

Come Follow Me

Exodus 1-6



Exodus 1: A reversal of fortune

1. Introduction – Ex. 1.1-7.
2. Oppression – Ex. 1.8-14.
3. The Midwives – Ex. 1.15-22.

"Pharaoh charged all his people, saying,
"Every son that is born ye shall cast into
the river!" - Ex. 1.22.



Exodus 2: The early life of Moses

1. The abandonment and rescue of Moses – Ex. 2.1-10.
2. Moses' strife with an Egyptian – Ex. 2.11-15.
3. Moses' life in Midian – Ex. 2.16-22.
4. Narrative transition – Ex. 2.23-25.



Exodus 2.1-10

Both the **Joseph Smith Translation** of the Bible (see Genesis 50) and the Book of Mormon (see 2 Nephi 3) show that as early as the time of Joseph, son of Jacob, **the future mission of the deliverer had been prophesied**. So detailed had been the prophecy by Joseph that even the name of Moses was known, as well as incidents of his ministry.





Did Moses really kill an Egyptian? (Ex. 2.11-12)

“The historian Eusebius says that the slaying was the result of a court intrigue in which certain men plotted to assassinate Moses. In the encounter it is said that Moses successfully warded off the attacker and killed him. (Eusebius IX:27.)

“In the Midrash Rabbah, the traditional Jewish commentary on the Old Testament, it is asserted that Moses, with his bare fists, killed an Egyptian taskmaster who was in the act of seducing a Hebrew woman. This is confirmed in the Koran.

Moses, Jethro, and Zipporah

The more common name for Reuel is Jethro (see Exodus 3:1; Numbers 10:29). Jethro was a descendant of Midian, who was a son of Abraham and Keturah (see Genesis 25:1–6). Through this line Moses received the priesthood (see D&C 84:6–13).

(Old Testament Institute Manual)

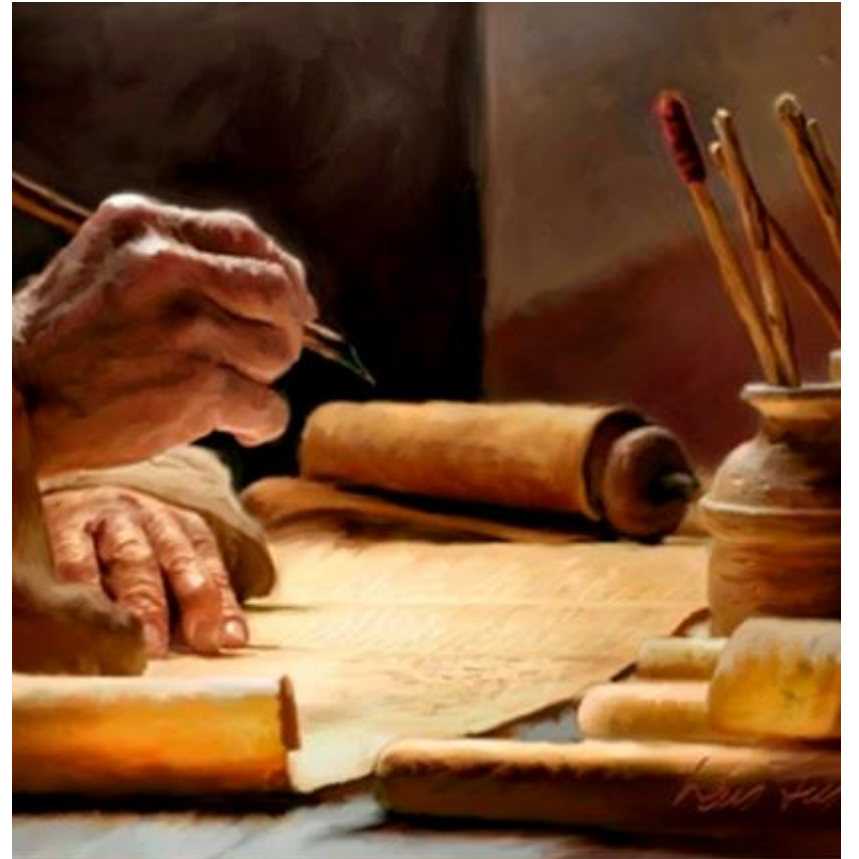


Who was Jethro? Was Reuel Jethro?

