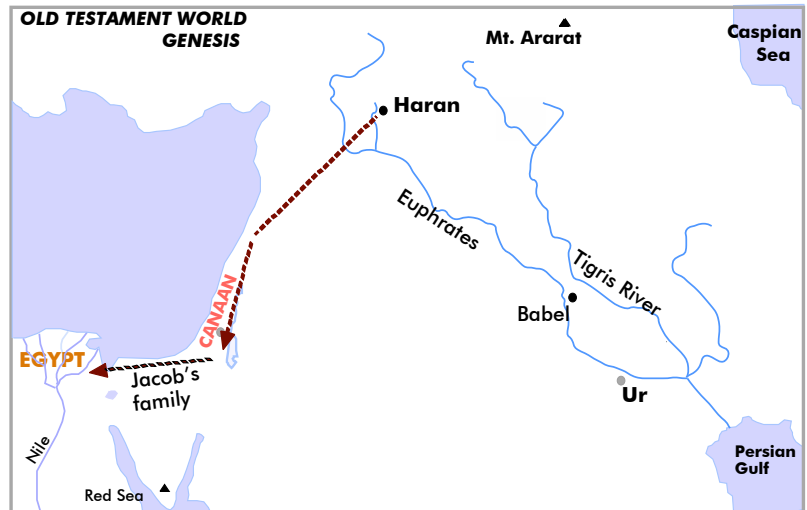


Before starting this lesson, read at least Exodus chapters 1:1-2:15; chapters 3, 12, 14:8-31; 16:1-16; 17:1-7; 20:1-20; 25:1-9. If possible read the whole book. You may find it helpful to read just the minimum chapters, go thru the lesson and then read the whole book. You will discover what works best for you.

In our last lesson we talked about Genesis, the book of beginnings. One of these beginnings was the Jewish race.

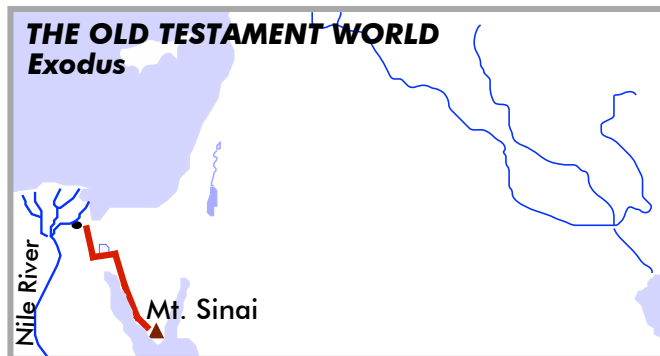
When Abraham left Haran, on the northern side of the Euphrates and moved to Canaan, the people referred to him as *that man from the other side of the river*. The word was *Eber*. From that, developed the name *Hebrews*, *people from the other side of the river*. This was their first name.

As time passed, they also became known as the *children of Israel* or *Israelites*. Altho descended from Jacob, *the deceiver*, they were always associated with Jacob's new name, *Israel, prince with God*.



Over the years, the family clan of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in the land of Canaan. Then because of a famine, the clan of 66 people moved to Egypt, to join Joseph and his family. Over the next 430 years the combined group of 70 grows into a nation. During all this time they live in the land of Egypt. But this is not the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The story and theme of Exodus is the Jews' exit from Egypt as they head back to Canaan, which **was** the Promised Land. The word *exodus* is a combination of 2 Greek words, *ex* – *hodos*, which literally means *a way out*. God created a way out of Egypt.

The main people are Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Pharaoh and God. Moses is the author. He writes it c. 1400 or 1300 B.C. To give a sense of time, chapter one covers **350 years**, chapter 2 covers **80 years** and chapters 3-40 cover **2 years**.



**OUTLINE** - describes the Exodus in 3 stages.

- Israel in Egypt 1-12
- Israel en route 13-19
- Israel at Mt. Sinai 20-40
  - God's people receive the law
  - God's people receive the tabernacle.

Instead of a summary sentence, Exodus begins with a summary chapter.

