

The Biggest Miracle!

Exodus 13-15

October 11, 2026

Please open your Bibles to Exodus 13. Nine year old Joey was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday school. "Well, Mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to save the Israelites. When he got to the Red Sea, his engineers built a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across. Then he radioed headquarters and they sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved." "Joey, is that really what your teacher taught you?" she asked. "Well, no, Mom. But if I told it what the teacher said, you'd never believe it!" Later in life, Moses kept his staff with him all the time, he just couldn't part with it. Kind of like Dave Sherman's comb.

We return to Egypt this morning just in time to see the Israelites heading out! After 430 years of bitter bondage, and after 9 plagues and the Passover, they are free at last! And heading east! Scripture tells us there were about 600,000 men plus women and children so it was no small caravan. Maybe 2 million or more. Today we're going to see what Joey thought his mother would never believe. If you are able, stand as we read Ex 13:17 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." 18 So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt armed for battle. 19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the sons of Israel swear an oath. He had said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place." 20 After leaving Succoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. 21 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. 22 Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. 14 Then the Lord said to Moses, 2 "Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. They are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon. 3 Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.' 4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord." So the Israelites did this.

This enormous group left Egypt armed for battle. But God did not lead them into combat right away. They would face some battles, but initially God spared them of that knowing that they might hang a youie and head right back to Pharaoh. God did not lead them into temptation, nor will He us. His ways are higher than our ways, and better. So

they took the desert road toward the Red Sea. They also took Joseph's bones with them just as he had made them swear to do over 350 years earlier. Even though, the people who promised to do this were long gone, their descendants never forgot his prophecy that God would take them back to Canaan, nor Joseph's instructions to take his bones with them when they went, and now they were going!

We also learn in this passage of God's GPS. Say pillar. A pillar of cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night. Going before them to plot the way and direct their steps. They didn't have the Bible or the Holy Spirit as we do today so God provided this pillar. And it guided them to make camp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. Archaeologists have found some intriguing inscriptions on rocks in the Sinai area although none of them are conclusive. Timothy Mahoney has 7 videos called Patterns of Evidence with a lot of clues for the route they took and where they camped. The Bible says they camped by the Red Sea.

For many years, scholars said that this was not the Red Sea, but the Sea of Reeds. The old country boy was in one of his first classes in the big city seminary when his professor told the class that God didn't really open the 300-foot deep Red Sea, but the Sea of Reeds which was just a few inches deep. The old country boy started hollering and praising God! The professor asked him if he misunderstood. It's not that big of a deal, he said. Just a slight breeze could have done it. The old boy said, "It's an even bigger miracle than I thought! How God drowned all those Egyptians in just a few inches of water!" Every other Scripture refers to the Red Sea as what we now know as the Gulf of Aqaba. (s) The best location considering all the clues we have from Scripture is that they stopped here (s) where there is an area large enough for such a group to camp by the Red Sea. And it would certainly be a trap. If the Egyptians chased them down this canyon, there would be nowhere they could go except into the sea.

Ex 14:9 The Egyptians—all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, horsemen and troops—pursued the Israelites and overtook them as they camped by the sea near Pi Hahiroth, opposite Baal Zephon. 10 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. 11 They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

At the first sign of potential danger, they freeze in fear. After just witnessing how God spared them through all the plagues. This will be the first of many tests they will fail. How very much like us. We witness God's mighty grace and miracles and then our faith wavers and we collapse in fear and worry. Has He not led us thus far? Will He not

lead us on? Sadly, they've already forgotten what it was like to have their baby boys killed and their backs beaten. "It would be better for us to serve the Egyptians." Many times we can't see the good that God has planned for us. All we can see is what we have known and even though it was miserable, it was familiar and we long to go back. God have mercy. People talk about the "good ole days?" Yes, the ones with no AC, central heat, paved roads, refrigeration, or indoor plumbing. The days with bed bugs, polio, and dysentery. I really don't want to go back to all that.

Vs 13 Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will **never** see again. 14 The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." Don't be afraid! Stand firm! Watch and wait for God to move! He will fight for you, you won't even have to fight. Just stand still! There are times to fight, but there are other times just to stand firm and watch. And not to be afraid. Friends, God fights for us! He is a majority all by Himself! Trust Him! We think we have to figure everything out, fight every battle. No! God will fight for you!

And you know what happened next. Vs 19 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, 20 coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long. (a 2-tone pillar) 21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, 22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left." No wonder Joey didn't think his mom would believe it.

Notice it only took one of God's angels to hold off the entire Egyptian army! But imagine what it must have been like to walk between those two walls of water 30 stories high on either side! There is a land bridge right at this location in the Gulf of Aqaba. It is only about 300 ft deep compared to 3000 to the north and 4000 to the south. It slopes gradually on each end creating a perfect road through the sea which is what Isaiah 51:10 calls it. It is about a 10 mile span from one side to the other taking an average person about 3 hours to cross. There used to be 2 stone pillars, one on each side of the Red Sea at this point supposedly put up by King Solomon to mark the spot of the crossing but they are now gone. But isn't Mt. Sinai on the Sinai peninsula? Actually, it was never called that until 2000 years after the Exodus. The burning bush where Moses met God was in Midian which was always over in Saudi Arabia and Paul said in Gal 4:25 that Mt. Sinai was in Arabia, not Egypt. Not everyone agrees on the route or the mountain but this seems to me the very best option.

