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What Sea Did Moses Part to Aid His People's Escape from the Pharaoh?

Question from Antonio, Age 15

While this question seems very simple, you could ask five different people and get five different answers. How is that possible when the Bible very clearly says they crossed the "Red Sea"?

Psalms 106:9-11 ERV He gave the command, and the Red Sea became dry. He led them through the deep sea on land as dry as the desert. 10 He saved our ancestors and rescued them from their enemies. 11 He covered their enemies with the sea. Not one of them escaped!

Another important question is where the actual location of Mount Sinai is. Knowing where Mount Sinai is helps us to understand where the Israelites crossed the Red Sea.

The Children of Israel

When Jacob and his sons came to live in Egypt at the request of his favorite son, Joseph, there were only seventy people, and over four hundred years later at the time when they left Egypt (called the Exodus), Jacob's family had grown to over two million people.

Jacob and his sons moved to Egypt, they lived in the "land of Goshen" (Genesis 45:10, 46:28, 29). This area is on the east side of the Nile Delta –where the Nile River meets the Mediterranean Sea. One of the main cities in the area where archeologists have found evidence of foreign people living in Egypt is Avaris. (See Footnote)

Remember, these people were not Israelites or Jews at this stage in their history, they were only just beginning to have their own identity and independence as a group. The Egyptians became afraid of having so many foreign people in their country that they made slaves of them and treated them very badly. God raised up a deliverer to take His people, the children of Jacob—also known as Israel, out of the land of Egypt and bring them back into the land that He promised to Abraham, Isaac, and even Jacob from the beginning. After four hundred and thirty years, the Lord blessed them and they had many children, and once they left Egypt, the nation of Israel was born.

Footnote: *According to Archeologists (Archeologists are scientists/historians who dig up ruins or remains and using them as clues to find out about people of the past), Avaris (also known as Tell El-Dab'a) was inhabited by Hyksos people—a people who were not Egyptian—for almost five hundred years. This city was an administrative city that grew into the capital of the Hyksos. In Genesis 45:10, we see that Joseph who was the administrator of Egypt lived in Goshen (Avaris). According to archeologists the city was just abandoned (that is one day, everyone just left). Also when they studied the graves in this area, they found more graves for females than they did for males (remember there was a period of time when all baby boys were thrown into the Nile River to die). They also found a statue of a man who was not Egyptian –it was damaged, but they could still make out some details—like part of his robe that he wore had many colors on it—sound like anyone we know?*



The Exodus

Exodus 13:17-22 BSB "When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them along the road through the land of the Philistines, though it was shorter. For God said, "If the people face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." 18 So God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the Israelites left the land of Egypt arrayed for battle. 19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the sons of Israel swear a solemn oath when he said, "God will surely attend to you, and then you must carry my bones with you from this place." 20 They set out from Succoth and camped at Etham on the edge of the wilderness. 21 And the LORD went before them in a pillar of cloud to guide their way by day, and in a pillar of fire to give them light by night, 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 before the people."

The people celebrated the first Passover in the night and stayed in their houses which they had marked by the blood of the lamb on their doorposts. The angel of death passed over any house marked by the blood and anyone who was in the house was safe because they were under the blood. The firstborn from Pharaoh's house to the firstborn of the livestock died that night because he had not marked the house and they were not under the protection of the blood. After this seventh and final warning, from God, Pharaoh finally let the children of Israel go, but not for long.

The people of Egypt were glad to get rid of them, they gave them gold and silver, wagons, horses, and weapons and said, "Get out", "Go quickly!" and they did.

Two million people started their march from Succoth and went across the Sinia Peninsula, the same route Moses had taken forty years before when he fled Egypt. God guided them by a pillar of cloud.

While they were headed in the path that Moses knew the Lord had them change direction at the last minute.

Exodus 14:2-3 BSB " 2 Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. You are to encamp by

the sea, directly opposite Baal-zephon. 3 For Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, 'They are wandering the land in confusion; the wilderness has boxed them in.'

These places that Moses names in their journey were not cities because two million people could not travel through cities, but they were territories. Pi-hahiroth means the "Mouth of the canal or gorge", Migdol means tower or fortress (it could either be a certain mountain peak or a lookout tower), the sea is the Red Sea and Baalzephon is a worship place for Baal.