**Chapter one** reviews **350 years of history**.

Verses **1-6** cover the last 75 years of Joseph's life in the 1800's BC. It is repeating the last part of Genesis.

Verse **7** uses one sentence to cover the next 200 years. It is during this time, the family clan develops into a Jewish nation.

Verse **8** ends these 275 years by saying a new king of Egypt has come to power. Because 200 years have gone by since Joseph's death, he has never heard of Joseph.

This brings us to the 1600's BC. It is from the book of Ezekiel, near the end of the Old Testament, that we find out what happened next. According to Ezekiel 20:6-8, God tells His people He is ready to take them out of Egypt. But first they have to stop worshipping the Egyptian gods. However the Jews have become comfortable in Egypt and do not want to leave. They have fallen in love with **Egyptian** life and the **Egyptian** gods.

Because they continue to rebel against God, He has to send consequences. He uses this new king to do it. Over the next 75 years the king forces God's people into slave labor, to build some of his cities. As their suffering gets worse, the Jews become disillusioned with life in Egypt. If only they could leave. In their desperation they finally turn to God, pleading for His help.

Nationally, whether in the past or in the present, when God's people turn from God, He allows suffering and hardship to bring **His** people back to Him. And sometimes He uses government itself.

Two years before Moses is born, the suffering gets worse. The king commands all Jewish baby boys to be killed by throwing them into the Nile River. (This was after the birth of Aaron)

Satan is behind this command. Back in the Garden of Eden, God told Satan a Man would be born who would destroy his (Satan's) power. Now at the time of Moses, Satan knows the Man will come thru the Jewish race. So Satan uses the king of Egypt to destroy them. If all Jewish boys are killed and only the girls survive, eventually the girls will have to marry Egyptians. Within 1-2 generations, the Jews would be completely absorbed. There would no longer be a Jewish race and that Man, Jesus, could not be born.

But God has other plans. Moses is born and his parents hide him in their home for 3 months. Then they move him to a waterproof basket made of reeds and place it near the bank of the Nile River. His sister Miriam is also there to watch him. She is about 7 or 8 years old.

One day Pharaoh's daughter comes to the river, sees the baby and wants to adopt him. Miriam goes to Pharaoh's daughter and asks, *would you like me to find a Jewish woman to nurse the baby for you?* Since the Jews were slaves, no Egyptian woman would want to nurse a Jewish baby. Pharaoh's daughter agrees and Miriam goes to get their mother. Notice how God works far beyond their expectations. According to chapter 2:9, not only can Moses' parents raise him without any fear, but they will also be paid for doing it.

During the next few years Moses' parents teach him all they can about God. When he is about 5 years old, Moses is taken to the palace because he is considered the son of Pharaoh's daughter. As a child and then a teenager he has the best education possible. Then he is given a university doctorate, studying subjects like science, astronomy, medicine and mathematics. He will have leadership and military training. In addition, he is taught the Egyptian religion with their many gods and practices.

In Egypt at this time, the age of 40 is the age of adulthood and maturity. In the palace, this is the age when a person is named potential heir to the throne. Since Moses has been adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, he is in line for this position. So when he turns 40, he has to decide. Will he identify himself with the Egyptians, as heir to the throne, or will he identify himself with the Jewish people in slavery? Hebrews 11:24-26 tells us about his decision.

*By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, (meaning he reached the age of 40) refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time, meaning worshipping the idols of Egypt. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.*

The author of Hebrews says Moses makes his decision on the basis of faith. Altho he has lived in the palace around Egyptian idols for 35 years, his faith has remained strong from the training he received from his parents. As a result of his first 5 years, Moses is able to make a choice to follow God when he is 40. Never minimize the ability of a small child to understand about God.

Soon after Moses makes his decision, he sees an Egyptian beating a Jew. He kills the Egyptian and buries him in the sand, thinking no one has seen him. The next day when 2 Jews are fighting, he asks them, *Why are you fighting?* One of them replies, *Who made you a leader over us? Are you going to kill me like you killed that Egyptian?*

Moses makes the same mistake as Abraham and Jacob. He knows God's plan, but does not **wait** for God to act. He tries to get the answer on his own, doing it his way instead of God's way. The consequences last 40 years.

