

## Week One: Slavery in Egypt Teacher Information

### Exodus 1:6-14,22; Exodus 2:1-10

#### Additional Resources

1. **New Church Vineyard online magazine ([www.newchurchvineyard.org](http://www.newchurchvineyard.org))**
  - For materials on Joseph and how the Israelites came to be in Egypt, see the issue called "God Meant It for Good" at <http://www.newchurch.org/resources/vineyard/2004may>
2. ***Bible Study Notes, Volume Two* by Anita S. Dole**, pp. 1-14 (Moses' birth) and 31-32 (Slavery). This may be available in your church or school library or can be purchased through the General Church Book Store. Visit <http://store.newchurch.org/home.php> or call (USA) 267-502-4980.
3. ***Bible Stories and Their Inner Meaning: A Family Study Guide* by W. L. Worcester (the "Sower Notes")**. These may be available in your church or school library. They are also available online at [www.swedenborgdigitallibrary.org](http://www.swedenborgdigitallibrary.org). Lesson 34 discusses the birth and rescue of Moses. Lesson 36 talks about the Israelites slavery.

#### Background Information for Teachers

The book of Genesis—whose name means beginnings—ends with the death of Joseph. Up to this point, living in Egypt had been pleasant and good for the children of Israel. The enslavement happened probably about 200 years after Joseph died, when the memory of him was gone. The name Exodus means going out, so the book of Exodus is the story of the Israelites going out of Egypt and journeying to the promised land.

People go to Egypt throughout the Word—Abraham did, so did Jesus. Being in Egypt represents a state of learning, of preparation for a life of useful service. Egypt is an orderly state in childhood especially since it is a preparation for the uses of life.

Egypt, which symbolizes natural knowledge in the Word, was a good home for the children of Israel for many years. So too as long as worldly knowledge serves spiritual life it is good. When Joseph who represented the Lord was ruler in Egypt, it was a good home for Israel. But when such interests are made the most important—in the first place, like a king or pharaoh—then we become enslaved.

When we read about Moses, we are reading about the Divine law, the commandments and the Word. If we obey these, they can break the power of habit, hold off evil spirits, and eventually take away our desire to do wrong. Our knowledge of the Word can lead us back toward the promised land when we become lost. The Lord raises it into our conscious memory when we are in need.

The ark into which Moses was put reminds us of the protection of the Lord's Word by the external literal meaning which is made up of simple truths and is accommodated to the natural state of human beings.

The Writings of the New Church tell us that Moses took the first eleven chapters of Genesis from the Ancient Word. There was a knowledge of some of the Ancient Word in Egypt—particularly correspondences. This knowledge had been perverted to serve selfish ends—which is why some of the Egyptians were able to turn their staffs into snakes as well.

## **Quotations from the Writings on Slavery and Freedom**

To be led by the Lord is true freedom (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5660).

Being self-led is slavery, while being led by the Lord is freedom (*Arcana Coelestia* 892).

It is slavery when evil desires and falsities predominate. It is freedom when affections for good and truth predominate (see *Arcana Coelestia* 892).

Any freedom coming from the Lord is real freedom; but any that comes from hell and makes itself at home with a person is slavery (*True Christian Religion* 495).

To do evil from freedom, appears as freedom, but it is slavery, because that freedom is from the love of self and from the love of the world, and these loves are from hell. Such freedom is actually turned into slavery after death.... But to do good from freedom is freedom itself, because it is from love to the Lord and from love towards the neighbor, and these loves are from heaven. This freedom also remains after death, and then becomes freedom indeed... (*New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 142).

The understanding and will of people ought not to be in the least compelled by another, since all compulsion by another takes away freedom, but one ought to compel oneself; for to compel oneself is to act from freedom (*Apocalypse Explained* 1136).

It is of the Divine Omnipotence to protect people from the hells, so far as it can be done without injury to their freedom and reason (*Apocalypse Explained* 689).

The Lord guards freedom in a person as a person does the pupil of his eye. The Lord continually withdraws a person from evils by means of his freedom; and as far as He can withdraw him by means of freedom He implants by means of freedom what is good. Thus in the place of infernal freedom the Lord gradually endows a person with heavenly freedom (*Divine Providence* 97).

The Lord will rescue those who are willing to be led by Him by means of the Word. That the Word is holy and Divine from inmost to outmost, is not evident to the person who leads himself, but to the person whom the Lord leads. For the person who leads himself sees only the external of the Word, and judges it from its style, but the person whom the Lord leads judges the external of the Word from the holiness which is in it (*Apocalypse Explained* 1072).