The textual tradition identified as the Yahwist (J) consistently refers to him as **Reuel** (Exodus 2:18; Numbers 10:29), while the Elohist tradition (E) uses the name **Jethro** (Exodus 3:1, 3:18, 18:1-27).

To further complicate issues, another source names **Hobab** as the father-in-law of Moses (Judges 4:11), and Num 10:29 refers to Hobab as Reuel's son, implying therefore that Reuel was Moses' grandfather-in-law!

These differences most likely represent the traditions of northern and southern scribes or scribal schools.



Exodus 3-4.17: Moses' Prophetic Call

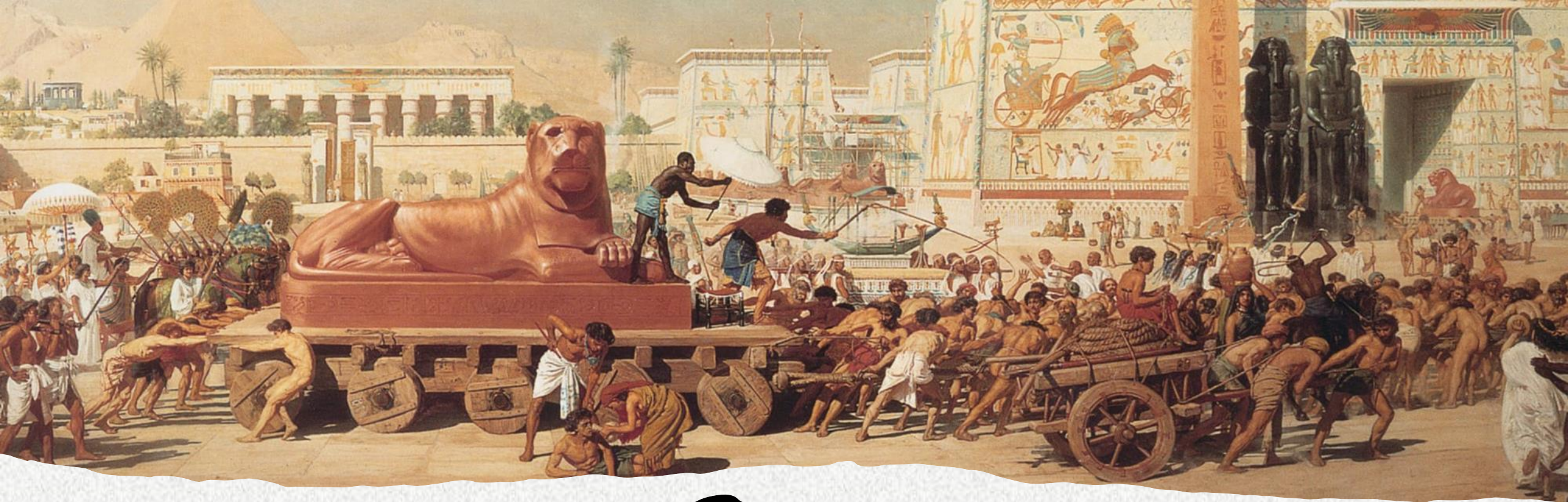
1. Moses' theophany at the burning bush – Ex. 3.1-6.

2. "I know their sorrows!" - Ex. 3.7.

3. "A land flowing with milk and honey" - Ex. 3.8.

4. "The cry of the children of Israel is come unto me" - Ex. 3.9





"I know their sorrows!"

Exodus 3.7

יָדַעְתִּי אֶת־מַכְאֲבֵיוֹ



The burning bush

The bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. הַסֵּנֶה בָּעֵר בְּאֵשׁ וְהַסֵּנֶה אֵינָנוּ אֵכָל.

What is your name?

