



# God Leads the People Out of Egypt

Exodus 13:17 - 14:31



God led the Israelites to a place where they had no choice other than to depend on His power. That is right where God wants His people! Pharaoh foolishly fought the plan of God again, and it would be the last thing he would ever do.

## Day #1: God's Heart

It took ten horrible plagues for Pharaoh to finally let the Israelites leave Egypt. Pharaoh even had to lose his own son before he would listen to God's instructions.

Did God need Pharaoh's permission to remove His people from Egypt? Of course not. God could have done anything He wanted to Pharaoh. In fact, God told Moses to send that exact message to Pharaoh:

**+** *For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth.* - Exodus 9:15 (NIV)

If God had done that, the Israelites would certainly have been free from their slavery. It would have been quicker and easier for God to do it that way. So why did God choose to send the plagues as He did? Why did God come back to Pharaoh time and time again? Because God is full of mercy and grace and He wants each and every person to turn away from their sins and believe in Him.

*The Lord is not slow to keep His promise. He is not slow in the way some people understand it. He is patient with you. **He doesn't want anyone to be destroyed. Instead, He wants all people to turn away from their sins.*** - 2 Peter 3:9

God foretold what He was going to do, and He did wonders so amazing that there was no other explanation other than the hand of God (Exodus 8:19). God wanted His own people, the Israelites, to see His power and might so they would be strong and believe in Him even when things were difficult (Deuteronomy 20:1). God wanted the Egyptians, who worshipped many false gods, to know that He is the one true God (Exodus 7:5). Their false gods could do nothing for them! (Jeremiah 16:19) God knew the Egyptians could never be truly satisfied and could never have eternal life until they believed in Him. And God wanted His name to be known throughout the world so that everyone who heard about Him would believe in Him (Exodus 9:16).

**\*** Do not miss the heart of God in all of the wonders He performed. God wants all people to know Him for two reasons. For one, God fully deserves all praise from all people (Luke 19:37-40). And the other reason that no matter what we try to fill our life with, we will never have **true life** without God at the very center (John 6:33).

## Day #2: Leaving Egypt

The Israelites were finally released from Egypt. God was going to lead His people to the land of Canaan. This was the land God had promised to give to Abraham's descendants. In Genesis 17:8 (NIV), God told Abraham, "*The whole land of Canaan...I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you.*"

God gave specific instructions to Moses about leading the Israelites. It was very important that Moses followed God's directions. God did not lead His people on the shortest route, because that was where the Philistines lived. God knew the Israelites would be afraid of the Philistines (Exodus 13:17-18).

This was an amazing and exciting time for the Israelites, for God had taken them out of their slavery. But it was also an incredibly scary time, as they faced the unknown out in the desert. Would there be water to drink? Would there be enemies to face or wild animals to fend off? Would they get lost in the darkness? As the huge crowd of probably over three million people traveled, God led them in a miraculous way.

**+** *By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.* - Exodus 13:21-22 (NIV)

This was God's fulfillment of His promise to Moses. Remember when God spoke to Moses from the burning bush. God told Moses he was chosen to lead the Israelites out of their slavery, but Moses did not feel he was capable of such a big job. God promised Moses, "**I will be with you.**" (Exodus 3:12) God ALWAYS keeps His promises.

**\*** Discuss times when it is hard to follow God's instructions. What are some of the fears you have when you follow God? God appeared in front of the Israelites so they could see Him day and night. Remember, God promises to be with His people **always** (Matthew 28:20). God has given us His Word, the Bible, that we can look to day and night to be reassured of His presence and His promises.

## Day #3: Helpless

God told Moses to lead the Israelites to camp at a place called Pi Hahiroth near the Red Sea. God told Moses that once again He would harden Pharaoh's heart about the Israelites. Notice the two things God said would happen because of Pharaoh's stubbornness.

**+** *"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.* - Exodus 14:4

Of course, it happened just as God said it would. Pharaoh led his army to chase after the Israelites.


