

A Bible Adventure

Edition 06

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Walking Through the Sea

A dramatized retelling of Exodus 12 to 15

Pharaoh had finally given his consent, saying to Moses, “Go! Leave my people. You and the Israelites—go and worship the Lord as you requested.”

Moses’ early training in Pharaoh’s royal palace had now become useful. Part of his education and training as a prince would have been in the skill of handling and organizing large numbers of people. Working through the leadership structure of the Israelites, Moses soon had the crowd forming lines and moving along the route he planned to take them. Gradually, a long procession

took shape as the Hebrews started out for Canaan.

It had taken many hours to prepare to travel, for there were 600,000 men—not counting women and children.

Fifteen-year-old Jemima and her family also brought their goats and the rest of their livestock, as did many other families who were joining the procession. The Hebrews had lived in Egypt for 430 years, and now God was leading them out. He went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night so that they could travel

continuously. At last they were free from the wicked Pharaoh and were heading for the Promised Land.

They had all expected to go straight to Canaan, a journey that would have taken them only a few days. But when they reached a little place called Etham, less than 250 kilometers from the border of Canaan, orders came from Moses that they were to turn south and go through the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea.

Everybody was surprised, and even Jemima knew enough to exclaim, “This isn’t the way to Canaan!”

But God had a purpose in leading His people this way. Had they gone directly to Canaan, they would have had to pass through the land of the Philistines, who would have fought them. God knew that if His people—just out of slavery—should encounter war too soon, they would lose heart and return to Egypt.

See “The Plagues of Egypt” for the first part of the story of Moses and the children of Israel.

On they went—in what seemed like the wrong direction.

Jemima and her family watched the pillar of cloud all that day to see whether it would turn and go where they thought it should. Instead, it slowly came to a place on the shores of the Red Sea. Here Moses told the people to pitch camp for the night and rest, just as the Lord had instructed him to do.

Suddenly, a man sounded a cry of alarm and pointed back to the way they had just come. In the midst of a distant cloud of dust were advancing horsemen, chariots! The *Egyptians!*

Back in Egypt, when Pharaoh and his counsellors realized that they could no longer count on the Hebrew people as part of their workforce, they became angry.

“What have we done?” they said. “Let us get them back!” So Pharaoh readied his army for war.

When the Hebrews saw the chariots approaching, they realized they were trapped by the Red Sea on one side and the pursuing Egyptians on the other.

Terrified, they cried to the Lord, and began to complain to Moses, “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? It would be better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!”

“Fear not!” Moses cried to the people. “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you today. The Egyptians that

you have seen today, you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.”

Just as Moses was speaking, the pillar of cloud shifted mysteriously toward the onrushing Egyptians and became a barrier between them and the Hebrews. As night fell, the cloud brought dense darkness to the Egyptians while shedding a comforting glow upon the camp of Israel. The entire night, Pharaoh’s host was prevented from coming near.

Moses, left alone, knelt in prayer, and God said, “Speak to the children of Israel so that they will go forward.”

But forward to where? There was only one way forward—across the Red Sea!

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night, God drove the sea back with a strong east wind and the waters were divided. A wall of water stood on the right hand and on the left hand, and the opened seabed between had turned into dry land.

“Forward!” shouted Moses.

“Forward!” shouted the leaders of Israel, passing on the word of command. “Forward! Everybody forward!”

God hadn’t failed! The way of escape had come, and soon Jemima and her family were walking along that miraculously dry seabed along with thousands of people with oxen, cows, donkeys, goats, and sheep, moving as quickly as their feet could carry them.

As the Israelites made their way across the sea, Pharaoh's horsemen and chariots pursued them, also going into the sea on dry ground. But God threw the Egyptian host into confusion by clogging and removing their chariot wheels, so that they were slowed down, insomuch that the Egyptians cried, "Let's flee from the face of Israel. The Lord fights for them!"

Then God said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen."

Moses obeyed and the sea returned to its place and the waters swept over Pharaoh and his army. Not one of them survived!

When Israel saw the great power God had displayed,

the people feared God and trusted Him and His servant, Moses.

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord:

I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously:

The horse and his rider He has thrown into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and song, and has become my salvation:

He is my God, and I will prepare Him a habitation;

My father's God, and I will exalt Him.

The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is His name.

The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake,

I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them;

I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

You did blow with your wind and the sea covered them:

They sank as lead in the mighty waters.¹

God Himself had intervened to fight for His children and gain them a magnificent victory!

Just imagine what would have happened if Moses, God's anointed leader, had despaired of hope when his people began to complain against him and falsely accuse him.

What if, instead of raising his rod over the sea in obedience to God's command, he had chosen to turn back because of his own people's desires of the moment and also in fear of the oncoming enemy forces? It would have been a completely different story with disastrous consequences.

However, Moses put his trust in God, and God did not fail him.

A true man of God knows what he believes and acts upon it, no matter what others say. What he must do—not what people think, is all that concerns him. You cannot stop the man of faith.

Footnote:

¹ Exodus 15:1-3, 9-10 NIV

See "Heroes of the Bible: Moses" for more on this fascinating Bible character.

S&S link: Christian Life and Faith: Biblical and Christian Foundation: Faith-2f

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