

12.05 Moses' First Meeting with Pharaoh (Exodus 5:1–7:14)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- “Life of Moses” Series 1 Flash-a-Cards from A Beka Book and/or pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- (optional) *Herein Is Love Commentary Series; Exodus, A Commentary for Children*, by Nancy Ganz, Shepherd Press, 2002.
- A brick

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *making bricks*: “Many clay products require the addition of other materials to add strength and durability. In the case of bricks in OT Egypt, river clay is usually composed of very fine particles and so would dry slowly. Adding straw would ‘open up’ the clay, allowing it to dry more readily and so be more promptly and successfully fired” (Wikipedia).
- *taskmasters*: supervisors over slaves
- *straw*: dried stalks of grain
- *stubble*: short cut stalks of grain plants left sticking out of the ground after the grain is harvested. Notice the difference between *straw* and *stubble*: straw, with longer stalks, would be more plentiful; stubble, with the stalks cut off, would be scanty.
- *judgment*: punishment

Scripture (NASB)

Exodus 5:1 And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let My people go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness.’” 2 But Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go.” 3 Then they said, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, otherwise He will fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.” 4 But the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you draw the people away from their work? Get *back* to your labors!” 5 Again Pharaoh said, “Look, the people of the land are now many, and you would have them cease from their labors!” 6 So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters over the people and their foremen, saying, 7 “You are no longer to give the people straw to make brick as previously; let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 But the quota of bricks which they were making previously, you shall impose on them; you are not to reduce any of it. Because they are lazy, therefore they cry out, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’ 9 Let the labor be heavier on the men, and let them work at it so that they will pay no attention to false words.”

10 So the taskmasters of the people and their foremen went out and spoke to the people, saying, “Thus says Pharaoh, ‘I am not going to give you *any* straw. 11 You go *and* get straw for yourselves wherever you can find *it*, but none of your labor will be reduced.’” 12 So the people scattered through all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. 13 The taskmasters pressed them, saying, “Complete your work quota, *your* daily amount, just as when you had straw.” 14 Moreover, the foremen of the sons of Israel, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, “Why have you not completed your required amount either yesterday or today in making brick as previously?”

15 Then the foremen of the sons of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, “Why do you deal this way with your servants? 16 There is no straw given to your servants, yet they keep saying to us, ‘Make bricks!’ And behold, your servants are being beaten; but it is the fault of your *own* people.” 17 But he said, “You are lazy, *very* lazy; therefore you say, ‘Let us go *and* sacrifice to the LORD.’ 18 So go now *and* work; for you will be given no straw, yet you must deliver the quota of bricks.” 19 The foremen of the sons of Israel saw that they were in trouble because they were told, “You must not reduce *your* daily amount of bricks.” 20 When they left Pharaoh’s presence, they met Moses and Aaron as they were waiting for them. 21 They said to them, “May the LORD look upon you and judge *you*, for you have made us odious in Pharaoh’s sight and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us.”

22 Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, “O Lord, why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me? 23 Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people, and You have not delivered Your people at all.”

6:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for under compulsion he will let them go, and under compulsion he will drive them out of his land.”

2 God spoke further to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD; 3 and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but *by* My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them. 4 I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned. 5 Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. 6 Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you *for* a possession; I am the LORD.’” 9 So Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of *their* despondency and cruel bondage.

10 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 11 “Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the sons of Israel go out of his land.” 12 But Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, “Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am unskilled in speech?” 13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, and gave them a charge to the sons of Israel and to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

[Exodus 6:14–30, which gives details about the tribes of Israel, is not included here.]

7:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. 2 You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh that he let the sons of Israel go out of his land. 3 But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5 The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst.” 6 So Moses and Aaron did it; as the LORD commanded them, thus they did. 7 Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three, when they spoke to Pharaoh.

8 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 9 “When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, ‘Work a miracle,’ then you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.’” 10 So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and thus they did just as the LORD had commanded; and Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. 11 Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts. 12 For each one threw down his staff and they turned into serpents. But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs. 13 Yet Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go.

Introduction/Review:

God had told Moses to go back to Egypt, for he had a job to do—lead God’s people out of Egypt. Aaron, prompted by God, met Moses at the Mount of God, and Moses rehearsed to Aaron all the words and signs that God had had shown him.

When Moses and Aaron arrived in Egypt, they gathered the elders of Israel together, told them what God had said, and showed them God’s signs. When the elders saw the signs, they believed God would take care of them; they bowed their heads and worshiped.