No matter where it happened, this miracle was so spectacular, so amazing that it still intimidated Israel's enemies many years later. How do you fight against a god like

Yahweh? A god who dries up a sea? A god who sends fire and clouds? God protected them from the Egyptian army with the pillar of fire all night long while they crossed over. God gained glory from Pharaoh just as He said. God can use you to bring Him glory either by going with Him or even if you oppose Him. But it's so much better if you go with Him! So with their backs against the wall, God made a way where there was no way! He opened a door through a concrete wall. And He ushered His people to safety on the other side leading in front and coming behind as their rear guard! Protecting them from the well-armed, fully trained, eager and angry Egyptian army. God's pillar of fire was their air superiority.

And then, after the Israelites were safely on the east bank, Ex 14: 24 During the last watch of the night (2-6am) the Lord looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. 25 He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt." Ya think? God jammed their transmissions, stalled their engines, and ruined their CV joints. Some claim to have found chariot wheels in this area while others say it is only coral. Vs 26 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen." 27 Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the Lord swept them into the sea. 28 The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen — the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived." Say ouch. This was naval superiority! You could say the Red Sea was the 11th and final plague. Vs 29 But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. 30 That day the Lord saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. 31 And when the Israelites saw the great power the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant." These Egyptian chariots, which were like the Humvees of their day, needed pontoons. Ps 20:7, Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but **we** trust in the name of the Lord our God. The Great I AM that I Am! Some trust in tanks and jets, we trust in the name of the Lord our God! Ps 33:16-17 No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. 17 A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save." The Lord **will** fight for you, you need only be still! They did and He did!

Pharaoh and his nation had been completely humbled and destroyed. After losing their crops and livestock, their economy and their firstborn, they now lost their whole military. The Israelites would face other armies and other challenges, but the Egyptians were no longer an issue at all, whatsoever. And God's decisive deliverance, His miraculous rescue should have shut the mouths of the Israelite doubters. But they would be back. Meanwhile, this was another exercise for the people to build their trust both in God and in Moses, their leader.

In Exodus 15 we find the oldest song in the Bible which Moses composed. I wish we had the music to go with the lyrics but it celebrates this great miraculous victory from God! It was **their** song of response to what God had done for them. Our call to worship this morning was taken from this song. Vs 1-2 I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea. 2 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." Moses' big sister Miriam who had watched her little brother from the bulrushes is now 80 years older and she follows it up leading all of the women in a refrain from vs 1 praising the God who had delivered them. We should praise God for delivering us!

God's deliverances should be celebrated. They should be remembered (like today 13 year anniversary of dedication of this new part). Like CBC Sunday next week when God led us out of where we had been into a new and wonderful land of the Covenant Brethren Church. But especially our salvation. Do you remember the day the Lord saved you? It's easy for me, I was baptized on July 4, 1971! My own independence day. Do you remember other times in your life when God moved in a mighty way? When He opened a way where there was no way? When He protected you from someone or something that was about to destroy you? Don't forget those days! Celebrate those days! And do so with songs and partying. Giving praise to God for His goodness. Each Sunday is an opportunity to praise God in song and I thank our musicians for helping us to do that each week. And I pray we don't just go through the motions or just mouth the words. The Israelites were NOT just going through the motions of worship on the far side of the Red Sea. They knew what God had done and how close they came to being destroyed and how God delivered them. We need to remember how close we were to hell. To eternal destruction before God saved us.

Let's see how this event too is all about Jesus. We noticed last week God's great deliverance through the Passover when a lamb provided the substitute for every oldest male and how that perfectly foreshadowed Jesus Christ, the perfect spotless Lamb of God who took our place. He shed His blood that it might be smeared on our hearts' doors to spare us from hell. It's a picture of salvation which we remembered and celebrated again last week around the Lord's Table. I was disappointed that more were not present to honor the One who died to save them and I trust you will make plans now to attend the next one on March 21, 2027. Put it on your calendar. Make it a priority. Jesus made you a priority. Terry Kauk in CA shared how much she wished she could participate with us.

But after the Passover and after the Hebrews were saved from Egypt, they passed through the sea which is a reminder of our need to be baptized after we are saved from sin. 1 Cor 10:1-2 ... our forefathers were all under the cloud and ... they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." We, however are baptized into something infinitely better than Moses. We are baptized into

the Body of Christ, the Holy Church of God, the fellowship of the Redeemed, the Saved, the Delivered. And all the forces of evil that want to drag us back into sin's slavery are forever destroyed and drowned. Not by our will power or resolve, but by Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and our Savior. If you're still living in the slavery of sin, call not on Moses, but on Jesus to lead you out! To lead you to the other side of safety and true freedom! To deliver you with His blood and then to seal the deal with holy baptism. The first step of obedience, the first step of discipleship is into the waters not of the Red Sea but of baptism.

The parting of the Red Sea is one of the biggest miracles in the Bible. It is mentioned over 20 times later in Scripture as evidence of God's power. But it is not the biggest miracle. The biggest miracle would occur 1500 years later when Jesus Christ would die on a cross to save sinners like us. That's the biggest miracle. God saved the Israelites that day so you could be saved this day. For in that great multitude walked through the sea that night was a direct ancestor of Jesus Christ who parted our sea of sin not by a wooden staff but on a wooden cross. And His pathway to freedom still stands side open today for you to cross over to safety. But it will not be open forever. It will close, the door will be shut. Friend if you haven't been born again, today is your day. Come to Jesus today and rejoice in His great salvation!