



Moses is the central figure of the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. While these books, along with Genesis, are often ascribed to his authorship, the evidence really suggests these books were composed during the Babylonian exile.

Moses' life may have occurred anywhere from 1500 to 1300 BCE, and the Babylonian Exile occurred during the 500's BCE. Regardless of authorship, these stories are central to the people of Israel and their understanding of their relationship with the God named Yahweh.

We explore Moses' life today, because Deuteronomy 18 is our first reading this week. In this passage, Moses is preparing the people for a future prophet to be like him who the LORD will raise up to lead over the people of Israel. The Gospel lesson demonstrates Jesus teaching with a new authority, which many Christian theologians link to this prophecy by Moses, that is to say Jesus is the fulfillment of Moses' ancient Prophecy.

Moses was born at a time when the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. The Pharaoh had just issued a new order to have all Israelite baby boys killed. But Moses' mother found a way to protect her newborn son. The story of the basket, and the princess finding the basket, are very well known.

Read Exodus 2:1-10. Why did the princess name the boy she found Moses?



After growing up as an adopted child of the Pharaoh, a young adult Moses began seeing his people and the abuse they were suffering. Moses lashed out in anger at an Egyptian soldier for beating an Israelite, killing the soldier. Ashamed of his actions, Moses fled to Midian. There he met Jethro, a shepherd. Jethro took Moses under his wings and mentored him and even gave his daughter in marriage to Moses.

One day, while tending his flocks, Moses came across a strange sight. The story of the burning bush that was not consumed by the flames is well known. Here Moses learns God's name; here God sends Moses back to Egypt to free the Israelites.

Read Exodus 3:13-22. What is the divine name God reveals to Moses? _____

Moses returns to Egypt. With Aaron, his brother, at his side, Moses speaks to Pharaoh. Moses requests the Pharaoh allow the people go to worship their God, and the Pharaoh denies this request. We have heard of the Ten Plagues, but do we remember what they all are? Read Exodus 7:14-25; 8:1-15; 8:16-19; 8:20-32; 9:1-7; 9:8-12; 9:13-35; 10:1-20; 10:21-29; 11:1-12:32.

What are the plagues God sends into Egypt? _____





This is a picture of St. Catherine's Monastery at the base of the traditional location of Mt. Sinai. Though the actual site is unknown, and many mountains across the Sinai Peninsula compete for recognition as *The Mt. Sinai*, we can only guess today where Moses stood. It may well have been this mountain peak in this picture.

On top of Mt. Sinai, Moses received the Law. We typically know the Ten Commandments as the Law Moses received. But on the mountaintop, Moses received so much more. The Ten Commandments are recorded in both Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21.

An equally famous part of this story is the worship of the Golden Calf, which takes place in Exodus 32. Take a moment to skim Exodus 20 through 31. What are some other laws the God gives to Moses, before the Golden Calf incident takes place? _____

The Israelites leave Mt. Sinai with a Tabernacle being the place where God resides in their midst. They head toward the Promised Land, but spies sent into survey their new home return home scared of giants in the land. Moses condemns the traveling nation to 40 years of homelessness until a new generation is raised up and ready to occupy the land God has promised them.



After the nation completes this era and rests on the banks of the Jordan, Moses gives his farewell speech, names blessings and curses for the nation, and passes the mantle of leadership to his assistant. Moses then climbs up Mt. Nebo, is given a chance to see the land he is not able to enter, and he dies there.

Read Deuteronomy 31:1-8. How old is Moses as he passes leadership on to his successor? _____

What is the name of the new leader of Israel? _____

What blessing does Moses give to his successor? _____

Speculation time: Moses dies on Mt. Nebo. Deuteronomy 34:6 tells us he was buried in the valley of Moab, but no one knows his burial place to this day. Why is Moses burial place so unimportant that no one bothered to mark it for future generations? (this is pure speculation, there is no right answer, this is just your chance to wonder) _____