Church of God
Sunday School

ISRAEL CROSSES THE RED SEA

Exodus 13:17 — 15:21

At midnight, on the appointed day, the tenth and last plague came: the *death of all the firstborn* in the land of Egypt. A great cry of sorrow was heard throughout the land. Even Pharaoh's own son was not spared. "There was not a house [in Egypt] where there was not one dead" (Exodus 12:30). Only the Israelites who had sprinkled the blood of the lamb on their doorposts, obeying the word of the Lord, escaped death.

As God had promised, after this plague Pharaoh finally let the children of Israel go. He said to Moses and Aaron, "Go, serve the LORD, as ye have said" (Exodus 12:31). So, the great multitude of Israelites (and some who were not Israelites) left Egypt. During the day, God led them "in a pillar of a cloud." Then, at night He led them "in a pillar of fire."

After the Israelites were gone, Pharaoh and his servants said, "Why have we . . . let Israel go from serving us?" Pharaoh's heart was again hardened, and he decided to bring back the Israelites. Pharaoh and his large army, horses, and chariots chased after the Israelites.

When the Israelites saw Pharaoh's army coming up behind them, they became afraid and cried out to God. They told Moses it would have been better for them to have stayed in Egypt as slaves than to die in the wilderness. Moses said to the people: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD . . . for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

God told Moses to tell the people to go forward, regardless of the dangers ahead. Moses was told to lift his rod and stretch his hand over the sea. The water would divide. The people would be able to walk through the sea on dry ground!

The pillar of cloud that led the Israelites moved behind them and stood between them and Pharaoh's army. The cloud was "darkness" to the Egyptians, but it gave "light by night" to the Israelites. The Egyptians could not come near the Israelites all night!

When Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, God sent a strong east wind that blew all night. It divided the waters and dried the ground. The Israelites saw the water as two walls: one on the right and one on the left.

The Bible says that "six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside [women and] children" left Egypt (Exodus 12:37). That number did not include the mixed multitude of people who left with the Israelites. And think of all the flocks and herds besides. They were not counted. So, we do not know exactly how many people and animals there were that crossed the Red Sea!

Pharaoh and his army followed the Israelites into the sea using the same path God had made for the Israelites. But "in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of Egyptians." God saw what they were trying to do, and He began to trouble them. The Lord caused their chariot wheels to fall off. They were in the sea and could

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not drive their chariots. They were scared!

Then the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians." But it was too late to turn around and flee! At God's command, Moses stretched forth his hand again, and the water closed in upon all the Egyptians and all their horses. They were all drowned. Not one remained!

"Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians." When the Israelites saw Pharaoh's army lying dead upon the seashore, they feared and believed the Lord and His servant, Moses.

The people were so thankful to God, they sang a song of praise to Him: "I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously." God had kept His promise to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. This wonderful, true story would be told from one generation to the next: "With a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt" (Exodus 13:9).

MEMORY VERSE:

"Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD . . . ." —*Exodus 14:13*

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