>5</sup>The total number of these people directly descended from Jacob was seventy.<sup>a</sup> His son Joseph was already in Egypt.

<sup>6</sup>In the course of time Joseph, his brothers, and all the rest of that generation died, <sup>7</sup>but their descendants, the Israelites, had many children and became so numerous and strong that Egypt was filled with them.

<sup>8</sup>Then, a new king, who knew nothing about Joseph, came to power in Egypt.

<sup>9</sup>He said to his people, "These Israelites are so numerous and strong that they are a threat to us.

<sup>10</sup>In case of war they might join our enemies in order to fight against us, and might escape from<sup>b</sup> the country. We must find some way to keep them from becoming even more numerous." <sup>11</sup>So the Egyptians put slave-drivers over them to crush their spirits with hard labour. The Israelites built the cities of Pithom and Rameses to serve as supply centres for the king.

<sup>12</sup>But the more the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites, the more they increased in number and the further they spread through the land. The Egyptians came to fear the

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<sup>a</sup> One ancient translation 75.

<sup>b</sup> *escape from; or take control of.*

Israelites<sup>13-14</sup> and made their lives miserable by forcing them into cruel slavery. They made them work on their building projects and in their fields, and they had no mercy on them.

<sup>15</sup>Then the king of Egypt spoke to Shiphrah and Puah, the two midwives who helped the Hebrew women.

<sup>16</sup>“When you help the Hebrew women give birth,” he said to them, “kill the baby if it is a boy; but if it is a girl, let it live.” <sup>17</sup>But the midwives feared God and so did not obey the king; instead, they let the boys live.

<sup>18</sup>So the king sent for the midwives and asked them, “Why are you doing this? Why are you letting the boys live?”

<sup>19</sup>They answered, “The Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they give birth easily, and their babies are born before either of us gets there.” <sup>20-21</sup>Because the midwives feared God, he was good to them and gave them families of their own. And the Israelites continued to increase and become strong.

<sup>22</sup>Finally the king issued a command to all his people: “Take every newborn Hebrew boy and throw him into the Nile, but let all the girls live.”

## Chapter 2

### **The Birth of Moses**

<sup>1</sup>During this time a man from the tribe of Levi married a woman of his own tribe, <sup>2</sup>and she bore him a son. When



**“The king’s daughter ... noticed the basket” (2.5)**

she saw what a fine baby he was, she hid him for three months.

<sup>3</sup>But when she could not hide him any longer, she took a basket made of reeds and covered it with tar to make it watertight. She put the baby in it and then placed it in the tall grass at the edge of the river.

<sup>4</sup>The baby’s sister stood some distance away to see what would happen to him.

<sup>5</sup>The king’s daughter came down to the river to bathe, while her servants walked along the bank. Suddenly she noticed the basket in the tall grass and sent a slave woman to get it.

<sup>6</sup>The princess opened it and saw a baby boy. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. “This is one of the Hebrew babies,” she said.

<sup>7</sup>Then his sister asked her, “Shall I go and call a Hebrew woman to act as a wet nurse?”

<sup>8</sup>“Please do,” she answered. So the girl went and brought the baby’s own mother.



<sup>9</sup>The princess told the woman, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So she took the baby and nursed him.

<sup>10</sup>Later, when the child was old enough, she took him to the king's daughter, who adopted him as her own son. She said to herself, "I pulled him out of the water, and so I name him Moses."<sup>c</sup>

### **Moses Escapes to Midian**

<sup>11</sup>When Moses had grown up, he went out to visit his people, the Hebrews, and he saw how they were forced to do hard labour. He even saw an Egyptian kill a Hebrew, one of Moses' own people.

<sup>12</sup>Moses looked all round, and when he saw that no one was watching, he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand.

<sup>13</sup>The next day he went back and saw two Hebrew men fighting. He said to the one who was in the wrong, "Why are you beating up a fellow-Hebrew?"

<sup>14</sup>The man answered, "Who made you our ruler and judge? Are you going to kill me just as you killed that Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and said to himself, "People have found out what I have done." <sup>15-16</sup>When the king heard about what had happened, he tried to have Moses killed, but Moses fled and went to live in the land of Midian.

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<sup>c</sup> Moses: This name sounds like the Hebrew for "pull out".