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

And God said unto Moses, (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה)

I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you. (Exodus 3:13-14)



אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה

This name God gives to Moses I AM THAT I AM *ehyeh asher ehyeh* is the first person imperfect of *hayah* היה, the Hebrew verb "to be." This is a theologically loaded statement.

God is telling Moses that he is a being who "will be," or one who acts. See 2 Nephi 2.13-14, 16, 26.



I am that I am

Students often ask, what does this mean? What does God mean when he says, “I AM THAT I AM?”

Frank Moore Cross explains that “the accumulated evidence ... strongly supports the view that the name Yahweh is a causative imperfect of the Canaanite-Proto-Hebrew verb *hwy*, ‘to be.’ Therefore, the divine name Yahweh, according to this view, literally means “He who causes to be” or even “He who procreates.” (Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, p. 65.)

The Name of God

Moses says: May I say who sent me? He asks for God's name. The Israelites will want to know who has sent me, and God replies with a sentence, "Ehyeh asher ehyeh." This is a first person sentence that can be translated, "I am who I am," or perhaps, "I will be who I will be," or perhaps, "I cause to be what I cause to be." We really don't know, but it has something to do with "being." So he asks who God is, God says, "I am who am I am" or "I will cause to be what I will cause to be." So Moses, wisely enough, converts that into a third-person formula: okay, he will be who he will be, he is who he is, "Yahweh asher Yahweh." God's answer to the question of his name is this sentence, and Moses converts it from a first-person to a third-person sentence: he will be who he will be; he is who he is; he will cause to be, I think most people think now, what he will cause to be, and that sentence gets shortened to "Yahweh." This is the Bible's explanation for the name Yahweh, and as the personal name of God, some have argued that the name Yahweh expresses the quality of being, an active, dynamic being. This God is one who brings things into being, whether it's a cosmos from chaos, or now a new nation from a band of runaway slaves.

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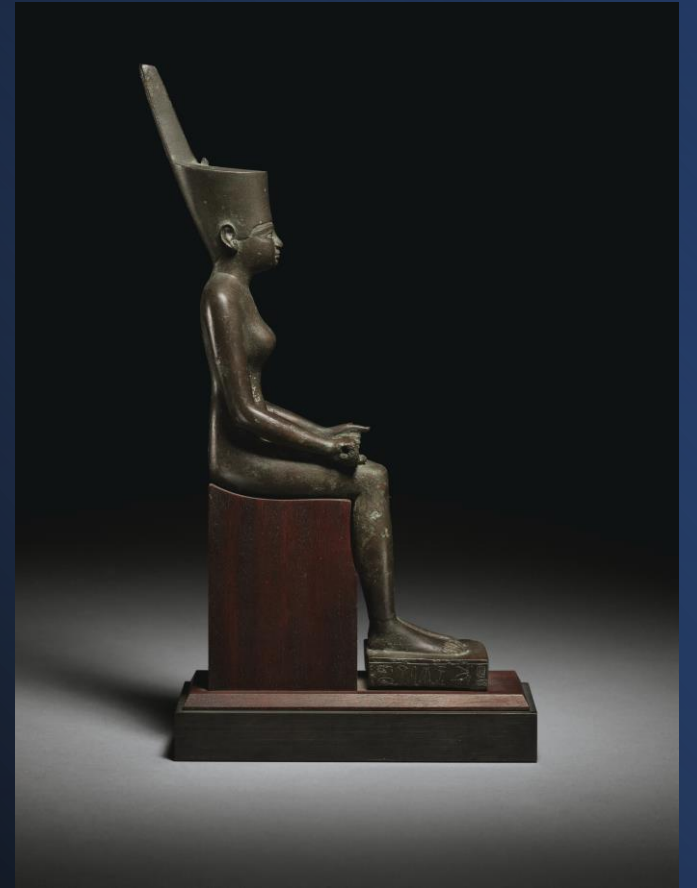
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Milk and Honey

Milk and Honey: A recurrent symbol of the land's fertility. Milk and Honey are seen as two of nature's nurturing elements that require no agricultural knowledge. Milk and Honey are also connected to the image of the tree, lady wisdom, and images of holiness and creation (Proverbs 3.18). **Honey and bees** were also connected to **divine foresight**, because bees were able to predict weather, something that ancient writers observed them able to choose to stay close to their hives or venture beyond, depending upon the weather conditions. (Aristotle, History of Animals 9.40)

[Image: The Goddess Neith, wearing the Deshret crown of Lower Egypt. Neith was the Goddess of the House of the Bee, and is directly connected to Asenath, wife of Joseph.]