Since Moses is no longer a part of the royal family, killing an Egyptian makes him a wanted man. He leaves Egypt and goes to the land of Midian. It is on the eastern side of the Sinai Peninsula and not under Egyptian authority. The Midianite people descended from a son of Abraham, so they are distant relatives.

Moses finds housing and work with a man named Jethro. He is also called Reuel, altho we are not sure why. Moses works as a shepherd, marries one of Jethro's daughters and eventually has 2 children. Moses' education in Egypt prepared him in many ways, but God now gives him further training. During his 40 years as shepherd in the Sinai Peninsula, he gets to know the geography in every detail.

He also learns patience and the ability to wait for God's timing. One day, at the end of these 40 years, Moses takes the sheep south towards the tip of the Sinai Peninsula. He sees flames coming out of a bush, but it is not burning up. As he goes towards it, He hears God's voice. God identifies Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

### The GOD

...of Abraham can do the impossible  
...of Isaac provides  
...of Jacob changes human nature

God has prepared him to return to Egypt. Over the next year, while in Egypt, Moses will experience God in the same way that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did in the past. He will experience God as the One who can do the impossible, the One who provides and the One who can change us.

When Moses identified himself with God's people, *he* knew God wanted him to be their leader. When he killed the Egyptian, he assumed the *people* knew he was their leader because he had the education and preparation. Acts 7:25. Now he understands God will work **thru** his abilities, but the people are **God's** people and **God** is the One who will do it. Moses has experienced God as the *God of Jacob*. God has changed him from arrogant to humble; from impatient to patient.

For 300 years, while living in Egypt, the Jews have worshipped and followed the hundreds of Egyptian gods. When they talk about god in general, they use the word *El*, meaning *god*. When they talk about a specific god, they use a descriptive or defining name such as the god of fire, the sun god or the moon god.

If Moses goes to Egypt and says, *El sent me*, the Jews will ask, *God, who? Which of the many gods sent you?* This explains Moses' question, *When the people ask me who sent me, what should I say?* God replies in 3:14, *Tell them, I AM sent you.*

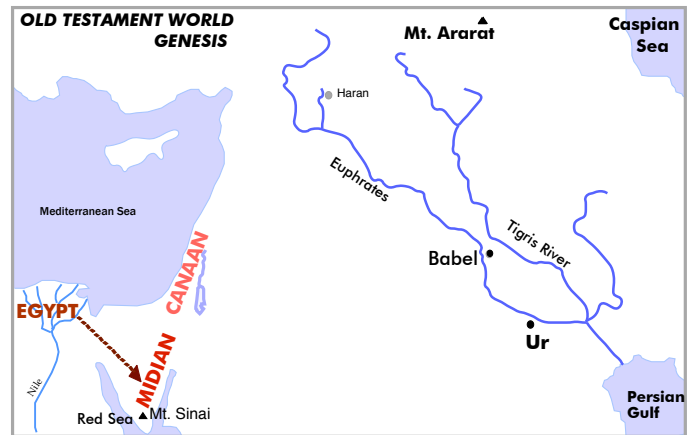
The purpose of this name is to show the Jews *their* God is different from the Egyptian gods. He is not an animal, a thing or a force. He is a person - *I AM*. In addition, He does not depend on anything or anyone else for His existence. He is not part of creation; He is the Creator of it.

In Hebrew, the name *I AM* can also be translated, *I will be*. God is saying to Moses, *In the future there will be a lot of problems and needs, but I will be to you and to the people, all you will ever NEED Me to be.*

This name for God applies not just to Moses, but also to us. No matter what we go thru or what problem we have, God will always be adequate for our need. His grace will always be sufficient. What a wonderful promise.

When God is speaking about Himself He uses the name, *I AM*. But when He wants people to use this name *for* Him, it has to be changed from *I AM* to *HE IS*.

Originally Hebrew writing only had consonants. The Hebrew word for *HE IS* had 4 letters YHWH. This became a name for God - YHWH. When the Bible was being put into English, translators came to this Hebrew name meaning *HE IS*. They knew they could not translate it literally, *He Is said this; He is did that*. So they transliterated it. They used the original Hebrew letters for the English name.