One day, when Moses was sitting by a well, seven daughters of Jethro, the priest of Midian, came to draw water and fill the troughs for their father's sheep and goats.

<sup>17</sup>But some shepherds drove Jethro's daughters away. Then Moses went to their rescue and watered their animals for them.

<sup>18</sup>When they returned to their father, he asked, "Why have you come back so early today?"

<sup>19</sup>"An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds," they answered, "and he even drew water for us and watered our animals."

<sup>20</sup>"Where is he?" he asked his daughters. "Why did you leave the man out there? Go and invite him to eat with us."

<sup>21</sup>So Moses agreed to live there, and Jethro gave him his daughter Zipporah in marriage, <sup>22</sup>who bore him a son. Moses said to himself, "I am a foreigner in this land, and so I name him Gershom."<sup>d</sup>

<sup>23</sup>Years later the king of Egypt died, but the Israelites were still groaning under their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry went up to God, <sup>24</sup>who heard their groaning and remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

<sup>25</sup>He saw the slavery of the Israelites and was concerned for them.<sup>e</sup>

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<sup>d</sup> *Gershom*: This name sounds like the Hebrew for "foreigner".

<sup>e</sup> *was concerned for them*; one ancient translation *revealed himself to them*.

## Chapter 3

### **God Calls Moses**

<sup>1</sup>One day while Moses was taking care of the sheep and goats of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, he led the flock across the desert and came to Sinai, the holy mountain.

<sup>2</sup>There the angel of the LORD appeared to him as a flame coming from the middle of a bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire but that it was not burning up.

<sup>3</sup>"This is strange," he thought. "Why isn't the bush burning up? I will go closer and see."

<sup>4</sup>When the LORD saw that Moses was coming closer, he called to him from the middle of the bush and said, "Moses! Moses!"

He answered, "Yes, here I am."

<sup>5</sup>God said, "Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals, because you are standing on holy ground.

<sup>6</sup>I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." So Moses covered his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD said, "I have seen how cruelly my people are being treated in Egypt; I have heard them cry out to be rescued from their slave-drivers. I know all about their sufferings, <sup>8</sup>and so I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and to bring them out of Egypt to a spacious land, one which is rich and

fertile and in which the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites now live.

9 I have indeed heard the cry of my people, and I see how the Egyptians are oppressing them.

10 Now I am sending you to the king of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of his country."

11 But Moses said to God, "I am nobody. How can I go to the king and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

12 God answered, "I will be with you, and when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will worship me on this mountain. That will be the proof that I have sent you."

13 But Moses replied, "When I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors sent me to you,' they will ask me, 'What is his name?' So what can I tell them?"

14 God said, "I am who I am. This is what you must say to them: 'The one who is called I AM<sup>f</sup> has sent me to you.' 15 Tell the Israelites that I, the LORD, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, have sent you to them. This is my name for ever; this is what all future generations are to call me.

16 Go and gather the leaders of Israel together and tell them that I, the LORD, the God of their ancestors, the God

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<sup>f</sup> *I am who I am... I AM; or I will be who I will be... I WILL BE.* "I am" sounds like the Hebrew name Yahweh, traditionally transliterated as Jehovah. This name is represented in this translation by "the LORD" in capital letters, following a usage which is widespread in English versions.

of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, appeared to you. Tell them that I have come to them and have seen what the Egyptians are doing to them.

<sup>17</sup>I have decided that I will bring them out of Egypt, where they are being treated cruelly, and will take them to a rich and fertile land — the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

<sup>18</sup>“My people will listen to what you say to them. Then you must go with the leaders of Israel to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has revealed himself to us. Now allow us to travel for three days into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD, our God.’

<sup>19</sup>I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless he is forced to do so.

<sup>20</sup>But I will use my power and will punish Egypt by doing terrifying things there. After that he will let you go.

<sup>21</sup>“I will make the Egyptians respect you so that when my people leave, they will not go empty-handed.

<sup>22</sup>Every Israelite woman will go to her Egyptian neighbours and to any Egyptian woman living in her house and will ask for clothing and for gold and silver jewellery. The Israelites will put these things on their sons and daughters and carry away the wealth of the Egyptians.”