Milk and Honey - Fertility

Besides prophecy, both **Greeks** and **Christians** **associated the bee with chastity**, even virginity, as well as a figurative expression for the model state (Jones, p. 216-217). The **bee** was associated with the Virgin Mary by many Christian thinkers (Jones, p. 218). **Artemis, the Greek goddess of chastity and childbirth**, was also associated with the bee. Artemis' involvement with honey harmonizes with her virginity, as well as her **protection of women**. More interestingly, it is only in her presentation as Artemis Ephesia that she wears bees on her wrap-around garment. [Image: Artemis' tunic, National Archeological Museum, Naples, Italy. See: [Jones, figure 7, p. 219](#)]



Wisdom: Honey and Milk

- Proverbs 3.13-18
- Proverbs 24.13-14
- Song of Solomon 4.11
- Ezekiel 3.3
- Ezekiel 16.9-14
- Revelation 10.9-10
- 1 Nephi 8.11-12



Guided by bees

The bee is before all creatures the sponsor, inspiration, and guide of the Great Trek. As a creature of the preexistent or pre-Diluvian world, and all but sole survivor of the great catastrophes that desolated the earth, the bee is first to arrive on the scene and start things going again in the new world. **In the first of all migrations, Adam and Eve were accompanied and guided by the bees as they moved from the Garden into the dark outer world.** The bees brought with them “the primordial creative divine power,” their honey, “made by the bees of Paradise,” is “the food of heaven.” When our first ancestors were allowed to bring some of their original blessings from Eden with them, Adam bore the olive, vine, date, pomegranate, and nard, but to Eve was given the greatest blessing, for she was accompanied by her friends from the Garden with their honey—the busy bees whose beneficent labors among the plants and trees made it possible to renew the verdure of the former world in their new one. According to one of the oldest Egyptian ritual sources, when they found the earth barren of life after the Flood, the bees got to work restoring the fertility of the woods and fields while busily producing their honey and wax for the benefit of man. They were especially qualified to conduct Adam and Eve into a strange world, because they knew the place from its older times, themselves being the survivors from that other and better age. (Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt: The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 14: Pearl of Great Price*, p. 612.)

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Honey is tied to Asenath's marriage to Joseph

Asenath has a dialogue with an angel just before she marries Joseph.

The angel who comes to marry Asenath, the daughter of the High Priest of Heliopolis, to Joseph the son of Jacob, a king and a priest in his own right, first asks her for a honeycomb, which she orders brought from the family estate near the temple. Then he has her go to the pantry and fetch a comb of honey, “white honey like the dew of heaven.” The angel sits and shares bits of honeycomb with her, saying, “Blessed are they who will eat of this honey, made by the bees of Paradise. ... Whoso eateth thereof will never die. It is the food of heaven.”

(Joseph and Asenath 16.14, For an English translation, see C. Burchard, trans. Joseph and Aseneth, in The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, ed. James H. Charlesworth, 2 vols, Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1985, 2:230.)