**I AM → HE IS**

יהוה

**NAMES OF GOD**

**Y H W H - LORD**

**Adonai - Lord**

Since they were German, they wrote the letters based on German alphabet.

The **Y** sound in German is written as **J**, so they wrote **J**

For example: *ja* is pronounced *ya* (the German word meaning “yes”).

The **H** stayed the same

The **W** in German is pronounced like a **V**, so they wrote **V**

The final **H** stayed the same YHWH became JHVH

Because all English words need vowels, they added an *e*, *o* and *a*. The Hebrew name YHWH became the English name *Jehovah*. This was done in the 1600’s AD.

In the 1800’s, Bible scholars stopped using the name *Jehovah* and changed it to the name *Lord*. But this was the translation for another name for God - the Hebrew name Adonai. (Ad-o-nai). God used these names as well as many other names as a revelation of His nature – to reveal what He is like. *Adonai* points to [God’s authority and power](#). The *YHWH* name points to [God’s relationship and salvation for His people](#). To show English readers which Hebrew name is in the original, scholars wrote the *YHWH* name as *LORD* in all capital letters. When the Hebrew name was *Adonai*, they wrote *Lord* in small letters.

We can see this in Exodus 4:10 *But Moses said to the **LORD**, Oh my **Lord**, I am not...*

However, unless some teacher explained this, English readers would never know why the name *Lord* was written in 2 different ways. So in the 1900’s, some translators went back to the YHWH name, putting in the vowels *a* and *e*. They gave us the name *YAHWEH*. Unfortunately, most Bibles have never accepted that name and still use the 2 forms of *Lord*.

But *Yahweh* is the name that God used to identify Himself to Moses and the Jewish people in Egypt. By using **this** name, He was telling them He wanted to, once again, establish a relationship with them. He wanted to save them out of their slavery. He would be their God and they would be His people.

Jesus also used this name for Himself when He said, *Before Abraham was born, **I AM***. In the Garden of Gethsemane, the Jewish soldiers come to arrest Jesus. He asks, who is it you want? They say, *Jesus of Nazareth*. He replies, **I AM**. Immediately the soldiers fall backwards in fear. This is the name of deity, *YAHWEH*. Jn. 8:24, 28, 58; 18:5. Jesus is *YAHWEH* because it is thru Him we can have a relationship with the Father. It is thru Him we can be free from the slavery of sin.

After chapter 3 of Exodus, the name that is most often used for God is *Yahweh* or *LORD*. Pharaoh is told *Yahweh* is the name of the Jewish God. The Jews start hearing the phrase, *Yahweh your God*, or more literally, *Yahweh your El*. All nations and people had their *El*, their god. For the Jews, *Yahweh* is **their El** – a [God of relationship and salvation](#).

God now sends Moses back to Egypt. He is 80 years old. The king who wanted to kill him has died. Thru Moses, God brings 10 plagues or disasters on Egypt. Each one is an attack on one of the gods of Egypt.

In Exodus 12:12 God says, *On that same night I will pass thru Egypt and strike down every firstborn - both men and animals; and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt.*

This is going to be a battle of the gods. In the end, both the Egyptians and the Jews have to decide who is the true God. (Num. 33:4; Dt. 32:16; 2 Sam. 7:23)

The first 9 plagues are based on natural disasters common to the area. However God shows them to be supernatural by making them worse than usual, briefer than usual; they will start and stop at the word of Moses and some will only affect the Egyptians, but not the Israelites. They take place, from June to the following April. There will be 10 plagues in 11 months.

In **June**, the **Nile River** always floods. It turns red from the sediment upriver. In the first plague, the Nile River turns red like blood. 7:17 It could have been the natural sediment, red tide or supernaturally changed to blood. It will last for only 7 days instead of the usual 20 days of flooding. What is important is that it is an attack on the Nile River god, Hapi. The Egyptians worshipped the River because it gave life to their land, their animals and to them. But now the Nile is giving death.

