

## **The Israelites leave Egypt (Exodus 6 - 14) Part 1**

This is Pharaoh. He was the most important man in Egypt. If Pharaoh told you to do something you did it! You did not dare disobey Pharaoh. Pharaoh was not only powerful, he knew he was powerful. He thought that there was no-one who was more powerful than him. He walked about like there was no-one who was more powerful than him.

God told Moses to go and see Pharaoh and tell him to let the Israelites go - so that is what Moses did, taking Aaron his brother with him. They walked up to Pharaoh's palace feeling very scared but they knew that God was with them. Aaron said to Pharaoh, "God says - Let my people go!"

Pharaoh was not pleased. "God? Who is this God? Why should I do what he says?" And he sent Moses and Aaron away and made the Israelites work even harder. Pharaoh knew that he was the most powerful person in the whole of Egypt - he wasn't going to do what God said.

One day, Pharaoh was down by the River Nile and God sent Moses and Aaron to talk to him. They delivered God's message: "You have refused to listen to God, so now God is going to send a terrible disaster and then you will know that he is the most powerful God".

Aaron stuck out his staff over the river as God had told him to and all the water turned to blood. It was disgusting. All the fish in the river died and the smell of rotting fish was everywhere. There was no water to drink, no water to wash in - everyone in Egypt began to smell. Life was awful.

Pharaoh called his magicians to the river and they copied what Moses and Aaron had done by tricks. That didn't help at all but it did make Pharaoh feel more powerful. He didn't listen to God's warning. He just walked away and went into his palace.

Again, God sent Moses and Aaron to see Pharaoh and to give him a warning: "God says let my people go or I will send you a terrible disaster. This time there will be frogs everywhere - frogs in your beds, frogs in your dinner, frogs in your bath!"

But Pharaoh would not listen. He sent Moses and Aaron away. So God sent frogs all over Egypt; they were everywhere. Frogs in houses, frogs in beds, frogs in dinners and frogs in baths. Again, Pharaoh's magicians did tricks to copy what Moses and Aaron had done. That just made the situation worse!

This time, Pharaoh was more worried and he called to Moses and Aaron to come back. "Please take away these frogs and I will do what your God says and let your people go". So Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh and they asked God and God sorted out the frog problem, leaving frogs in the river but not all over the place. But still Pharaoh would not listen to God. He refused to let the people go.

God said to Aaron, "Strike the ground with your stick and all over Egypt the dust will turn to gnats." So Aaron did what God had said and the whole of Egypt was covered with gnats, tiny little flies that got into people's ears and eyes and mouths and even up their noses. The Egyptians ran around trying to get away from them. The magicians couldn't copy this and they went to Pharaoh and told him that it was God's work but Pharaoh refused to listen to God and he refused to let the people go.

God sent swarms of flies and a disease that killed the cattle and painful red spots that made life for the people in Egypt terrible and huge hailstones big enough to kill and locusts that ate up the crops. None of these affected the Israelites, only the Egyptians. That was a sign to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh hated these problems while they lasted so he kept asking Moses and Aaron to speak to God and saying that he would let God's people go. Then God took away the problem and Pharaoh didn't do as he had said he would - he didn't let God's people leave Egypt. He kept on ignoring God. But God had not finished with Pharaoh - the next day when Pharaoh woke up there was no sunshine, it was totally dark. And it stayed like that all day and all night. It was so dark that you could not see where you were going and people walked into each other and were scared.

Pharaoh sent for Moses again. He yelled, "Get out of my sight, Moses, I never want to see you here again". Moses said, "You are quite right Pharaoh. You will never see me again". But Moses did warn Pharaoh that God was going to send one final, terrible plague and he told Pharaoh what would happen. Then he left.  
(Continued in the next story)