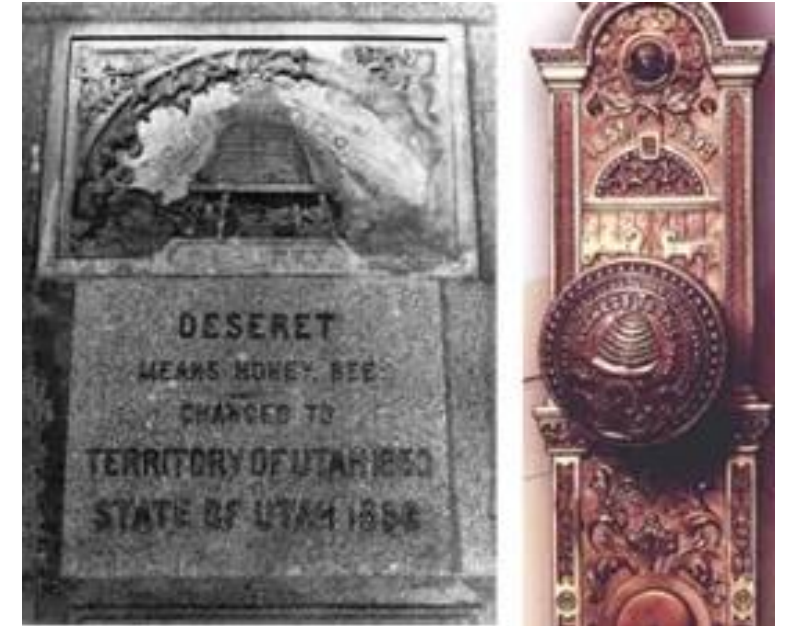


Fertility and Invulnerability

This can be seen as a **blessing of both fertility and invulnerability given to Asenath**. This is a great parallel to [Genesis 49.22-26](#), the blessing given to Joseph by Jacob before he dies. The blessing continues when the angel tells her: “Behold, you have eaten bread of life, and drunk a cup of immortality, and been anointed with ointment of incorruptibility. Behold, from today your flesh (will) flourish like flowers of life from the ground of the Most High, and **your bones will grow strong** like the **cedars of the paradise** of delight of God, and **untiring powers will embrace you**, and your youth will not see old age, and your beauty will not fail forever. And you shall be like a walled mother-city of all who take refuge with the name of the Lord God, the king of the ages.” (Ibid.)

The connection to Latter-day Saints

From the first the symbol of the bee captivated the imagination of the Latter-day Saints in their migrations and their settlements; **the emblematic hive became the seal of the Territory and State and adorned every important edifice** within the vast expanse of “our lovely Deseret.” Finally, by what strange coincidence does the *History of the Church* end with the sign of the bee? After the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, “the bodies ... were removed ... at Emma’s request, to near the Mansion house, and buried side by side, and the bee house was then moved and placed over their graves.” (Nibley, p. 635-38)



The name reveal in Exodus 3.15 (E)

“Go and gather Israel’s elders and say to them, ‘YHWH, your fathers’ God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob...’” – Ex. 3.15.

This is the first time YHWH is revealed in the Elohist text. In the next verse we are told that this God appeared unto Moses.





The name reveal in
Exodus 6.2-3 (P)

And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty (El Shaddai), but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

"I was known as El Shaddai"...

Here **God tells Moses that he was not known to the patriarchs by the name YHWH**. However, **the patriarchs did in fact know** the name YHWH (Gen 18.14; 24.3; 26.22; 27.20, 27; 28.16; and Gen. 4.26 – all stories told from J. This P passage (Exodus 6.2-3) is a doublet of the passage in E in which God first reveals the divine name (see Exodus 3.15). N. Sarna (p. 31) writes, “The reference is to Genesis 17:1-8 and 35:11- 12.5. Although this divine Name is usually translated "God Almighty, there are no convincing traditions as to its meaning and little etymological justification for that particular rendering. With the advent of Moses, El Shaddai became obsolete; it is preserved only in poetic texts.” For the approach that El Shaddai could represent the divine feminine, see D. Biale’s paper [here](#).

Between these two name reveals (Ex. 3 & 6), many things happen!

1. Three signs given – Ex. 4.1-9.
2. God gives Aaron to Moses to help out – Ex. 4.13-17.
3. Moses' audience with Pharaoh – Ex. 5.1-6.1
4. Now Israel has to make bricks without straw – Ex. 5.4-19.
5. The elders of Israel get upset with Moses – Ex. 5.21.

