



# FEBRUARY 1

## **This is impossible!**

**God told Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. But Moses didn't think he would be able to do what God wanted. See what God had to say about that.**

### **Exodus 4:1-17**

But Moses protested again, "What if they won't believe me or listen to me? What if they say, 'The LORD never appeared to you?'"

<sup>2</sup>Then the LORD asked him, "What is that in your hand?"

"A shepherd's staff," Moses replied.

<sup>3</sup>"Throw it down on the ground," the LORD told him. So Moses threw down the staff, and it turned into a snake! Moses jumped back.

<sup>4</sup>Then the LORD told him, "Reach out and grab its tail." So Moses reached out and grabbed it, and it turned back into a shepherd's staff in his hand.

<sup>5</sup>"Perform this sign," the LORD told him. "Then they will believe that the LORD, the God of their ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—really has appeared to you."

<sup>6</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now put your hand inside your cloak." So Moses put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out again, his hand was white as snow with a severe skin disease.\* <sup>7</sup>"Now put your hand back into your cloak," the

LORD said. So Moses put his hand back in, and when he took it out again, it was as healthy as the rest of his body.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD said to Moses, "If they do not believe you and are not convinced by the first miraculous sign, they will be convinced by the second sign. <sup>9</sup>And if they don't believe you or listen to you even after these two signs, then take some water from the Nile River and pour it out on the dry ground. When you do, the water from the Nile will turn to blood on the ground."

<sup>10</sup>But Moses pleaded with the LORD, "O Lord, I'm not very good with words. I never have been, and I'm not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled."

<sup>11</sup>Then the LORD asked Moses, "Who makes a person's mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see? Is it not I, the LORD? <sup>12</sup>Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say."

<sup>13</sup>But Moses again pleaded, "Lord, please! Send anyone else."

<sup>14</sup>Then the LORD became angry with



Moses. "All right," he said. "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he speaks well. And look! He is on his way to meet you now. He will be delighted to see you. <sup>15</sup>Talk to him, and put the words in his mouth. I will be with both of you as you speak, and I will instruct you both in what to

do. <sup>16</sup>Aaron will be your spokesman to the people. He will be your mouthpiece, and you will stand in the place of God for him, telling him what to say. <sup>17</sup>And take your shepherd's staff with you, and use it to perform the miraculous signs I have shown you."

4:6 Or *with leprosy*. The Hebrew word used here can describe various skin diseases.



"I can't do it." Have you ever felt that way when facing something new or a tough assignment at school? Moses sure did. But God promised to be with Moses and help him. In fact, God would do all the hard work. If God tells you to do something hard, he will help you get it done. Do any of God's commandments seem impossible to you? Trust him and he will help you do what he wants you to.

*Let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.* HEBREWS 4:16



# FEBRUARY 2

## Pharaoh says no

**Pharaoh was not going to give up his slaves easily. In fact, rather than let the Israelites go free, he made things even harder for them. Read and find out what Pharaoh did.**

### Exodus 5:1-21

Moses and Aaron went and spoke to Pharaoh. They told him, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Let my people go so they may hold a festival in my honor in the wilderness."

<sup>2</sup>"Is that so?" retorted Pharaoh. "And who is the LORD? Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I don't know the LORD, and I will not let Israel go."

<sup>3</sup>But Aaron and Moses persisted. "The God of the Hebrews has met with us," they declared. "So let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness so we can offer sacri-

fices to the LORD our God. If we don't, he will kill us with a plague or with the sword."

<sup>4</sup>Pharaoh replied, "Moses and Aaron, why are you distracting the people from their tasks? Get back to work! <sup>5</sup>Look, there are many of your people in the land, and you are stopping them from their work."

<sup>6</sup>That same day Pharaoh sent this order to the Egyptian slave drivers and the Israelite foremen: <sup>7</sup>"Do not supply any more straw for making bricks. Make the people get it themselves! <sup>8</sup>But still require them to make the same number of bricks as before. Don't reduce the quota. They are lazy.