There is also another significance. So many Jewish baby boys had been killed by throwing them in the river. It is as tho their blood was crying out for justice. God has seen it.

In **September**, **frogs** were a problem. The Egyptians worshipped the frog as the goddess of creation and birth. Any animal they worship should not be killed. Can you imagine the frogs in their houses, cookware and beds. Yet they cannot kill them because they are gods. That which they worship has now become a torment to them.

During **October**, Egypt had problems with **lice**. Moses uses the dust of the earth to produce the 3<sup>rd</sup> plague. Scholars are not sure if the word means *gnats* or *lice*. For the Egyptians, the earth was the father of all the gods. But now the earth has *caused* this plague and there is nothing they can do to control it.

Personally I think the plague is lice, because of the significance. The Egyptian religion had a rule that no one could enter any of their temples if they had lice on them. It was considered a sacrilege. So with a plague of lice, neither people nor priests could enter. Their whole temple worship would have been shut down.

#### PLAGUES OF EGYPT

1. Nile River turned to blood

2. Frogs 

3. Lice, gnats

4. Flies 

5. Livestock killed 

In **November**, there is a problem with **flies**. This becomes plague number four. To control them, the Egyptians had a god Baalzebub, lord of the flies. But when flies are sent by Yahweh God, the Egyptian god can do nothing.

From pictures of Egypt, we know the people worshipped livestock animals - the cow, bull, calf and ram. So in **December**, when God sends a **plague** that **kills animals** considered to be gods, it shows these so called gods cannot even protect or save themselves. It is only the livestock animals in the field that are killed.

Among the gods that Pharaoh worships, there is one that requires a human sacrifice which was burned in a large furnace. Pharaoh has just offered a sacrifice to seek relief from the plagues. Moses and Aaron come, takes ashes or soot from this furnace and produce a new plague - **boils** and ulcers. This probably happens in **January**.

In **February**, the 7<sup>th</sup> plague is **hail** and **lightening** which was thought of as water and fire. The Egyptian gods of water and fire are unable to give protection from the water and fire sent by Yahweh God. This happens when the flax is in bloom.

Back in December, during the 5<sup>th</sup> plague, the livestock in the field had been killed. However there had also been livestock in shelters, both as they gave birth and where the newborn stayed. Now in February, this livestock has been moved to the fields. The Egyptians are warned that the plague of hail will kill them unless they are returned to the shelters.

#### PLAGUES OF EGYPT

6. Boils

7. Hail, lightning 

8. Locust

9. Darkness 

10. First born dies

In **March**, the Egyptians always had problems with **locust**, so they had a god to protect them from severe plagues. But when Yahweh God sends a locust plague, the Egyptian god is powerless to help them.

Also in **March** are the sandstorms. Severe storms can block out the sun, sky and even the light of day. Most likely, God uses a sandstorm to produce darkness. However it is supernatural because it is only among the Egyptians. Where the Jews live, there is no darkness. The 9<sup>th</sup> plague of **darkness** is an attack on their sun god Ra and the sky god Horus.

The sky god is shown to be completely powerless. Yet some people still worship him today. His name has changed a little. He is known as the *horoscope*. The word *horoscope* comes from the sky god, Horus. When people use the horoscope to make life decisions, they are worshipping the Egyptian sky-god, even if they do not realize it. We may not think of it in this way, but **whatever controls our life is our god**.

In **April**, is the 10<sup>th</sup> and final plague. It is the death of the first-born son and first-born animals in each home. For the Egyptians, this will be the most devastating of all the plagues because it kills the immediate heir to the throne. This is an attack on all the gods of Egypt because not one of them can protect the Egyptian people.

Even the Jews have to go thru this plague, but not one of their sons **has** to die. God tells them how they can escape this judgment.



Each family must kill a lamb, put some of its blood on the doorposts of their house, roast the lamb, eat it, have everything packed and be ready to leave immediately. At midnight God will kill the oldest son and the first born of the animals in every house. But, if He sees the blood on the doorpost, He will pass **over** that house. The blood proved a lamb died in place of the oldest son. The blood had to be applied to his house. It had to be personal.