It was probably from this Migdol or "lookout tower" that news got back to Pharaoh that the Children of Israel took a wrong turn and were now trapped.

Exodus 14:5-14 BSB 5 "When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them and said, "What have we done? We have released Israel from serving us." 6 So Pharaoh prepared his chariot and took his army with him. 7 He took 600 of the best chariots, and all the other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them. 8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out defiantly. 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 saw the Egyptians marching after them, and 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 into the wilderness to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Did we not say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone so that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." 13 But Moses told the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the LORD's salvation, which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. 14 The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."



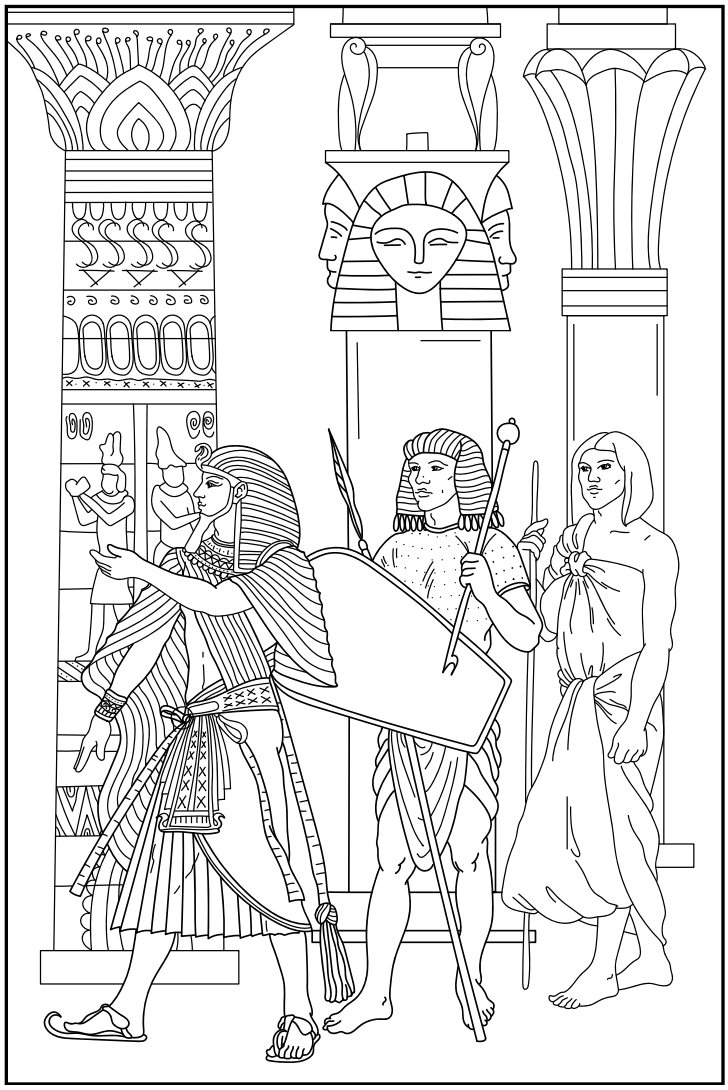
The people turned from the easy path they were on to down into the mountain area and became trapped between the mountains and the sea. They came to what is now called Nuweiba Beach on the Gulf of Aqaba (one of the arms of the Red Sea). The beach is eight miles wide, but the mountains on each side were seven thousand feet high.

Why would God take them down this path to a dead end? They could have easily gotten to the land of Midian if they only continued to travel the way they were going. They were confused and frightened and blamed Moses that they were all going to die. The sea was over nine miles across at this point, and there was no way they could swim it. They only saw the problem and still didn't understand how big their God was.

When our problems are too big for us, and we cannot see a way out, we need to do what Moses told the people: "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the LORD's salvation, which He will accomplish for you today…the LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."

We don't have to be a match for our enemies. We don't have to fight at all. "Only be still and let God fight for you." The Children of Israel had just gone through the 10 plagues of Egypt and saw the power of the LORD, but now they had forgotten and were filled with fear. If they could see all that God had done but ended up fearing for their lives, we too can be filled with fear when we don't know what we are going to do. The God that fought for Israel is the same God that we worship and obey and He will protect us as well, but that doesn't mean everything will be easy for us.