That's why they are crying out, 'Let us go and offer sacrifices to our God.'<sup>9</sup> Load them down with more work. Make them sweat! That will teach them to listen to lies!"

<sup>10</sup>So the slave drivers and foremen went out and told the people: "This is what Pharaoh says: I will not provide any more straw for you. <sup>11</sup>Go and get it yourselves. Find it wherever you can. But you must produce just as many bricks as before!" <sup>12</sup>So the people scattered throughout the land of Egypt in search of stubble to use as straw.

<sup>13</sup>Meanwhile, the Egyptian slave drivers continued to push hard. "Meet your daily quota of bricks, just as you did when we provided you with straw!" they demanded. <sup>14</sup>Then they whipped the Israelite foremen they had put in charge of the work crews. "Why haven't you met your quotas either yesterday or today?" they demanded.

<sup>15</sup>So the Israelite foremen went to Pharaoh and pleaded with him. "Please don't

treat your servants like this," they begged. <sup>16</sup>"We are given no straw, but the slave drivers still demand, 'Make bricks!' We are being beaten, but it isn't our fault! Your own people are to blame!"

<sup>17</sup>But Pharaoh shouted, "You're just lazy! Lazy! That's why you're saying, 'Let us go and offer sacrifices to the LORD.' <sup>18</sup>Now get back to work! No straw will be given to you, but you must still produce the full quota of bricks."

<sup>19</sup>The Israelite foremen could see that they were in serious trouble when they were told, "You must not reduce the number of bricks you make each day." <sup>20</sup>As they left Pharaoh's court, they confronted Moses and Aaron, who were waiting outside for them. <sup>21</sup>The foremen said to them, "May the LORD judge and punish you for making us stink before Pharaoh and his officials. You have put a sword into their hands, an excuse to kill us!"



Pharaoh was making life hard for the Israelites even though they hadn't done anything to deserve it. Sometimes people try to cause problems for you, even when you haven't done anything to deserve it. If that happens, don't get discouraged. God will help you hang in there until he rescues you from the problems. How will you react when someone makes fun of you for no reason?

*God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. JAMES 1:12*





# FEBRUARY 3

## Down and out

**The tougher Pharaoh got on the Israelites, the more discouraged they became. God promised to free the Israelites, but they felt like just giving up! They couldn't figure out what was going to happen to them.**

### Exodus 6:1-12

Then the LORD told Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. When he feels the force of my strong hand, he will let the people go. In fact, he will force them to leave his land!"

<sup>2</sup>And God said to Moses, "I am Yahweh—the LORD.\* <sup>3</sup>I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El-Shaddai—'God Almighty'\*—but I did not reveal my name, Yahweh, to them. <sup>4</sup>And I reaffirmed my covenant with them. Under its terms, I promised to give them the land of Canaan, where they were living as foreigners. <sup>5</sup>You can be sure that I have heard the groans of the people of Israel, who are now slaves to the Egyptians. And I am well aware of my covenant with them.

<sup>6</sup>"Therefore, say to the people of Israel: 'I am the LORD. I will free you from your oppression and will rescue you from your

slavery in Egypt. I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment. <sup>7</sup>I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God who has freed you from your oppression in Egypt. <sup>8</sup>I will bring you into the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you as your very own possession. I am the LORD!"

<sup>9</sup>So Moses told the people of Israel what the LORD had said, but they refused to listen anymore. They had become too discouraged by the brutality of their slavery.

<sup>10</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, <sup>11</sup>"Go back to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and tell him to let the people of Israel leave his country."

<sup>12</sup>"But LORD!" Moses objected. "My own people won't listen to me anymore. How can I expect Pharaoh to listen? I'm such a clumsy speaker!"

6:2 *Yahweh* is a transliteration of the proper name *YHWH* that is sometimes rendered "Jehovah"; in this translation it is usually rendered "the LORD." 6:3 *El-Shaddai* means "God Almighty." 6:12 Hebrew *I have uncircumcised lips*.



