

# The Red Sea

Exodus 13:17-14:31

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Pharaoh let the people go. The shortest road from Goshen to Canaan went through the Philistine country. But God didn't lead them that way. God said, "If they have to go into battle, they might change their minds. They might return to Egypt."

So God led the people toward the Red Sea by taking them on a road through the desert. The Israelites were prepared for battle when they went up out of Egypt.

Moses took the bones of Joseph along with him. Joseph had made the sons of Israel take an oath and make a promise. He had said, "I'm sure that God will come to help you. When he does, you must carry my bones up from this place with you."—(Genesis 50:25)



The people left Succoth. They camped at Etham on the edge of the desert.

By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud. It guided them on their way. At night he led them with a pillar of fire. It gave them light. So they could travel by day or at night. The pillar of cloud didn't leave its place in front of the people during the day. And the pillar of fire didn't leave its place at night.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses. He said, "Tell the people of Israel to turn back. Have them camp near Pi Hahiroth between Migdol and the Red Sea. They must camp by the sea, right across from Baal Zephon. Pharaoh will think, 'The people of Israel are wandering around the land. They don't know which way to go. The desert is all around them.'

"I will make Pharaoh's heart stubborn. He will chase them. But I will gain glory for myself because of what will happen to Pharaoh and his whole army. And the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord." So the Israelites camped by the Red Sea.

The king of Egypt was told that the people had gotten away. Then Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them. They said, "What have we done? We've let the people of Israel go! We've lost our slaves and all of the work they used to do for us!"

So he had his chariot made ready. He took his army with him. He took 600 of the best chariots in Egypt. He also took along all of the other chariots. Officers were in charge of all of them.

The Lord made the heart of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, stubborn. So he chased the Israelites, who were marching out boldly. The Egyptians went after the Israelites. All of Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen and troops went after them. They caught up with them as they camped by the sea. The Israelites were near Pi Hahiroth, across from Baal Zephon.

As Pharaoh approached, the people of Israel looked up. There were the Egyptians marching after them! The Israelites were terrified. They cried out to the Lord.

They said to Moses, "Why did you bring us to the desert to die? Weren't there any graves in Egypt? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? We told you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone. Let us serve the Egyptians.' It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die here in the desert!"

Moses answered the people. He said, "Don't be afraid. Stand firm. You will see how the Lord will save you today. Do you see those Egyptians? You will never see them again. The Lord will fight for you. Just be still."

Then the Lord spoke to Moses. He said, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people of Israel to move on. Hold your wooden staff out. Reach your hand out over the Red Sea to part the water. Then the people can go through the sea on dry ground."

"I will make the hearts of the Egyptians stubborn. They will go in after the Israelites. I will gain glory for myself because of what will happen to Pharaoh, his whole army, his chariots and his horsemen."

"The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord. I will gain glory because of what will happen to all of them."

The angel of God had been traveling in front of Israel's army. Now he moved back and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved away from in front of them. Now it stood behind them. It came between the armies of Egypt and Israel. All through the night the cloud brought darkness to one side and light to the other. Neither army went near the other all night long.



Then Moses reached his hand out over the Red Sea. All that night the Lord pushed the sea back with a strong east wind. He turned the sea into dry land. The waters were parted. The people of Israel went through the sea on dry ground. There was a wall of water on their right side and on their left.

The Egyptians chased them. All of Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.

Near the end of the night the Lord looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud. He saw the Egyptian army and threw it into a panic. He kept their chariot wheels from turning freely. That made the chariots hard to drive.

The Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The Lord is fighting for Israel against Egypt."

Then the Lord spoke to Moses. He said, "Reach your hand out over the sea. The waters will flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen." So Moses reached his hand out over the sea. At sunrise the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians tried to run away from the sea. But the Lord swept them into it. The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen. It covered the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the people of Israel into the sea. Not one of the Egyptians was left.

But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground. There was a wall of water on their right side and on their left. That day the Lord saved Israel from the power of Egypt. Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. The Israelites saw the great power the Lord showed against the Egyptians. So they had respect for the Lord. They put their trust in him and in his servant Moses.

