

# The Prophet of the Exodus: The Life of Moses

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The life of Moses is the story of a man chosen by God to lead the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt and into the freedom of the **Promised Land**.

## A Dangerous Beginning

Moses was born at a time when the **Pharaoh** (the King of Egypt) ordered that all Hebrew baby boys be killed to prevent them from growing up to challenge his power. To save him, his mother placed him in a **basket** coated with pitch and set him adrift on the Nile River. He was discovered by the Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him and raised him in the royal palace, though he was actually nursed by his own Hebrew mother.

## Fleeing to the Desert

As an adult, Moses stood up for his people by killing an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew. Fearing for his life, he fled to the land of **Midian**, where he became a **shepherd** and lived a quiet life in the mountains for many years. During this time, he married Zipporah and learned the discipline of the wilderness.

## The Burning Bush and God's Name

While tending his sheep, Moses saw an **awe-inspiring sight**: a bush that was flaming with fire but was not being burned up. God spoke to him from the light, telling him to remove his sandals because he was on **holy ground**. It was here that God revealed His mysterious name: "**I AM WHO I AM**" (YHWH). God commanded Moses to return to Egypt to set the Israelites free.

## The Exodus and the Red Sea

Moses returned to Egypt with his brother **Aaron** to face the Pharaoh. After God sent ten powerful plagues to show His strength, the Pharaoh finally let the people go. When the Egyptian army trapped them at the **Red Sea**, Moses struck the water with his staff, and God split the sea so the people could cross on **dry land**.

## Life in the Wilderness

For 40 years, Moses led the people through the desert. God provided for them in miraculous ways:

- **Manna:** A "bread from heaven" that fell like dew every morning.
- **Water from the Rock:** When the people were thirsty, Moses struck a rock, and sweet water gushed out.
- **The Cloud and Fire:** A miraculous cloud led them by day, and a pillar of fire gave them light by night.

### The Ten Commandments

At **Mount Sinai**, Moses climbed into a thick, dark cloud to meet with God. He stayed there for **40 days**, receiving the **Ten Commandments** written by the "finger of God" on stone tablets. He also received the patterns for building the **Tabernacle**, a portable tent where God would dwell among His people.

### Faithfulness and Death

Although Moses faced many challenges—including the people's grumbling and the envy of his own siblings—he remained a faithful **servant of God**. Before he died, God allowed him to climb a high mountain to see the Promised Land from afar. He died at a very old age, yet his eyes remained bright and his strength remained full. The Catholic Church recognizes him as a **saint**, celebrating his feast day on **September 4**.