

# The Israelites Flee Egypt and Receive the Law

## *Characters*

NAIN and ABIDA,  
Hebrew men  
ZILPAH and MILCAH,  
Hebrew women  
MOSES

AARON  
PHARAOH  
JETHRO

## *Scene I: Egyptian construction site, c. 1400-1200 B.C.*

- NAIN: Abida, I can't take this kind of life any longer.
- ABIDA: What do you mean? We have food, shelter, and jobs.
- NAIN: And stripes on our backs from the overseer's quick lash. Face the facts: we can never improve our lives here. Our Egyptian masters are never satisfied. We'll always be their slaves.
- ABIDA: Such is our fate, so accept it. Take pride in the great buildings we have made.
- NAIN: They are not ours, and I will not accept my fate. I have heard the stories our old men tell about our people . . . .
- ABIDA: Yes . . . I know them, too . . . how our people long ago left the land promised to Abraham.
- NAIN: The land flowing with milk and honey.
- ABIDA: But not in the days of Jacob. Famine gripped the land and his sons came here to Egypt.



- NAIN:** Why did they stay? Famines don't last forever.
- ABIDA:** I don't know. Maybe our ancestors became enchanted by the Egyptians' way of life: their majestic buildings, luxurious clothes and jewelry, great achievements in science and agriculture . . . .
- NAIN:** What? Our people live no better than stray dogs! When did we ever enjoy the fruits of Egyptian civilization?
- ABIDA:** Many, many years ago, when Jacob's son, Joseph, held a high position in Pharaoh's court. But as our people grew in number the pharaohs feared we'd one day take over. So they took our rights and privileges away.
- NAIN:** How could the Egyptians do that?
- ABIDA:** Simple. There were no laws to protect us.
- NAIN:** Look busy. Here comes the overseer with his whip.

***Scene II: A small dark hut in the Hebrew settlement.***

- ZILPAH:** Milcah, why do you look so troubled?
- MILCAH:** Oh, Zilpah . . . there is talk that the Egyptians are going to take our sons. What will they do to them?
- ZILPAH:** Do not believe every rumor . . . but many years ago they tried to kill every male Hebrew baby.

***Scene III: The Pharaoh's court.***

- PHARAOH:** Aides! Who are these presumptuous old men you have brought before me?
- AARON:** I am Aaron, and this is my brother.



- MOSES: The Lord God of Israel commands you to free His people!
- PHARAOH: What are you babbling about? Do you know whom you are addressing, old man?
- AARON: Obey, or Egypt will suffer greatly.
- PHARAOH: You two and your tribal god cannot threaten me! Guards, take them away at once! I'll show those complaining Hebrews who has power to command!

*Scene IV: Hebrew settlement,  
late in the day, days later.*

- ZILPAH: What is happening? Are we all doomed? Plague after plague . . . . Water turned to blood . . . frogs, gnats, flies, and locusts without number. Skin boils and hail . . . . Why?
- MILCAH: To move the Pharaoh's heart to release us from bondage. Remember, only the Egyptians have suffered.
- ZILPAH: But this is our home.
- (Enter NAIN and ABIDA.)*
- NAIN: No it is not!
- ABIDA: The nine plagues have not moved the Pharaoh.
- NAIN: One more comes: death.
- ABIDA: We have been instructed to place lamb's blood on the sides and tops of our doorways—
- NAIN: To guide the Angel of Death to pass over and spare our people.
- ABIDA: When Egyptian sons die, the Pharaoh will let us go.
- NAIN: But we must leave quickly. He might change his mind.



***Scene V: Near Mt. Horeb,  
many days later.***

- MOSES:** Aaron, my brother, I am weary. The people do nothing but complain.
- AARON:** They are impatient for the Promised Land.
- MOSES:** Who approaches our camp?
- JETHRO:** It is Jethro, your father-in-law. Moses, I have heard of your great accomplishments.
- MOSES:** Would that the people remember and appreciate them. Everyone wants my attention. I cannot solve every problem. The people are growing more and more restless. Worry and fatigue are overcoming me.
- JETHRO:** Moses, my son. Reduce your burden. Find honest and righteous men to handle problems as they arise. Concern yourself only with the biggest and lasting ones. Organize and delegate your authority.
- MOSES:** Jethro, thank you for this wise counsel. But such men and I need something to guide our judgments . . . a fair and just code the people will respect and accept. Something from our God.

***Scene VI: Israelites' camp  
near Mt. Sinai.***

- ZILPAH:** Why do we remain camped here?
- MILCAH:** Moses and Aaron have climbed Mt. Sinai for a revelation.
- ZILPAH:** A revelation? Of what?
- MILCAH:** I'm not certain. But the talk in the camp says it's very important. It will determine who we are as a people.

*(Enter NAIN and ABIDA.)*



- NAIN:** Moses and Aaron have returned.
- ABIDA:** They have brought from the Most High, the Law.
- NAIN:** Ten basic commandments.
- MILCAH:** What do they say?
- NAIN:** Four of them concern our relationship with our God.
- ABIDA:** The other six tell us how we are to treat each other as people.
- NAIN:** As people . . . all who are equal before the Law.
- ABIDA:** The Ten Commandments are truly from the Most High. They are so clear, direct, and beautiful.
- NAIN:** If we follow and obey them, we will be a blessed people.
- ZILPAH:** The Egyptians have their pyramids. I hope and pray these commandments shall be our treasure forevermore.