*The king of Egypt was told that the people had gotten away. Then Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them. They said,*

### Day #3 continued:

*"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. - Exodus 14:5-7*


Pharaoh's army caught up with the Israelites where they were camped by the sea. When the Israelites saw Pharaoh and his army, they were terrified! They cried out to God, and even told Moses it would have been better if they had stayed slaves in Egypt than for them to die in the desert (Exodus 14:12). The Israelites were scared and blamed Moses for being trapped. They felt helpless to protect themselves. But, remember, God led them to this exact spot! God knew Pharaoh would chase them, and He knew His people would be trapped. God was about to show the entire world **His amazing power!**

Consider this: If the Israelite army had been the strongest in the land, and they could easily defeat Pharaoh and his army, they would not have needed God's help. And God would not have received the glory for delivering His people.

 In 2 Corinthians 12:9, the Lord says, "My grace is all you need. **My power is strongest when you are weak.**" When difficulty comes your way and you feel weak and helpless, be glad. It is in that moment God can show Himself the strongest.

## Day #4: Stepping into Faith

With the sea before them and Pharaoh and his army behind them, it would take a miracle for the Israelites to escape. And a miracle was on its way! Moses reassured the Israelites.

 *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.**" - Exodus 14:13-14*

It would certainly be hard to be still in this situation! But the Israelites had seen God's power displayed in Egypt. God had brought them this far and they had to have faith He would rescue them again. God told Moses to raise his staff and stretch out his hand over the sea. He said the water would divide so they could walk through the sea on dry ground! God also told Moses that He would harden the hearts of the Egyptian army so they would follow after the Israelites.

Then God moved the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire between the Israelites and the Egyptian army. The cloud made darkness for the Egyptians while the fire lit the night for the Israelites. Neither group went near the other all night. Read what amazing thing happened next:


*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. - Exodus 14:21-22*

What a miracle this was! Can you imagine what it must have been like to walk across the sand with a wall of water on each side? The wind was blowing and the sea was roaring. Would those near the water wall dare to touch it? Do you think they could see huge fish swimming inside?

Once again, God's people were in a time of extreme excitement mixed with the fear of the unknown. This was unlike anything anyone had ever seen before! Hebrews 11:29 tells us, "By **faith** the people

### Day #4 continued:


passed through the Red Sea as on dry land." They had to **trust** God's provision and **actually step** into the pathway He created. Just standing and watching would not have saved anyone! Tomorrow we will look at how God took care of Pharaoh once and for all.

 Because the Israelites had **faith** to walk into God's provision, they were saved from Pharaoh's army. Faith is being sure of something, even when we cannot see it (Hebrews 11:1). The Israelites had faith that God would keep the sea parted until they were safely on the other side.

Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." It is **by faith** that we believe in God's provision for us - the blood of His Son Jesus. Only this **faith** makes us right with God (Romans 5:1, Romans 3:25).

## Day #5: Pharaoh, No More

Once the Israelites moved through the sea on the dry path God had provided, Pharaoh and His army went in after them. This included all the horses and over 600 chariots. If the chariots rode five across, with only 10 feet between the back of one and the front of the next, the line of chariots would have been over a half mile long. The whole army probably spanned one to two miles in length. This was a fierce army, but not a match for God Almighty!


 *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.** - Exodus 14:23-28*

Notice that even the hard-hearted army realized it was God who was fighting for the Israelites. With their own mouths, they confessed the power of God. This fulfilled God's promise in Exodus 14:4, "But I will gain glory for Myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord." The last words of the Egyptian army were words declaring their fear of the Lord. And who was left of the Egyptian army? No one. This included Pharaoh who led the march (Exodus 14:6).

From the first time God called Moses to speak to Pharaoh, God claimed He would make Himself known through the judgment He would pour out on Egypt. He made a name for Himself that remains to this day (Nehemiah 9:10).

*But He saved (the Israelites) for the honor of his name. He did it to make his mighty power known. - Psalm 106:8*

 Proverbs 9:10 tells us, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Proper respect and reverence for the power of God leads us to wise decisions. This fear and respect came too late for the Egyptians. How can you show your respect for God daily? (Read His Word, listen to His teachings, memorize His Word, do not take His name in vain.)