

MOSES

BIBLE VERSE : Exodus 14 & 20

Many years later, after Jacob, Joseph, and his brothers had died, a new Pharaoh or king ruled Egypt. Jacob was called Israel and his descendants were called Israelites. The Israelites had been living as slaves in Egypt for 430 years and the new Pharaoh (or king) ruled was mean and hurt them so they cried to God for help.

Moses was an Israelite. After the Pharaoh of Egypt had ordered that all the Hebrew boy babies were to be drowned at birth, Moses' mother hid him until he was 3 months old and then placed her baby in a wicker basket in the Nile River reeds. The baby was rescued by one of Pharaoh's daughters who kept the baby and asked his mother to help raise him in the court of Pharaoh. Moses' name means "drawn out of water."

One day God sent an angel to Moses. He saw a bush that burned brightly but didn't burn up. The angel spoke to Moses from the bush. "God says, 'Return to Egypt. Tell Pharaoh to let my people go so they can worship me!'" So Moses and his brother Aaron went to Egypt. They told Pharaoh, "God says, let my people go!"

But Pharaoh said, "I don't know your God. And I won't let your people go." So God made terrible things happen to Egypt. There were 10 plagues that struck Egypt. Finally, Pharaoh said, "Go!" So Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. By day, a pillar of cloud went in front of them. And at night, a pillar made of fire led them. Then Pharaoh changed his mind! He wanted the Israelites back. So he sent his soldiers to chase them.

The Red Sea was in front of the Israelites and the Egyptians were following behind them. The Israelites were trapped! They shook with fear! God told Moses to hold out his stick - and God parted the water.

All the Israelites marched across on dry ground. But then the waters met again. The Israelites escaped the Egyptian soldiers!

During the Israelites forty year journey from Egypt to Canaan, Moses received the 10 Commandments from God at Mt. Sinai. You would think that just 10 commandments would be easy enough to keep. That's only as many fingers as you have. But of course it is impossible for us to keep them all, all the time. God knew we could never do it alone.

"BUT he gave them to us, ten perfect gifts of pure holiness  
 given for our best happiness,  
 for He knew they would be like a kind teacher for us,  
 each commandment teaching us how much we need Jesus.  
 Jesus to help us  
 Jesus to cleanse us from our sins  
 Jesus who stands between God and the people, to be the actual Word of the Lord."  
 Ann Voskamp - Holy Experience

In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus begins His ministry by announcing the good news of the kingdom of God coming. In the next scene Jesus is standing on a mountain declaring the rules, or way of life, in God's kingdom. It is clear that Matthew wants us to make the link between the first time God established His kingdom among the Israelites and the second time God ushered His kingdom into the world with Jesus and His followers.