

Research: Moses Crossing the Red Sea

Moses and Red Sea Crossing

Exodus 14:5, 7, 10, 13-15, 16, 21, 22, 30

5¶ And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled:

“The heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people.—No doubt the change began as soon as Israel commenced its march. The emigration left Eastern Egypt a solitude, suspended all the royal works that were in progress, threw the whole course of commerce and business into disorder. Beforehand, neither the king nor the people had understood what the loss of six hundred thousand laborers—some of them highly skilled—would be. When Israel was gone they realized it; consequently both king and people regretted what they had done” (www.biblehub.com, Ellicott’s Commentary).

7And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.

“Chariots were effective for their high speed, mobility and strength which could not be matched by infantry at the time. They quickly became a powerful new weapon across the ancient Near East. The best preserved examples of Egyptian chariots are the six specimens from the tomb of Tutankhamun” (Wikipedia.com).

“The Egyptian chariots were low two-wheeled cars open behind and drawn by two horses abreast. Each chariot contained a driver and a warrior, sometimes two. The **chosen chariots** were probably those of the king's bodyguard. The Hittites are known to have brought 2,500 chariots into the field against Rameses II” (Dummelow, www.studylight.org).

“*Six hundred chosen chariots* — The strength of ancient Egypt, which is a plain country, consisted in cavalry and military chariots. Indeed, it appears from sundry passages of Scripture, that the eastern nations in general, in the early ages of the world, made great use of armed chariots in war. *Captains over every one of them* — Or rather *over all of them*, distributing the command of them to his several captains” (www.biblehub.com Benson Commentary).

“he made ready his chariot—His preparations for an immediate and hot pursuit are here described: A difference is made between "the chosen chariots" and "the chariots of Egypt." The first evidently composed the king's guard, amounting to six hundred, and they are called "chosen," literally, "third men"; three men being allotted to each chariot, the charioteer and two warriors. As to "the chariots of Egypt," the common cars contained only two persons, one for driving and the other for fighting; sometimes only one person was in the chariot, the driver lashed the reins round his body and fought; infantry being totally unsuitable for a rapid pursuit, and the Egyptians having had no cavalry, the word "riders" is in the grammatical connection applied to war chariots employed, and these were of light construction, open behind, and hung on small wheels” (www.biblehub.com Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary).

8 and he pursued after the children of Israel:

10¶ And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.

“And when Pharaoh drew nigh, Or "caused to draw nigh" Stand that is, his army, brought it very near to the camp of the Israelites:

“the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; in great numbers, with full speed, threatening them with utter destruction:

“and they were sore afraid; being an unarmed people, though numerous, and so unable to defend themselves against armed and disciplined troops; and besides, through their long time of slavery their spirits were broken, and were a mean, abject, dispirited people; and especially were so on the sight of the Egyptians, whom they had so many years looked upon and served as their lords and masters” www.biblehub.com, Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible).

13¶ And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to-day:

Stand Still in Hebrew is *yatsab* (Strong’s 3320) which means “to set, stand, station oneself, take one’s stand, stand firm before any one whether a victor or an enemy.”

See in Hebrew is *ra’ah* (Strong’s 7200) which means “to look at, perceive, have vision, consider, give attention to, distinguish.”

Shew [show] in Hebrew is *asah* (Strong’s 6213) which means “fashion, accomplish, act with an effect, produce, to labor or to work.”

“*Moses said, Fear ye not, stand still* — Hebrew, *make yourselves to stand*. Let not your hearts fail, or sink, or stagger, through unbelief: but with quiet minds look up to God” (www.biblehub.com, Benson Commentary).

“Moses said, ... Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord—Never, perhaps, was the fortitude of a man so severely tried as that of the Hebrew leader in this crisis, exposed as he was to various and inevitable dangers, the most formidable of which was the vengeance of a seditious and desperate multitude; but his meek, unruffled, magnanimous composure presents one of the sublimest examples of moral courage to be found in history” (www.biblehub.com, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

14 The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

15¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:

“Moses bid them *stand still* and expect orders from God: and now *orders* are given. They thought they must have been directed either to the right hand or to the left; no, saith God, speak to them to *go forward* directly to the sea-side; as if there had lain a fleet of transport ships ready for them to embark in. Let the children of Israel go as far as they can upon dry ground, and then *God will divide the sea*. The same power could have *congealed* the waters for them to *pass over*, but infinite Wisdom chose rather to *divide* the waters for them to *pass through*, for that way of salvation is always pitched upon which is most *humbling*” (www.biblehub.com, Benson Commentary).

“When the path to freedom seemed closed in front by the Red Sea and all hope of retreat was cut off by the advancing hosts of Pharaoh, prayer and moral courage were Moses' weapons of defense. His communion with God directed him to go forward regardless of the ebbing and flowing tides that challenged his advance. His moral courage was justified: the waters of the Red Sea, typical of fear in all its forms, parted to make a highway for the children of Israel, and they passed across the Red Sea dry-shod, whereas the pursuing Egyptians were overwhelmed and destroyed by the returning tide” (*Moral Courage*, Robert Ellis Key, CSS, March 15, 1952).