The pillar cloud that had been leading the people now moved and stood between the people and the Pharaoh and his army. The people were protected by this large cloud that Pharaoh and his army could not enter. Meanwhile, Moses stretched his hand over the sea and a strong east wind blew all night and not only divided the waters but dried up the floor of the sea! God had



opened a door for the people to go through. When God leads you to something, He will also lead you through it as well, we just need to believe.

This was no little miracle. This was like walking through the mountain pass they had been through before, but instead of rock ledges on either side, it was water. How impressive that must have been!

Exodus 14:21-22 BSB 21 "Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove back the sea with a strong east wind that turned it into dry land. So the waters were divided, 22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with walls of water on their right and on their left."

Exodus 15:8 BSB "At the blast of Your nostrils the waters piled up; like a wall the currents

stood firm; the depths congealed in the heart of the sea."

Psalms 78:13-14 ESV "He divided the sea and let them pass through it, and made the waters stand like a heap. In the daytime he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a fiery light."

Pharaoh was so determined to destroy the people that once the cloud moved out of his way, he stormed right into the sea after them. We can become so blinded by hatred that we fail to notice anything else. The cloud that held them back should have been a warning, just as the 10 plagues were, but Pharaoh would not listen. Driving his chariots into the middle of the Red Sea at the Gulf of Aqaba, he was so stubborn that despite the chariot wheels getting clogged and his army becoming fearful because they recognized that God was working against them and wanted to turn back, Pharaoh kept them moving forward. In his blind rage in hoping to catch the Israelites, he probably didn't notice the walls of water on either side until the Lord released them, but then it was too late.

Pharaoh experienced all this misery because he was proud and didn't like to be told what to do. His pride ended up costing him not only the life of his firstborn son, and then his own life, but also the lives of many Egyptians and finally his entire army. Let's not be so hard-headed and hard-hearted that we cannot see the clear lessons the Lord is giving us. Let us not get angry when the Lord tells us, "No, that is not how I want things done". When we are stubborn, we act foolishly and this only leads to hurt and pain for us and those around us.

Let us also not be like the Children of Israel who had no faith. God had to show them over and over again that He was with them and over and over again, they forgot. Their attitude was, "I don't care what You did for me yesterday, what are You going to do for me today?"

Let us be like Moses, although he wasn't perfect, he looked for the Lord in everything he did and he listened for what God would tell him to do and he did it. He had to do some hard and uncomfortable things, but he trusted that God was with him and God never let him down.

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Join our mailing list so you won't miss any Newsletters or Magazines. The Magazine will only come out four times a year, but we don't want to wait that long to have fun learning about God and His Word, so we will try to send out monthly newsletters in between.

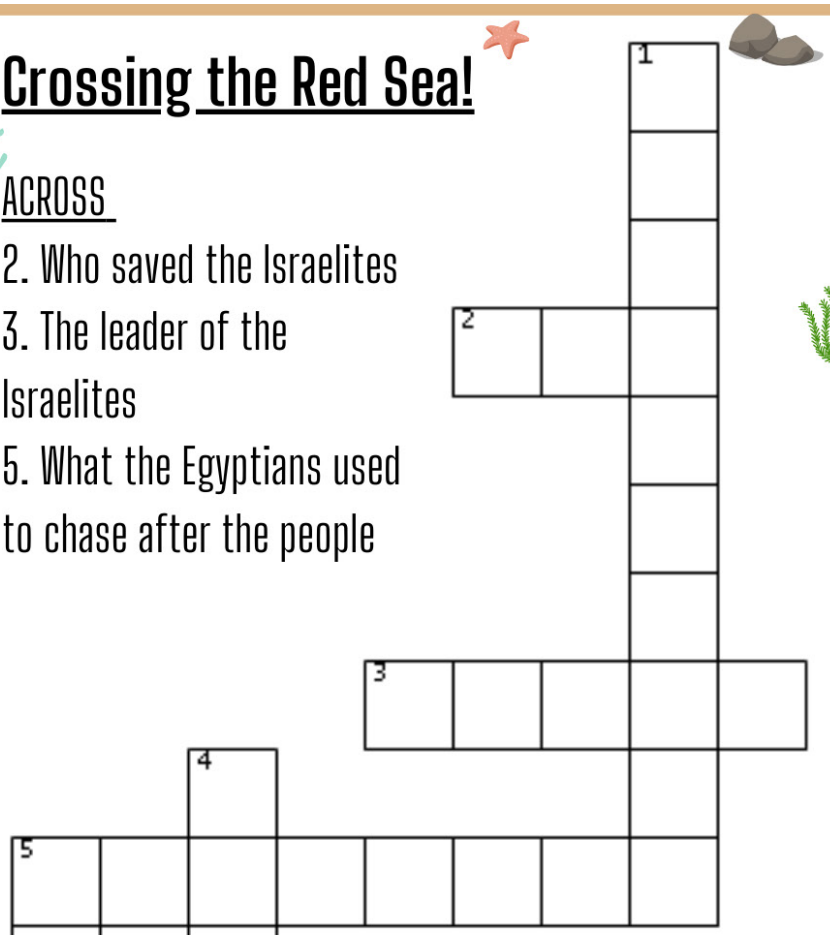
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Crossing the Red Sea!