Story:

“God says, ‘Let My people go.’”

Moses and Aaron, who were now eighty and eighty-three years old, approached Pharaoh himself, saying, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let My people go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness.’”

In this first of many denials, Pharaoh answered [angrily], “Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go.”

“Let us go, or God will send us pestilence.”

Moses and Aaron answered, noting how serious God was about wanting to meet with His people: “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to the LORD our God. Otherwise, He will fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.”

Did Pharaoh care if God punished the sons of Israel? No! All he cared about was their work for him. He answered, “Moses and Aaron, why do you draw the people away from their work? Get back to your labors! You just want the people to stop working!”

“Stop giving straw.”

Provoked, Pharaoh decided to punish the people himself. That very day he ordered the taskmasters, “Stop giving the people straw to make brick as you have been doing. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. However, even though they have to get their own straw, they must continue to make just as many bricks as when you got straw for them. These people are lazy, so they cry out [sarcastically], ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’ [Angrily.] Make the men work harder! They need more work so that they stop paying attention to false words.”

So the taskmasters announced to the people [in an announcing voice], “Thus says Pharaoh, ‘I am not going to give you any straw. You now need to get your own straw wherever you can find it. You must continue to make just as many bricks as usual.’”

This additional task caused a grave hardship, for the people had to scatter all over their area of Egypt to gather straw. One problem: straw was not available to them. Instead, they had to substitute stubble for straw. Stubble was difficult to gather. ✓Perhaps gathering it even meant pulling short stems from the ground as one might pull a weed.

Meanwhile, the taskmasters pressured the sons of Israel: “Produce your daily number of bricks just as you did when you had straw!”

This situation was impossible: brick production slowed down for lack of straw. Because of fewer bricks being made, Egyptian taskmasters beat their assistants, whom the Bible calls *foremen*. “Why have you not completed your required amount either yesterday or today in making brick as previously?” the taskmasters demanded as they beat these assistants.

“Why do you deal this way with us?”

The assistants went directly to Pharaoh and pleaded, “Why do you deal this way with your servants? We

don't get any straw; yet your people keep saying to us, 'Make bricks!' Look, we are even being beaten, but the problem is with *your* own people."

Pharaoh answered, "You are lazy—just plain lazy! That's why you say [sarcastically], 'Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.' [Angrily] Get to work now. No, you will be given no straw. Yes, you must produce the same number of bricks."

"You have made us abhorrent to Pharaoh."

The assistants now fully understood why they were in trouble with Pharaoh. It was the fault of Moses and Aaron! They found Moses and Aaron and accused, "May the LORD look upon you and judge you, for you have made us so abhorrent in Pharaoh's sight that he or his servants will kill us."

✓This report was too much for Moses. He went to the LORD and complained [refer to chart found below], "1. O Lord, why have You brought harm to this people? 2. Why did You ever send me? 3. Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people, and 4. You have not delivered Your people at all."

"I am the LORD."

The LORD's response to Moses fully explained what He would do and the fact that He is God. God said [refer to chart found below], "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh: 1. He will be forced to let you go; in fact, he will drive My people out of his land. 2. I am the LORD, the One who appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty. I established My covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they sojourned.

"Furthermore, 3. I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, who have been made slaves, and I have remembered My covenant. Therefore, 4. tell the sons of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the bondage of the Egyptians. I will also deliver you with great judgments.

"Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God. 5. You shall know that I, the LORD your God, brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 6. I will bring you to the land that I promised to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It will be your possession; I am the LORD. Now, Moses, tell the people what I have just told you."

"We don't believe you."

When Moses went to tell the people God's words, the people did not believe him because they were so burdened under their cruel, impossible situation.

However, God ordered again, "Go, tell Pharaoh to let the sons of Israel go out of his land."

"If the sons of Israel have not listened to me," objected Moses, "how then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I hardly know how to speak?"

"I am making you as God to Pharaoh."

Nevertheless, God repeated to Moses and to Aaron their mission to bring the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt. God now gave special authority to Moses by saying, "I am making you as God to Pharaoh."

This is interesting: Moses would be as *God Himself* to Pharaoh.

God continued. "Your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You, like God, shall speak all that I command, and your brother Aaron, like a prophet, shall speak to Pharaoh that he let the sons of Israel go out of his land.

"I will show My signs and wonders in the land of Egypt."

