

Bi121 Old Testament

Lesson Bi121- 22 Crossing the Sea (Ex 13-15)

For centuries only a select few people could read or write. History was mostly passed down through stories, poems, and songs shared by fathers to their children and then on to grandchildren. Every year at Passover time Israelite families sacrifice a male lamb. They then recount to their children the story of the supernatural deliverance from slavery in Egypt. It was a demonstration of God's power to Israel—a story they would never forget and is still told by Jewish people today.

Moses told the people, "Each year commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of slavery, because the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand. For seven days eat no bread with yeast. Tell your children, 'We do this because of what the Lord did for us, bringing us out of Egypt.'" Because God had spared every firstborn among the Israelites that night, whether man or animal, all the firstborn belonged to Him. They had to be redeemed by sacrifice and consecrated to the Lord. Many centuries later, even Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to be consecrated, in accordance with this law (Lk 2:22-24).

God led the Israelites on their journey using a pillar of fire at night and a pillar of cloud by day. These were visible symbols of God's presence among His people. God didn't lead them east along the most direct route to Canaan, but took them south into the wilderness toward the Red Sea. As they left, Moses took with them the bones of Joseph to bury in the Promised Land.

The fighting men went armed for battle, but the victory would be won by God alone. He told Moses to have the people camp at a certain location next to the sea. He said, "I'm going to make Pharaoh stubborn one more time, and he will chase after you. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord."

Pharaoh saw that the Hebrews had gone to the Red Sea, and were hemmed in and vulnerable. He said to his officials, "Why did we let our slaves go? They should be here, serving us." So he took his army—600 of the best chariots as well as many other chariots and troops—and chased after them.

The Israelites saw the chariots coming and cried to Moses. "Why have you brought us here to die? Didn't we say, 'Leave us alone to serve the Egyptians?' It would have been better to serve the Egyptians, than to die in this desert."

Moses told the people "Do not be afraid! Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you. The Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you. You need only to be still."

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites to move on. Lift your staff and stretch your hand out over the sea to divide the water, so that the Israelites can go through it on dry ground." Then the pillar of cloud that was in front of the Israelites moved behind them—

between them and the Egyptian armies. It stayed there the rest of the day and all night. The cloud brought darkness to the Egyptians, but light to the Israelites.

Moses stretched his hand over the sea and God drove the sea back with a strong east wind. The waters were divided and formed a wall on the right side and on the left. And the wind blew on the path between the two walls until the land between became dry. So Moses and the Israelites crossed over the sea on dry ground throughout the night.

Once they were all across, God allowed the Egyptians to chase after them, using the same path. When the troops were in the middle of the sea, God caused them to be totally confused, and their chariot wheels started to come off. The Egyptian army saw the seriousness of their situation. They shouted, "Run! The Lord is fighting for the Israelites!"

As the Egyptians turned to run to safety, God said to Moses, "Stretch your hand out over the water." So Moses stretched his hand toward the sea just as the sun was about to come up. Suddenly the walls of water crashed together, covering the entire Egyptian army, their chariots, and horsemen. Not one of them survived. The Israelites watched the power of God from the other side of the sea. And as the sun rose higher that morning, they saw the dead bodies washing up on the shore.

When Israel saw the Lord's great power displayed against the Egyptian forces, the people put their trust in God and in His servant Moses. They worshiped the Lord with singing, led by Moses and by the prophetess Miriam, his sister. She and the other women played their tambourines and danced, chanting, "Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him."

This story is **important** because it demonstrates God's power to deliver his people from bondage and imminent death. In the same way, He fulfills His promises to us today; nothing can stand against His plans for His children.

The main **truth** of this story is God has the power to keep His promises and to deliver His children from bondage and danger.

To **review** this lesson, answer these questions.

1. What did Moses tell the people of Israel when they feared being killed by the Egyptians?
 - A. [Pause]. If you said, "Don't be afraid! Stand firm and see the deliverance of the Lord," you are correct.
2. What happened when the Egyptian army tried to follow the people?
 - A. [Pause]. If you said, "Suddenly the walls of water crashed together, covering the entire Egyptian army. Not one of them survived," you are correct.
3. What was the response of the people towards Moses?
 - A. [Pause]. If you said, "they believed in God's servant Moses," you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to the story at least three times. As you hear the story each time, imagine how it happened; see the events in your mind. Then tell the story in your own words as you remember it. Then listen to the story again and retell it until you feel sure you are repeating the circumstances and actions correctly. You should spend at least 45 minutes in learning the story. You may need to have someone check that you are telling the story correctly.

Memorize the first few lines of the song Moses and Miriam sang in celebration of the Lord's defeat of the Egyptian army. From Exodus 15:1-21 this song of victory begins with:

“Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted.
The horse and its rider, he has hurled into the sea.
The Lord is my strength and my song;
He has become my salvation.”