

EXODUS

A DIVINE EXIT

God Protects His Children

Exodus 13:17-15

Do you trust that God is able to protect you? Let me put it another way, when life gets difficult and full of obstacles where do you turn? This morning we dive into a well-known passage of Scripture, the parting of the red sea wherein we see God's power over the created realm as He glorifies Himself and protects His children. Leading up to this amazing miracle, however, is a faithless nation that kept looking back at their Egyptian bondage as a picture of safety and comfort instead of looking forward to God's promise, power and provision.

GOD PROTECTS BY LEADING HIS CHILDREN 13:17-22

- **His Word:** *Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.* Ps. 119:105
- **Indwelling Spirit:** *By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us...* 2 Tim. 1:14
- **Godly Counsel:** Success, Safety & Victory Pr. 11:14, 15:22, 24:6

GOD PROTECTS TO GLORIFY HIMSELF 14:1-9

- The Rocky Effect
- Chess Master
- The Cross & Resurrection

GOD PROTECTS BECAUSE HE IS FAITHFUL 14:10-14

The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself. 2 Timothy 2:11–13

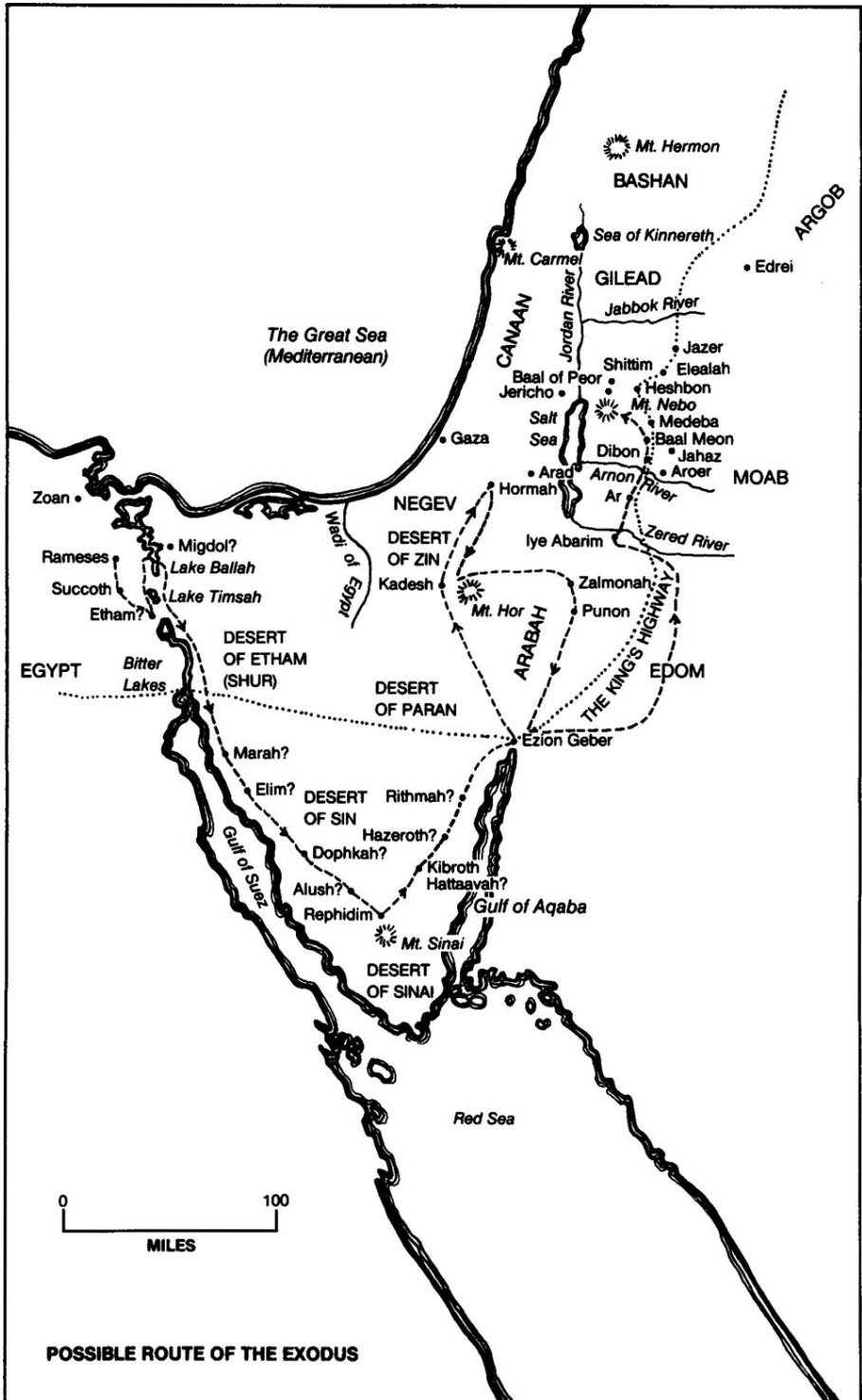
The Israelites whine and longed for Egyptian bondage even saying, “For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” They should have trusted God and longed for His promised land. Like the Israelites we too are also always at a crossroads to some degree in our lives. Will we allow the trials of this present life to turn our attention to what might have been or what once was, or will we rightly allow our present struggles to make us more fully long and yearn for our eternal home?