Some of the Jews would have asked **WHY?** *Why put blood on the doorposts? We may never get it off.*

Others would have asked **HOW.** *How can the blood outside have anything to do with my son inside?*

Since these were such strange commands, it was reasonable for people to ask questions. That was okay. The important part was their obedience. Jews who had faith did what God said.

**Faith in God is coming to God in God's way - in the way HE says.**

These commands for Passover night were so exact because God was creating another picture of Jesus.

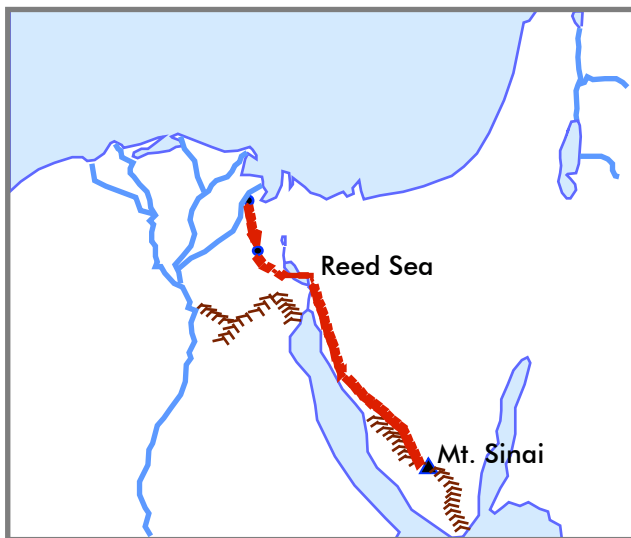
The lamb died to save the son from physical death. Jesus would be God's Lamb. He died to save people from spiritual death - from separation from God.

To see the picture from another angle, when the Jews acted in faith, their oldest son had physical life. When we act in faith to accept Jesus' payment, we will have spiritual life - enjoyment of God now and thruout eternity.

**Faith in God is coming to God in GOD'S way.**

For the Jews, the lamb dying in place of the oldest son was so important that they were commanded to remember it every year. They called it the Passover, when God PASSED OVER their house and their oldest son did not die.

Where the Egyptians lived, it was very different. At midnight, the king finds his oldest son has died. He discovers the oldest son in every Egyptian home has died. With this, Pharaoh sends word to Moses, *take your people and animals and leave Egypt immediately.*



Because of God's earlier commands, the Jews are packed and ready to leave. They head southeast towards what the Bible calls the Red Sea. The actual name is Reed Sea. It was located where the Suez Canal is today.

It has been 275 years since Joseph died. His body had been embalmed. Now as the Jews are ready to leave the land of Egypt, Moses takes his bones with them, so eventually, he can be buried in the Promised Land.

The people are thrilled with their new freedom as they head towards the Reed Sea. But back in Egypt, Pharaoh decides he cannot afford to lose his free labor. Several days later he and the army go after them.

When the Jews see the Egyptians and understand their situation, they are paralyzed with fear. The Egyptian army is in back of them, the Reed Sea in front, mountains are to the south and wilderness to the north. They are trapped. The situation is impossible.

God now becomes the **God of Abraham** for them - **the One who can do the impossible.**

God tells Moses to stretch out his rod over the Reed Sea. The water is parted and the people cross over on a dry bed. God puts a fog bank in front of the Egyptians so they cannot make any progress or even see what is happening. Once all the Jews have crossed over to the other side, He lifts the fog and the Egyptians come to the edge of the sea. If the Jews could get across, they can too. Once the entire army is in the dry bed, God has Moses stretch out his hand from the other side and the waters return. Pharaoh and his army are drowned.

Many critics say this is impossible. But God can do the impossible! As Creator, He can control His creation. He can separate water and create a fog bank. The Jews have seen that Yahweh does bring salvation. He has saved them from the Egyptian army. They rejoice with praise and thanksgiving. They compose a special song.



But their joy does not last. As they go down the western side of the Sinai Peninsula, they begin to complain. There is plenty of pasture for the animals. But what about them? What will they do for food and water? It is God who provides. He gives **bread** in the form of manna. He gives **meat** by means of quail. He leads Moses to a rock, which when he strikes it, produces **water**. In these events God shows Himself to be the **God of Isaac - the One who provides**.