God had promised to free the Israelites from slavery, but they still wanted to give up. They had a hard time believing that their situation would ever change. Following God was just too hard. Sometimes following God can be difficult for us, too. But rather than quitting, look to God, who will give you strength.

*I can do everything through Christ,\* who gives me strength.* PHILIPPIANS 4:13

4:13 Greek *through the one*.



# FEBRUARY 4

## A stubborn ruler

God had a message for Pharaoh. Would Pharaoh listen? Read and see.

### Exodus 7:1-13

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pay close attention to this. I will make you seem like God to Pharaoh, and your brother, Aaron, will be your prophet. <sup>2</sup>Tell Aaron everything I command you, and Aaron must command Pharaoh to let the people of Israel leave his country. <sup>3</sup>But I will make Pharaoh’s heart stubborn so I can multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. <sup>4</sup>Even then Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you. So I will bring down my fist on Egypt. Then I will rescue my forces—my people, the Israelites—from the land of Egypt with great acts of judgment. <sup>5</sup>When I raise my powerful hand and bring out the Israelites, the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.”


<sup>6</sup>So Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded them. <sup>7</sup>Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron was eighty-

three when they made their demands to Pharaoh.

<sup>8</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, <sup>9</sup>“Pharaoh will demand, ‘Show me a miracle.’ When he does this, say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw it down in front of Pharaoh, and it will become a serpent.\*’”

<sup>10</sup>So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did what the LORD had commanded them. Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a serpent! <sup>11</sup>Then Pharaoh called in his own wise men and sorcerers, and these Egyptian magicians did the same thing with their magic. <sup>12</sup>They threw down their staffs, which also became serpents! But then Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs. <sup>13</sup>Pharaoh’s heart, however, remained hard. He still refused to listen, just as the LORD had predicted.

7:9 Hebrew *tannin*, which elsewhere refers to a sea monster. Greek version translates it “dragon.”



Moses gave Pharaoh an important message from God. But Pharaoh wanted to have his own way. He didn’t care who sent the message—Pharaoh wasn’t going to listen. When have you had a hard time listening to God? Learn from what happened to Pharaoh. It’s always wiser to listen to God and obey than to insist on having your own way.

*Come and listen to [Wisdom’s] counsel. I’ll share my heart with you and make you wise.* PROVERBS 1:23





# FEBRUARY 5

## The Plaques Begin

**Pharaoh didn't get it. He wouldn't let the Israelites go. What would God do to make him change his mind?**

**Exodus 7:19–8:4, 8-19**

Then the LORD said to Moses: "Tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and raise your hand over the waters of Egypt—all its rivers, canals, ponds, and all the reservoirs. Turn all the water to blood. Everywhere in Egypt the water will turn to blood, even the water stored in wooden bowls and stone pots.'"

<sup>20</sup>So Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded them. As Pharaoh and all of his officials watched, Aaron raised his staff and struck the water of the Nile. Suddenly, the whole river turned to blood! <sup>21</sup>The fish in the river died, and the water became so foul that the Egyptians couldn't drink it. There was blood everywhere throughout the land of Egypt. <sup>22</sup>But again the magicians of Egypt used their magic, and they, too, turned water into blood. So Pharaoh's heart remained hard. He refused to listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had predicted. <sup>23</sup>Pharaoh returned to his palace and put the whole thing out of his mind. <sup>24</sup>Then all the Egyptians dug along the riverbank to find drinking water, for they couldn't drink the water from the Nile.

<sup>25</sup>Seven days passed from the time the LORD struck the Nile.

<sup>8:1\*</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go back to Pharaoh and announce to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so they can worship me. <sup>2</sup>If you refuse to let them go, I will send a plague of frogs across your entire land. <sup>3</sup>The Nile River

will swarm with frogs. They will come up out of the river and into your palace, even into your bedroom and onto your bed! They will enter the houses of your officials and your people. They will even jump into your ovens and your kneading bowls. <sup>4</sup>Frogs will jump on you, your people, and all your officials.'"