Five Excuses of Moses

Reference	Excuse	God's Reply
Exodus 3:11-12	Who am I?	"I will be with you."
Exodus 3:13-22	Who are you?	"I AM Who I AM."
Exodus 4:1-9	What if...?	Signs and wonders
Exodus 4:10-12	I'm not eloquent	I will be with your mouth
Exodus 4:13-17	Send someone else	I will be speak through you to Aaron

Making bricks without straw

President Packer stated: “The first order issued by a commander mounting a military invasion is the jamming of the channels of communication of those he intends to conquer.” (Reverence Invites Revelation, *Ensign*, November, 1991).

C.S. Lewis described the brick manufacturing mentality of the world in which we live in *The Screwtape Letters*. In this depiction of two devils speaking of ways to wreak havoc among mortals we read, “We will make the whole universe a noise in the end. We have already made great strides in this direction... the melodies and silence of Heaven will be shouted down in the end.” (*The Screwtape Letters* [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1973], p.103.)

Whose staff is it anyway?

Is this Moses' staff or Aaron's staff or God's staff? (Exodus 4:2, 7:15, 17:20, 9:23, 10:13 versus Exodus 7:9-12, 7:19 versus Exodus 4:20)

Exodus 4:2, 7:15, 7:20, 9:23, and 10:13 all indicate that the staff or rod involved in producing Jehovah's signs was Moses' staff, perhaps even his personal shepherd's staff. Exodus 7:15 refers to the rod that was previously used to turn into a serpent, which in chapter 4 of Exodus (the story it is referring to) makes this Moses' staff. Indeed Exodus 4:2, which introduces the staff in the storyline, seems to imply that it was already on Moses' person: “‘What's this in your hand?’ ‘A staff.’”



This is where we get into complications. Exodus 7:10, 7:12, and 7:19 refer to the same staff now as “Aaron’s staff” and, more surprisingly, seem to reflect that it was Aaron, not Moses, who performed the famous rod-to-snake miracle we read about in Exodus 7:10. When we get into the account in Exodus 7:20 of the first plague (water into blood) it gets really confusing as it doesn’t categorically say who owns the staff when it says, “And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD had commanded, and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters...” To me the “he” in verse 20 could be Moses or Aaron, but it would seem logical to assume that this is Aaron’s rod as verse 19 the command from God is to Aaron to use his rod. Students over the years have asked me, “So who is doing the miracle? Is it Aaron? Is it Moses? Could it be both? Why is this so confusing?”

The answer may lie in scholarship's critical analysis of the text.

See: [Whose staff is it anyway?](#)

I will harden Pharaoh's heart! (Ex. 4.21)

The JST has “but Pharaoh will harden his heart, and he will not let the people go.” The Hebrew text says אֶחֱזַק אֶת־לְבוֹ “I will strengthen his heart.” Friedman sees this as part of the text of the redactor, noting that **in E**, Pharaoh’s heart is made “**heavy**,” and **in P** Pharaoh’s heart is made “**strong**.” He sees the redactor working with this term “strengthen” to streamline the two accounts of Moses’ life, going with the P version here. But both versions are included in the flow of the narrative. For in the E accounts we read of Pharaoh’s heart being made “heavy,” כָּבֵד *kbd*, see Ex. 8.15, 32; 9.7, 34; 10.1. For P’s account of Pharaoh’s heart made “strong,” חֲזַק *hzq* (or *qsh*) see Ex. 7.13, 22; 9.12; 14.4, 8, 17. See: Mike Day, [“The Hardening of Pharaoh’s heart,”](#) 11.06.2015.



Pharaoh's "heavy" heart was an attack against his character

This term for Pharaoh's heavy heart can be seen as a polemic against Egypt, using their very terms as they saw them, and associating this with casting a judgment upon their leader. **To have a "heavy heart" was not a good thing in the final judgment scenes as portrayed in the Book of the Dead.** In Egyptian religion, the heart was the key to the afterlife. It was conceived as surviving death in the Netherworld, where it gave evidence for, or against, its possessor. It was thought that the heart was examined by Anubis and the deities during **the weighing of the heart ceremony.** If the heart weighed more than the feather of Maat, it was immediately consumed by the monster Ammit. See: BD spell 125.