Eventually, they come to Mt. Sinai. It is part of a long mountain range running north and south. The whole range is called Mt. Horeb. One of the peaks is Mt. Sinai. The book of Exodus uses the names Horeb and Sinai interchangeably.

The Jews stay in the Mt. Sinai area for about one year. During this time they receive national laws. God will also give them a new form of worship with the building of the Old Testament tabernacle.

The last part of Exodus tells about the construction of the tabernacle; the book of Leviticus describes the operation of the tabernacle. We will study them together in the next lesson.

There are 2 questions that people often ask.

First, in Exodus 4:11 God asks Moses,

*Who has made a person's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?*

We assume God is talking about the physical; but He is talking about the spiritual.

Moses has just told God he does not have the ability to give God's message. He claims he is not good at speaking, but this is not true. The New Testament tells us he was powerful in speech. God does not argue by saying, *that's not true*. Instead He uses it as a teaching opportunity. To paraphrase it, God says,

*Moses, you just said you cannot obey and give My message because you do not have the ability. But who gave man his mouth to give My message? Who makes him deaf or dumb so he cannot hear or speak My message? Who puts within him spiritual insight or makes him blind to spiritual truth? Is it not I, the Lord?*

(The word *make* in Hebrew means *put*)

If Moses obeys, he will have God-given ability. If he refuses to obey, God will discipline him by taking away the spiritual abilities he has. Jesus said of the Jews in the past and in His day, because they refused to obey, *alho seeing, they do not see; tho hearing, they do not hear or understand*. Matt. 13:13 When there is spiritual disobedience, God brings spiritual blindness, deafness and the inability to speak for Him. This is why the New Testament says, *He who has an ear, let him hear and obey what the Spirit says to the churches*.

The second question is about Pharaoh.

God told Moses ahead of time that He would harden Pharaoh's heart so the king will not let the people go. But that sounds unfair. If God *made* Pharaoh refuse, how can God punish him?

In Jewish writing, there is a summary statement at the beginning, with details afterwards. Two times in Exodus, God says He will harden Pharaoh's heart. Both times it is a summary statement. God is telling Moses the final results before anything has even started.

When we look at the details of the story, we discover it is **Pharaoh** who first hardens his heart.

After each of the first 6 plagues, we are told **Pharaoh** hardened his heart. During the 7<sup>th</sup> plague, Pharaoh admits, *I have sinned. Yahweh is right. I am wrong*. Pharaoh has come to a full and complete understanding. But as soon as the plague stops, he says *no* to God and again, **he** hardens his heart. In the Bible, the number 7 has the spiritual meaning of *complete*. Even tho Pharaoh had complete understanding, he had complete hardness of heart. There is nothing more that God can give him or reveal to him. God respects Pharaoh's free will. Since that is the path Pharaoh wants, God will now help him on that path. **God** hardens his heart. It is the consequence of Pharaoh's choices.

In God's plan to get His people out of Egypt, God used His sovereignty. He decided to work thru 2 people - Pharaoh and Moses. Each had free will to say *yes* or *no* to God. Moses said *yes* and his life was enriched. He was used in the lives of others. If Pharaoh had said *yes*, he would have gone down in history as one of the greatest leaders of all time. We would have known his name. In letting the Jewish people go, God would have blessed him.

But instead, Pharaoh said *no* and his life was impoverished. His choice messed up his life and the lives of everyone around him. But his choices did not mess up God's plan. Even without his co-operation, God still used Pharaoh to get His people out of Egypt.

Today God continues to use people in His plans. He looks down from heaven saying, *I want to use you for this. I want to use you for that.* Regardless of our choices, His plan will be accomplished. But He always gives us freedom to choose. If we say *no*, we will mess up our life and the lives of those around us. If we say *yes*, our life will be enriched. We will have an impact on the lives of others. God is active in everyone's life, whether they know it or not. But the **way** in which He is active is determined by our choices. We can either be a Moses or a Pharaoh. We can either say *yes* to God or we can say *no*.