16 But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it

“In the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," our revered Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, writes (p. 505), "Understanding is the line of demarcation between the real and unreal." Understanding then is that which discriminates by setting apart the good from the evil, the pure from the impure, the essential from the unsubstantial. Moses drew "the line of demarcation" across the Red Sea, and this line of spiritual understanding separated the children of Israel from danger and changed what had appeared to be an impassable barrier of water into an open thoroughfare. This understanding revealed to Moses a sure way where material vision saw only obstruction. His spiritual understanding of the power of God and his active obedience to the divine command brought to light the dry land—the specific formation of thought needed at that moment—on which the Israelites were able to proceed, and by which they were set apart from the forces of evil, darkness, and aggression” (*Let the Dry Land Appear*, May Rimes Hutson, CSJ, July 1945).

21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

“God showed his almighty power, by opening a passage through the waters, some miles over. God can bring his people through the greatest difficulties, and force a way where he does not find it. It was an instance of his wonderful favour to his Israel. They went through the sea, they walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea. This was done, in order to encourage God's people in all ages to trust him in the greatest straits” (www.biblehub.com, Matthew Henry's Commentary).

“Was not this experience of Moses and the children of Israel a practical fulfillment of the promise or statement of spiritual authority in Genesis (1:9), "And God said, Let the waters under

the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear"? And do we not have the same divine authority? Can we not say to every Red Sea experience, "Let the dry land appear"? Indeed, we can!

"It is "the line of demarcation" or spiritual understanding which we need to separate us from all beliefs of error, to set us apart from darkness, ignorance, misunderstanding, envy, limitation, fear, war, plagues. This spiritual discrimination enables us to see the real where the unreal appears to be, to see a way where no human way is apparent, to behold health where disease is making its claim, to see deliverance and safety where danger is evident, and to see the abundance of omnipresent good where lack argues its presence. We can, **like Moses, draw this "line of demarcation,"** and what has seemed to be an impassable barrier will become to us a wall of protection and a course of procedure. We too can walk on dry land through what had appeared to be a seething sea of impossibilities.

"Mrs. Eddy tells us (*ibid.*, p. 507), "In metaphor, the *dry land* illustrates the absolute formations instituted by Mind, while *water* symbolizes the elements of Mind." As Christian Scientists, it is not only our right but our duty to call forth the dry land in any and every experience, to realize the presence of the specific ideas or "absolute formations" of thought which we need each moment" (*Let the Dry Land Appear*, May Rimes Hutson, CSJ, July 1945).

22And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

"Were a wall unto them. The waters served the purpose of an entrenchment and wall; the people could not be attacked on either flank during the transit; to the north was the water covering the whole district; to the south was the Red Sea" (www.biblehub.com, Barnes' Notes).

"**The waters were a wall**, both for height, and for their defense" (www.biblehub.com, Matthew Poole's Commentary).

"**A wall unto them]** This need not mean that they stood up like a wall, but that the water on each side was a defense, preventing a flank attack by the enemy" (Dummelows, www.studylight.org).

30Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians;

"The Red Sea was in front; the pursuing Egyptians were behind. According to sense testimony, there was no way of escape, but courage, faith, and spiritual conviction opened one. "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord," Moses called to the people. "Go forward," God commanded. Moses heard this higher summons and obeyed. The water became a wall; the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea on dry ground. Fear disappeared, and they were free. The pursuing Egyptians were engulfed by the returning tide, and Israel marched forward toward the promised land.

Moses had glimpsed and felt the Christ-power; therefore, fear as a presence or power ceased to exist. The lesson is plain. When we face up to our fears, when we stand firm and go forward, the victory is already won, and we are on our way to the land to which Mrs. Eddy refers when she writes in "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (p. 226), "I saw before me the awful

conflict, the Red Sea and the wilderness; but I pressed on through faith in God, trusting Truth, the strong deliverer, to guide me into the land of Christian Science, where fetters fall and the rights of man are fully known and acknowledged.”” (*Our Exodus*, Robert Ellis Key, CSS, July 30, 1955).

SH 566:1-9

Spiritual guidance

As the children of Israel were guided triumphantly through the Red Sea, the dark ebbing and flowing tides of human fear, — as they were led through the wilderness, walking wearily through the great desert of human hopes, and anticipating the promised joy, — so shall the spiritual idea guide all right desires in their passage from sense to Soul, from a material sense of existence to the spiritual, up to the glory prepared for them who love God.

SH 592:11-15

MOSES. A corporeal mortal; moral courage; a type of moral law and the demonstration thereof; the proof that, without the gospel, — the union of justice and affection, — there is something spiritually lacking, since justice demands penalties under the law.