**BIG
IDEA**

**IT REALLY ISN'T BETTER BACK
IN “EGYPT”**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Share one thing you learned or that made an impact on you from the text this morning**
- 2. In what areas are you trusting in God's protection?**
- 3. Who are some of God's messengers in your life?**
- 4. What are some of the areas in your life that you are tempted to long for or return to when life is difficult?**



POSSIBLE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS

Notes on Passage
Bible Knowledge Commentary

13:17–22. The shortest route to the land of Caanan was **through the** territory of the Philistines in the direction of Beersheba and the Negeb. It led along the Mediterranean Sea, the military road of the Egyptians. But the route chosen by **God** was southeastward toward the Sinai to avoid possible military confrontations with Egyptian guards who might encourage the people to **return to Egypt**. The exact location of the desert road is uncertain but it probably led to the Bitter Lakes (see the map “Possible Route of the Exodus,” near Num. 33:1–5). **Armed for battle** probably means organized for march rather than equipped with armor, bows, and arrows for warfare.

Moses had heard of Joseph’s request that his **bones** be taken from Egypt (cf. Gen. 50:25), so he honored that request. Later Joseph’s bones were buried at Shechem (Josh. 24:32). Stephen indicated that the remains of other sons of Jacob were taken there also (Acts 7:15–16; see comments there).

After some time at **Succoth** the Israelites journeyed to **Etham** (see the map “Possible Route of the Exodus,” near Num. 33:1–5). Supernaturally guided by a **pillar of cloud** in the daytime, which became a **pillar of fire** at **night**, the Israelites apparently traveled some distance every day. Besides guiding them, the cloud, symbolizing God’s presence, assured them of His goodness and faithfulness. (There was one cloud, not two; cf. Ex. 14:24.) The people were brought to **the edge of the desert** (cf. Num. 33:6).

2. THE CROSSING OF THE RED (REED) SEA (CHAP. 14)

a. *The encampment by the Red (Reed) Sea (14:1–4)*

14:1–4. After the Israelites had traveled for some days in a southeasterly path and camped awhile at Etham, **the LORD** told **Moses** to **tell** the people **to turn back** to **Pi Hahiroth between Migdol and the sea** and **opposite Baal Zephon** (cf. Num. 33:7). These cities were east of Rameses. This change in direction would have led **Pharaoh** to **think the Israelites** were confused. As a result of God’s hardening of his **heart** (cf. comments on Ex. 4:21) Pharaoh would attempt to enslave the people again and then God would demonstrate His awesome power through another great judgment.

The sea is called the Red Sea in 10:19; 13:18; 15:4, 22. “Red Sea” (*yām sūp*) is literally, “Sea of [Papyrus] Reeds.” Several reasons indicate that this is farther north than the northern tip of the Gulf of Suez (the northwestern “finger” of the Red Sea between Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula): (1) The Gulf of Suez has no reeds. (2) The northern tip of the Gulf of Suez is much farther south than Pi Hahiroth and Migdol. (3) The area where the Israelites camped was marshy but this is not true of the land west of the Gulf of Suez. (4) From “the sea” the Israelites went east or southeast into the Desert of Shur (15:22), also called the Desert of Etham (Num. 33:8), in the northwestern part of the Sinai Peninsula. Possibly, then, the sea that the Lord dried

up for the Israelites was Lake Balah (see the map “Possible Route of the Exodus,” near Num. 33:1–5).

b. The pursuit by the Egyptians (14:5–9)