<sup>8</sup>Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and begged, "Plead with the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people. I will let your people go, so they can offer sacrifices to the LORD."

<sup>9</sup>"You set the time!" Moses replied. "Tell me when you want me to pray for you, your officials, and your people. Then you and your houses will be rid of the frogs. They will remain only in the Nile River."

<sup>10</sup>"Do it tomorrow," Pharaoh said.

"All right," Moses replied, "it will be as you have said. Then you will know that there is no one like the LORD our God. <sup>11</sup>The frogs will leave you and your houses, your officials, and your people. They will remain only in the Nile River."

<sup>12</sup>So Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh's palace, and Moses cried out to the LORD about the frogs he had inflicted on Pharaoh. <sup>13</sup>And the LORD did just what Moses had predicted. The frogs in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields all died. <sup>14</sup>The Egyptians piled them into great heaps, and a terrible stench filled the land. <sup>15</sup>But when

Pharaoh saw that relief had come, he became stubborn.\* He refused to listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had predicted.

<sup>16</sup>So the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Raise your staff and strike the ground. The dust will turn into swarms of gnats throughout the land of Egypt.'" <sup>17</sup>So Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded them. When Aaron raised his hand and struck the ground with his staff,

gnats infested the entire land, covering the Egyptians and their animals. All the dust in the land of Egypt turned into gnats.

<sup>18</sup>Pharaoh's magicians tried to do the same thing with their secret arts, but this time they failed. And the gnats covered everyone, people and animals alike.

<sup>19</sup>"This is the finger of God!" the magicians exclaimed to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh's heart remained hard. He wouldn't listen to them, just as the LORD had predicted.

8:1 Verses 8:1-4 are numbered 7:26-29 in Hebrew text. 8:15 Hebrew *made his heart heavy*; also in 8:32.



Since Pharaoh was not cooperating with God's plan, God sent frogs and gnats to bother him. Sometimes God uses the little, annoying things in our life to remind us that he is in charge. What does it take for God to get your attention? Remember that God is in charge of everything.

*Our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness.*  
HEBREWS 12:10



# FEBRUARY 6

## The Trouble Continues

**Although God sent plagues to Egypt, he protected his people.**

### Exodus 8:20–9:7

Then the LORD told Moses, "Get up early in the morning and stand in Pharaoh's way as he goes down to the river. Say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so they can worship me. <sup>21</sup>If you refuse, then I will send swarms of flies on you, your officials, your people, and all the houses. The Egyptian homes will be filled with flies, and the ground will be covered with them. <sup>22</sup>But this time I will spare the region of Goshen, where my people live. No flies will be found

there. Then you will know that I am the LORD and that I am present even in the heart of your land. <sup>23</sup>I will make a clear distinction between\* my people and your people. This miraculous sign will happen tomorrow.'"

<sup>24</sup>And the LORD did just as he had said. A thick swarm of flies filled Pharaoh's palace and the houses of his officials. The whole land of Egypt was thrown into chaos by the flies.

<sup>25</sup>Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron. "All right! Go ahead and offer sacrifices to





your God,” he said. “But do it here in this land.”

<sup>26</sup>But Moses replied, “That wouldn’t be right. The Egyptians detest the sacrifices that we offer to the LORD our God. Look, if we offer our sacrifices here where the Egyptians can see us, they will stone us. <sup>27</sup>We must take a three-day trip into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, just as he has commanded us.”

<sup>28</sup>“All right, go ahead,” Pharaoh replied. “I will let you go into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God. But don’t go too far away. Now hurry and pray for me.”

<sup>29</sup>Moses answered, “As soon as I leave you, I will pray to the LORD, and tomorrow the swarms of flies will disappear from you and your officials and all your people. But I am warning you, Pharaoh, don’t lie to us again and refuse to let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.”

<sup>30</sup>So Moses left Pharaoh’s palace and pleaded with the LORD to remove all the flies. <sup>31</sup>And the LORD did as Moses asked and caused the swarms of flies to disappear from Pharaoh, his officials, and his

people. Not a single fly remained. <sup>32</sup>But Pharaoh again became stubborn and refused to let the people go.