"But be warned about this, Moses. I will harden Pharaoh's heart so that I may show My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. As I said before, when Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand

on Egypt and bring out My people from the land of Egypt by great judgments. The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring sons of Israel out of their land.”

After this assurance from God, Moses and Aaron seemed ready to trust and obey the LORD.

“Work a miracle.”

The next time Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh, ✓the ruler said, “Work a miracle.”

Ah! It was time to show one of God’s signs. Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had said: Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants. The staff became a serpent—a snake.

Pharaoh called for his wise men and magicians. ✓“Can you copy this sign?” he might have asked. Surprisingly, the magicians did the same—made their staffs become snakes.* However, God, to show that He was mightier than the magicians, made Aaron’s snake swallow up all the serpents of the Egyptian magicians.

Wouldn’t one think that seeing Aaron’s snake eat the snakes of the magicians would change Pharaoh’s mind as he saw God’s mighty power before his eyes? Pharaoh did *not* change his mind; in fact, he became more hardened against God. He refused to let God’s people go.

How long will this go on?

*Several commentators state these magicians, two of whom were Jannes and Jambres (2 Timothy 3:8), merely gave the appearance of making their staffs into serpents. The following explanation among several for the magicians’ act is found at the web site, <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/exodus/7-11.htm>: “The art of serpent-charming is indigenous in the East: there are allusions to it in Psalm 58:5, Jeremiah 8:17, Ecclesiastes 10:11; and it is practised in Egypt to the present day” (*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*). “The magicians of Egypt in modern times have been long celebrated adepts in charming serpents, and particularly by pressing the nape of the neck, they throw them into a kind of catalepsy, which renders them stiff and immovable—thus seeming to change them into a rod. They conceal the serpent about their persons, and by acts of legerdemain [sleight of hand] produce it from their dress, stiff and straight as a rod” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary). Upon being thrown to the ground, these “rods” quickly “became” serpents.

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:
Just as Pharaoh, the man in authority, refused to believe God, the Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day, who had authority over the Jews, refused to believe Jesus.
- Rejection can be like a death. We need to die to ourselves—to our own self-esteem—in order to be more useful in God’s hands. We are useless when we are full of ourselves (James Montgomery Boice in an audio taped series, “The Battle of Egypt: The Life of Moses,” Session 6).
- As God promised to take His people from the burdens of the Egyptians, so He promises to be with believers in their times of trouble as they trust Him.

Activities:

- Play dough: bricks; whips; staff becoming serpent
- Snack: Gummi Worms[®]. The following site has a recipe for gummy worms made with straws: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNEiHXkYu3E>
Or roll out pizza dough to look like snakes. After baking, add frosting eyes and mouth.
- The YouTube video, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaNIydpOYYk>, made in India, pictures how

brick making might have been done in Egypt.

- For play time let younger students build walls with Legos[®] or other toy bricks.
- Sing stanzas 1–3 of “Moses Gets out of Egypt,” found in Lesson 12.01b or on the Songs page at teachingthebibleto kids.org, where an audio and a visual are available.
- Review Questions: (Game: Have students put a Lego[®] or toy building block in a transparent container for each correct answer.)
 1. What was Pharaoh’s first answer when Aaron and Moses asked to let the people go into the wilderness? [“Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go.”]
 2. What did Pharaoh command the taskmasters to do so that the people would work harder? [Make them get their own straw for the brick-making.]
 3. What happened to the foremen/assistants when the people couldn’t make the same number of bricks as before? [The taskmasters beat them.]
 4. After the foremen/assistants had appealed to Pharaoh with no success, to whom did they go? [Moses and Aaron.]
 5. Moses had four complaints when he spoke to God. What was one of them? [1. “Why have You brought harm to this people? 2. Why did You ever send me? 3. Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people. 4. You have not delivered Your people at all.”]
 6. God’s message to Moses and the people had six points. Tell one of these points. [1. “Pharaoh will be forced to let the people go.” 2. “I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, not LORD /Jehovah. I promised to give them the land of Canaan.” 3. “I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant.” 4. “I am the LORD, and I will deliver the people from their bondage with great judgments.” 5. “You shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.” 6. “I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and will give it to you.”]
 7. How did the people respond to God’s message from Moses? [They did not listen to Moses because of their despondency and cruel bondage.]
 8. Fill in the blanks. Then the LORD said to Moses, “See, I make you as _____ to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your _____.” [God; prophet.]
 9. God repeated the fact that Pharaoh’s heart would be hardened. What would God do then to force Pharaoh let the people go? [God would multiply His signs and wonders. He would lay great judgments on Egypt so that the Egyptians would know that God is the LORD.”]
 10. Describe how the sign of turning staffs into snakes turned out. [Aaron’s staff swallowed up the staffs of the magicians.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Exodus 6:7 (NASB)—“I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.”