14:5–9. Realizing the implications of the release of the Hebrews (**we ... have lost their services**; cf. 1:14) **Pharaoh and his officers** were determined to prevent the escape. Though the Israelite men numbered over 600,000, Pharaoh was apparently encouraged by their seeming indecisiveness and by his own superior military prowess. Pharaoh was probably informed immediately of the Israelites’ departure from Rameses on the 15th day of the month. But no doubt he did not react immediately because the Egyptians were involved in burying and bemoaning their dead (cf. Num. 33:3–4) and because Moses had repeatedly referred to “a three-day journey” (Ex. 3:18; 5:3; 8:27). Later, realizing the Israelites’ departure was not temporary, he got together **600 ... chariots, charioteers, and troops** and caught up with the Israelites **near Pi Hahiroth**.

c. The cry of the people and the faith of Moses (14:10–14)

14:10–14. As Pharaoh’s charioteers and armed troops **approached**, fear struck the encampment. They were trapped between the Red Sea (lit., “Sea of [Papyrus] Reeds”; see comments on v. 2) before them and a vicious foe behind them. The reaction of the Israelites here was much the same throughout the book (cf. 5:21) in times of duress and fright. Though they **cried out to the LORD**, they had no confidence He could help. Quickly forgetting the past, they bitterly accused **Moses** of deceiving them by leading them into **the desert to die... Didn’t we say ... in Egypt, Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians?** Moses, recognizing that fear was distorting their memories and arousing their passions against him, sought to reassure them that **the LORD** would deliver them by fighting **for** them (cf. 15:3; Neh. 4:20; Ps. 35:1) as they remained firm in confidence. Surprisingly, as they came to their greatest moment of deliverance, the people of God were full of distrust and fear.

d. The parting of the Red (Reed) Sea (14:15–22)

God communicated His intentions to Moses (vv. 15–18), the angel of God protected the Israelites (vv. 19–20), and they crossed on dry land (vv. 21–22).

14:15–18. God told **Moses** He would miraculously deliver the people **through the sea**. Moses only needed to **raise his staff ... over the sea** and **the water would divide** and the floor of **the sea** would be **dry ground**. Pharaoh’s charioteers would foolishly pursue the Israelites into the sea. There, as with the plagues, God would demonstrate His power and **glory** in the destruction of the Egyptian military. **The Egyptians**, God said, **will know that I am the LORD**.

14:19–22. **Then the angel of God**, perhaps a theophany (cf. comments on Gen. 16:9) or an angelic messenger, moved **from the front** of the Israelites to the rear to

protect them from the charging Egyptians. The angel shifted from guide to guardian! All through that night **the pillar of cloud**, which **also** had **moved** to the rear to be between the two camps, brought such darkness that military advance was impossible for the Egyptians. **That night** God was performing another miracle: splitting **the sea** (cf. Ps. 74:13) by **a strong east wind** and drying the sea floor (cf. Pss. 66:6; 106:9). The sea was deep enough (cf. Ex. 15:5) that later it drowned the Egyptians (14:28). While the wind kept the sea floor dry and the sea split, the Israelites walked **through the sea** (cf. v. 16; Ps. 78:13). The passageway may have been wide in order to allow about 2 million people and their flocks and herds to walk through. This was a miraculous wind!

God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt pictures His mercy in delivering all His people from bondage. In a mighty display of His power He freed Israel.

e. The destruction of the Egyptians (14:23–31)

14:23–28. As **the Egyptians pursued** the Israelites into the dry sea bed, **in the morning watch** (sometime between 3 A.M. and dawn) **the LORD** slowed their progress and they were panic-stricken. According to Psalm 77:16–19 God caused a rainstorm, lightning, thunder, and an earthquake. Perhaps the rain quickly soaked the sea floor, which caused **the wheels of their chariots** to **swerve**. There was also the noise and buffeting of the wind that was banking the waters. **The Egyptians** sought to escape, realizing that the God of the Hebrews (**the LORD**) was **fighting for** Israel (cf. Ex. 14:14). **At daybreak the sea water went** together again and **the Egyptians were swept ... into the sea** (lit., “thrown downward”). The crashing walls of **water** crushed the Egyptians in the sea so that **not** a single soldier **survived**.