<sup>9:14</sup>“Go back to Pharaoh,” the LORD commanded Moses. “Tell him, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so they can worship me. <sup>2</sup>If you continue to hold them and refuse to let them go, <sup>3</sup>the hand of the LORD will strike all your livestock—your horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep, and goats—with a deadly plague. <sup>4</sup>But the LORD will again make a distinction between the livestock of the Israelites and that of the Egyptians. Not a single one of Israel’s animals will die! <sup>5</sup>The LORD has already set the time for the plague to begin. He has declared that he will strike the land tomorrow.’”

<sup>6</sup>And the LORD did just as he had said. The next morning all the livestock of the Egyptians died, but the Israelites didn’t lose a single animal. <sup>7</sup>Pharaoh sent his officials to investigate, and they discovered that the Israelites had not lost a single animal! But even so, Pharaoh’s heart remained stubborn,\* and he still refused to let the people go.

8:23 As in Greek and Latin versions; Hebrew reads *I will set redemption between*. 9:7 Hebrew *heavy*.



Even though some pretty bad stuff was happening to the Egyptians, God kept the Israelites safe. Not a single cow died, not a single fly landed where the Israelites lived. God still lovingly protects his people. When you love God, you can trust that he will always be with you and watch over you.

*The Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one.\**

2 THESSALONIANS 3:3

3:3 Or *from evil*.



# FEBRUARY 7

## OBEDIENCE OR CONSEQUENCES?

**God kept punishing Pharaoh and his kingdom. But Pharaoh was not getting the point. He just kept disobeying God.**

### Exodus 9:8-12, 22-34

Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from a brick kiln, and have Moses toss it into the air while Pharaoh watches. <sup>9</sup>The ashes will spread like fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, causing festering boils to break out on people and animals throughout the land.”

<sup>10</sup>So they took soot from a brick kiln and went and stood before Pharaoh. As Pharaoh watched, Moses threw the soot into the air, and boils broke out on people and animals alike. <sup>11</sup>Even the magicians were unable to stand before Moses, because the boils had broken out on them and all the Egyptians. <sup>12</sup>But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and just as the LORD had predicted to Moses, Pharaoh refused to listen.



<sup>22</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Lift your hand toward the sky so hail may fall on the people, the livestock, and all the plants throughout the land of Egypt.”

<sup>23</sup>So Moses lifted his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed toward the earth. The LORD sent a tremendous hailstorm against all the land of Egypt. <sup>24</sup>Never in all the history of Egypt had there been a storm like that, with such devastating hail and continuous lightning. <sup>25</sup>It left all of Egypt in ruins. The hail struck down every-

9:34 Hebrew *made his heart heavy*.

thing in the open field—people, animals, and plants alike. Even the trees were destroyed. <sup>26</sup>The only place without hail was the region of Goshen, where the people of Israel lived.

<sup>27</sup>Then Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron. “This time I have sinned,” he confessed. “The LORD is the righteous one, and my people and I are wrong. <sup>28</sup>Please beg the LORD to end this terrifying thunder and hail. We’ve had enough. I will let you go; you don’t need to stay any longer.”

<sup>29</sup>“All right,” Moses replied. “As soon as I leave the city, I will lift my hands and pray to the LORD. Then the thunder and hail will stop, and you will know that the earth belongs to the LORD. <sup>30</sup>But I know that you and your officials still do not fear the LORD God.”

<sup>31</sup>(All the flax and barley were ruined by the hail, because the barley had formed heads and the flax was budding. <sup>32</sup>But the wheat and the emmer wheat were spared, because they had not yet sprouted from the ground.)

<sup>33</sup>So Moses left Pharaoh’s court and went out of the city. When he lifted his hands to the LORD, the thunder and hail stopped, and the downpour ceased. <sup>34</sup>But when Pharaoh saw that the rain, hail, and thunder had stopped, he and his officials sinned again, and Pharaoh again became stubborn.\*