Handwork:

- Print the snakes found below on colored paper or have the students scribble color them. Students will cut out the snakes on the solid lines. Fold the large snake (Aaron’s) on the dashed lines and glue with a thin line of glue on the inside edge, leaving the mouth area open. Aaron’s snake may “eat” up the other snakes by having students put them inside the mouth of Aaron’s snake. (Idea adapted from <http://childrensbiblelessons.blogspot.com/search?q=exodus+7>.)

making bricks

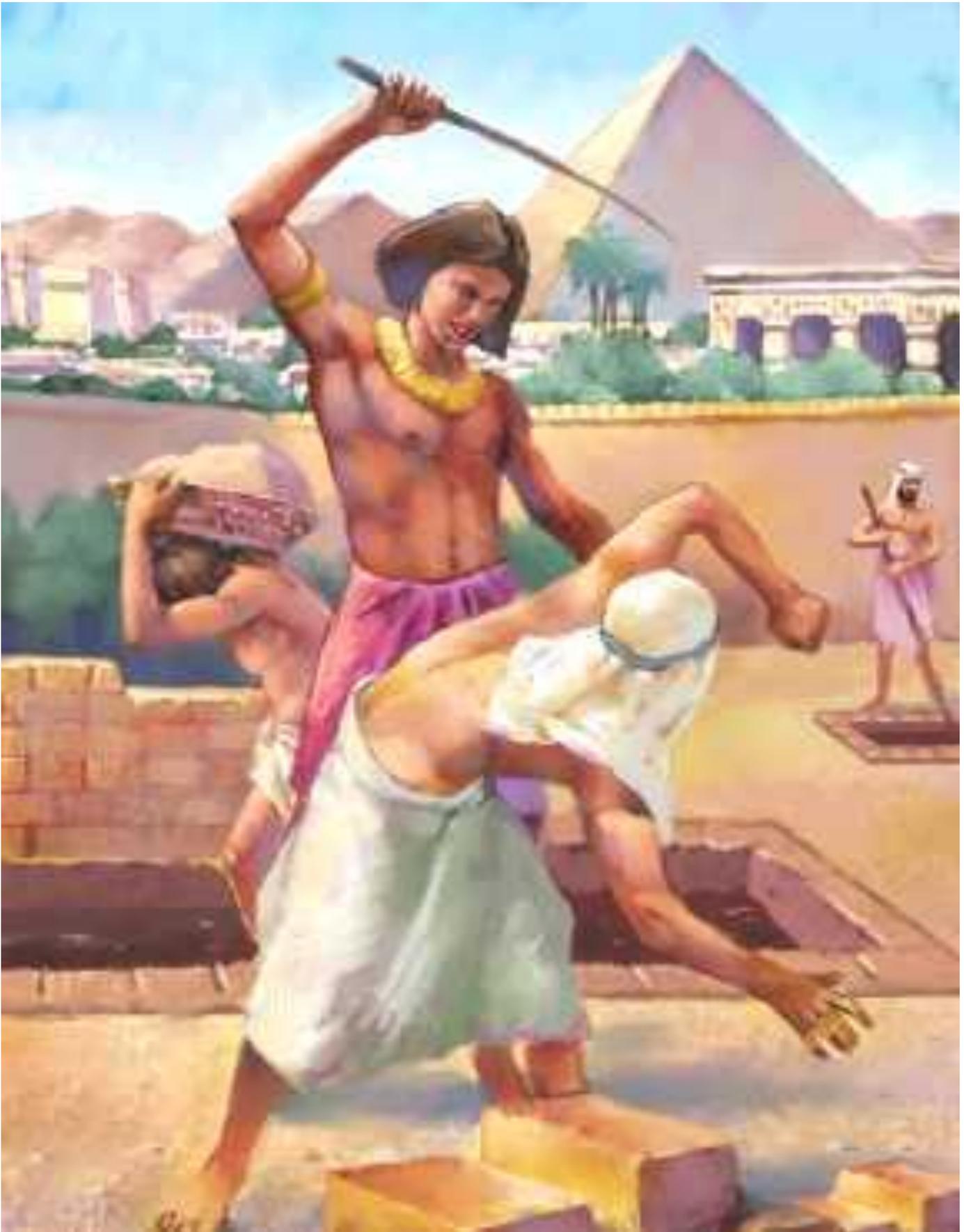
taskmasters

straw

stubble

judgment





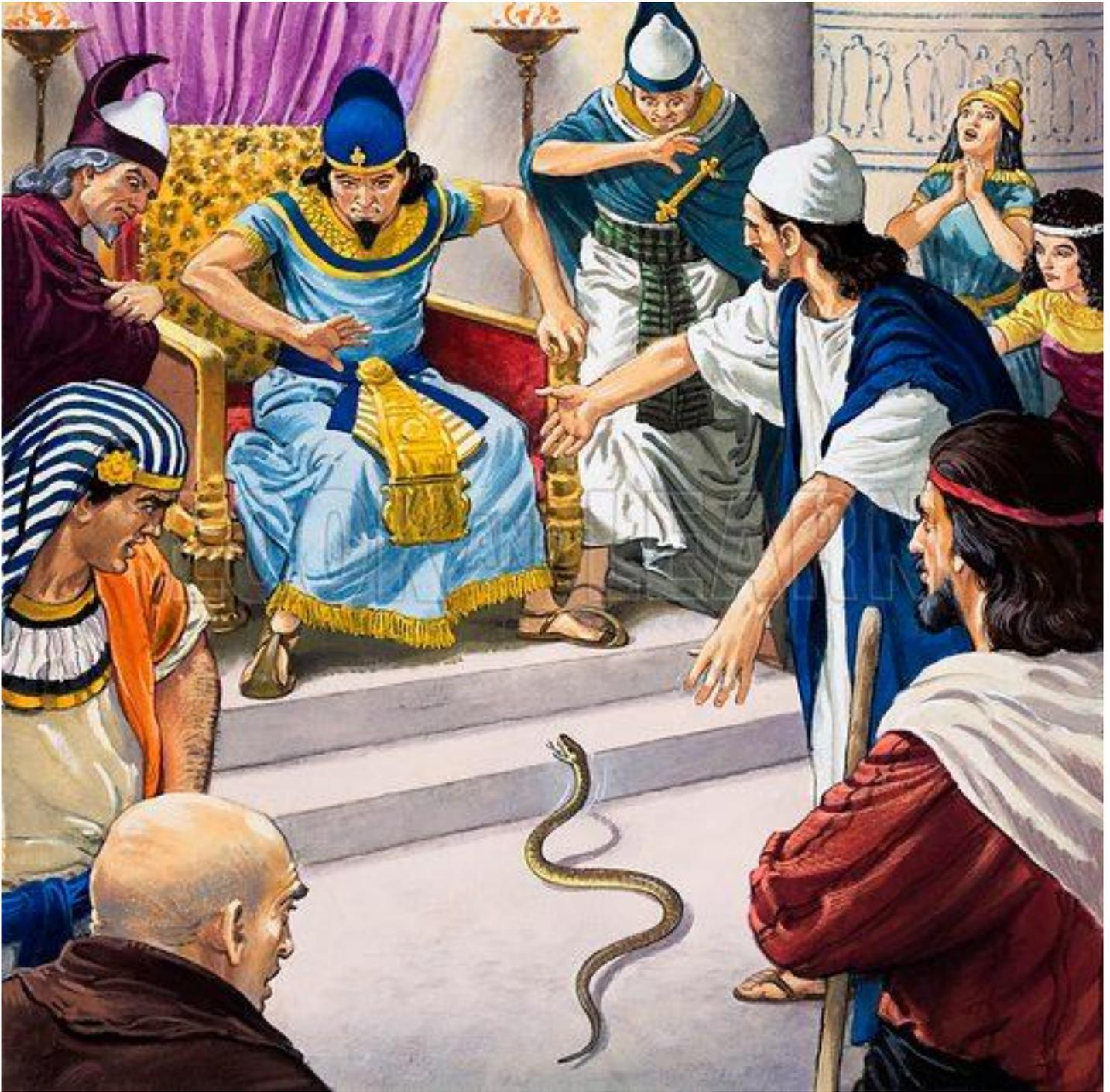
Moses' Complain to God

1. “Lord, why have You brought harm to this people?”
2. “Why did You ever send me?”
3. “Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people.”
4. “You have not delivered Your people at all.”