14:29–31. God delivered His people **through ... dry land**, while He destroyed **the Egyptians** in the sea; their dead bodies floating ashore were a grim reminder of the awesome **power** of God in judgment. As a result **the Israelites ... feared** and trusted **the LORD**. The people often fluctuated between trust and complaining, between belief and unbelief (4:31; 5:21; 14:10–12, 31; 15:24; 16:2–4; 17:2–3).

3. THE PRAISE BY MOSES AND MIRIAM FOR DELIVERANCE (15:1–21)

The groaning and crying of the Israelites (14:10–12) turned to worship as they were led by Moses (15:1–18) and his sister Miriam (vv. 19–21) in triumphal praise to the Lord.

a. The praise by Moses (15:1–18)

This poem of praise has three main sections (vv. 1–6, 7–11, 12–16) and a conclusion (vv. 17–18). At the end of each section certain words are repeated: “Your right hand, O LORD” (v. 6); “who is like You?” (v. 11) “until ... people ... pass by” (v. 16).

15:1–6. In the first section the theme is immediately stated—the destruction of the Egyptian army in **the sea** (v. 1; cf. v. 4). Moses acknowledged the great **strength** (v. 2; cf. v. 13) and **power** (v. 6; cf. v. 16) of the only true **God** in bringing about such

an awesome deliverance (**salvation**). For that reason Moses said God caused him to rejoice (**He is ... my song**).

15:7–11. This second section details the crushing of the Egyptians by God. These verses stress the mighty power of God (**the greatness of Your majesty**, v. 7) in controlling the elements and in using them to destroy His adversaries. **The blast of Your nostrils** (v. 8) refers to the wind that parted the sea, and the words **You blew with Your breath** (v. 10) refer to the wind that collapsed the billowed water; these are poetic anthropomorphisms. The Egyptians, confident of victory (v. 9), arrogantly charged against Israel, but in the minutest expense of divine energy God utterly destroyed them (**they sank like lead**; cf. v. 5, “they sank ... like a stone”). Recognition of God’s mighty works led Moses to extol the Lord’s uniqueness: **Who is like You?** (Cf. Pss. 35:10; 71:19; 77:13; 89:6; 113:5; Micah 7:18.) No one is like Him **in holiness and glory**.

15:12–18. Then Moses described the consequences of Israel’s deliverance by such a great God. As a result of this marvelous triumph by His **right hand** (cf. v. 6) God in His **unfailing love** (*hesed*, “loyal love”) would then lead His own into His **holy dwelling** in the Promised Land. Another result was that other nations would fear Israel, especially those lands Israel was about to enter. The greatness of Egypt had been effaced, her land ravished, her people left in mourning, and her army destroyed. Other nations, hearing of the power of the Israelites’ God, would cower in fear. **People of Philistia**, mentioned first, would have been some of the first ones to have heard of the Red (Reed) Sea crossing. **Edom** was located south and east of the Dead Sea, and **Moab** was immediately north of Edom. According to Joshua’s account of the Conquest, the Canaanites had a predisposed fear of the Israelites (cf. Deut. 2:25; Josh. 2:9–11, 24; 5:1).

Moses’ triumphal song includes the assurance (Ex. 15:17) that God would **bring** His people into the Promised Land and to Jerusalem, **the mountain of God’s inheritance**, where His presence would be evident in **the sanctuary**. Moses also affirmed the fact that **the LORD will reign** over His people **forever**. God is to be praised for what He did in effecting a mighty deliverance, for what He was then doing in preparing the land for conquest, and for what He will do in His eternal reign.

b. The song by Miriam (15:19–21)

15:19–21. Though at first glance verse 19 may seem to be misplaced in the narrative, it purposefully repeats the reason for such joyful praise—the defeat of the Egyptian army in **the sea** (cf. v. 1) and the deliverance of **the Israelites**. This verse has three clauses each ending (in Heb.) with the word **sea**. **Miriam** (cf. Num. 12:1–2) is the first woman in the Bible to be called a **prophetess**. Micah suggested that she, along with Moses and Aaron, had a significant leadership role in Israel’s wilderness wanderings (Micah 6:4). Since Moses was 80 years old and Aaron was 83 at the time of the Exodus (Ex. 7:7), Miriam was probably in her 90s because she was a young girl when Moses was born (2:4, 7–9). She and **the women** with her danced **with**

tambourines (cf. 1 Sam. 18:6) as she **sang** a joyful reply to Moses' song of God's triumph over the Egyptians (cf. Ex. 15:21 with v. 1).¹

¹ John D. Hannah, "[Exodus](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 130–133.