ACROSS

2. Who saved the Israelites
3. The leader of the Israelites
5. What the Egyptians used to chase after the people

DOWN

1. Where the people had been wandering
4. What the people needed more of
5. What stood between the Egyptians and the Israelites



Depend on the LORD for strength. Always go to him for help.

1 Chronicles 16:11 ERV

BARABBAS

Jerusalem, 33 A.D.

Hello dear friend,

Let me tell you a story, simple and clear so that all children can understand. A long, long time ago, in the ancient city of Jerusalem, there was a man named Barabbas. Barabbas was not a good man; in fact, he had done many bad things. He had caused trouble and harmed people, so much so that the Romans had imprisoned him.

Barabbas was in a dark and cold cell, waiting for his fate to be decided. He knew he had done terrible things and deserved severe punishment. While he was there, he heard a lot of noise outside his cell. People were shouting, and the commotion was getting louder and louder.

Full of curiosity, Barabbas approached the bars and called out to the jailer passing by.

"Hey!" Barabbas shouted. "What's going on outside? Why are the people so upset?"

The jailer, a man who had seen many things in his life and was not easily surprised, looked at Barabbas with hatred and replied,

"They are asking for the release of a man named Jesus of Nazareth. They say he is the King of the Jews."

Barabbas frowned, confused. He had heard of this Jesus, a man who preached about love and forgiveness. He couldn't understand why people would be so excited about him.

"What has this Jesus done?" Barabbas asked.

The jailer shrugged and replied,

"Nothing that deserves death, according to Roman law. The priests and elders have handed him over to Pilate out of envy. They accuse him of blasphemy and proclaiming himself king."

Barabbas let out a bitter laugh. How ironic all this was! He, a confessed criminal, was about to be freed, while an innocent man faced death.

"And what does the crowd say?" Barabbas asked curiously.

"They are asking for your release," said the jailer with a sarcastic smile. "Pilate has given them a choice between you and Jesus. And they have chosen you."

Barabbas couldn't believe what he was hearing. For a moment, he felt a pang of guilt, but quickly drowned it out with his usual scorn.

"So an innocent man will die for me," he murmured to himself, laughing quietly.

The guards arrived and opened the cell. Barabbas stepped out, still doubtful and unbelieving. As he walked out of the prison, he heard the crowd's cries: "Barabbas, free Barabbas!"

As he crossed the prison gate, he looked up at the sky, where the sun was shining, marking the beginning of a new day. He walked towards his freedom, while the image of the man who would die in his place was burned into his memory.

Summary: Jesus of Nazareth was crucified that day, and Barabbas, the man who deserved death, was freed. In the years that followed, Barabbas could not escape the memory of that innocent man who had taken his place. Justice and mercy intertwine in ways that cannot be understood, and this truth would always weigh on his conscience.

With love and hope,

Carlos Vargas

Friends, we can read about Barabbas in the Holy Bible:

- *Matthew 27:16-26*
- *Mark 15:7-15*
- *Luke 23:18*
- *John 18:40*



If you would like to submit an article for consideraton, write us. We thank Carlos for sharing with us.