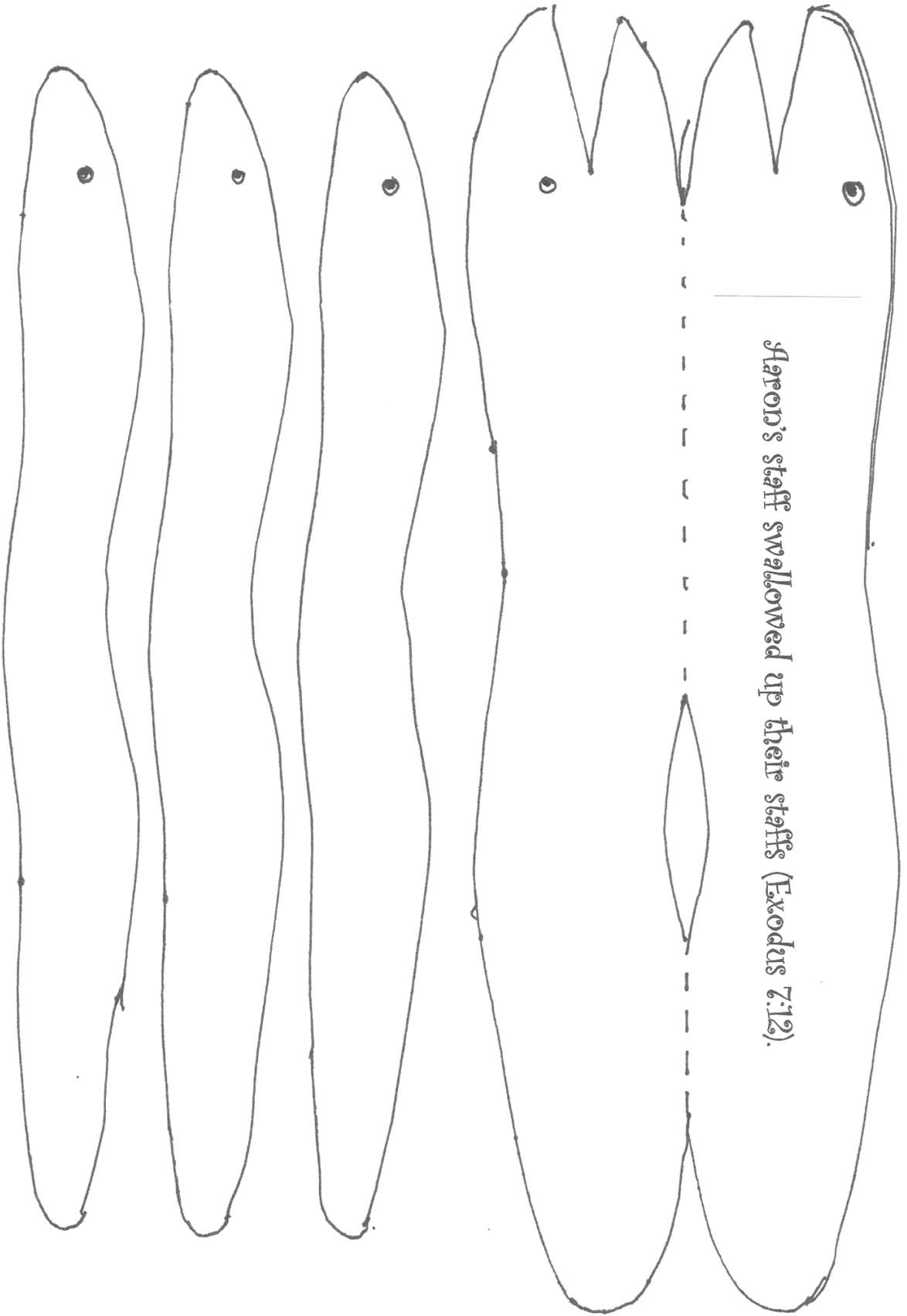
God's Message to Moses / God's People

1. "Pharaoh will be forced to let the people go."
2. "I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as *God Almighty*, not *LORD / Jehovah*. I promised to give them the land of Canaan."
3. "I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant."
4. "Tell the sons of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will do so with great judgments.'"
5. "You shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."
6. "I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you. I am the LORD."





<https://www.lookandlearn.com/blog/2911/aarons-rod/>



Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs (Exodus 7:12).