

Life Lesson 26
Crossing the Red Sea
Text: Exodus 14

Introduction

The Israelites were on their way. At last, after God sent ten terrible plagues on them. Pharaoh decided to let them go. Now their troubles were over, right? Wrong! The exciting adventures they would encounter on their way to the promised land were just beginning.

The Story

Can you imagine a moving day like the one the Israelites had? All the Israelites – between two and three million of them – packed up with their families, their household goods, and their animals and started off. Of course, they couldn't move very fast.

It really wasn't that far to the promised land, but the Philistines were in the way. They were a strong, war-like, people and God knew the Israelites were ready to handle a big war right then. They had been slaves for years. They needed experience in trusting God first – and God sent some trials to teach them.

God told Moses to lead the Israelites the long way around, by way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. He sent an angel to make sure that they went the right direction. It looked like a huge pile or pillar of clouds by day, and at night it looked like a pillar of fire. The angel led them into the wilderness.

Pharaoh changed his mind and decided to go after them. Actually, the Bible says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. It was all a part of His plan. Pharaoh's men were in chariots pulled by horses. They could get there and round up the former slaves in no time.

When the Israelites heard that the soldiers were coming they started crying. “Why did you bring us out here, Moses? Were there no graves in Egypt, so you brought us out here to die?” Already they were giving up on God and blaming Moses, before they even started.

It did look bad. Mountains blocked off one side and the Red Sea the other. There was no way they could move forward, and Pharaoh and his chariots were coming toward them from behind. They were trapped

“Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord,” Moses said. “You won’t see these Egyptians any more. God will fight for you and you shall hold your peace.”

The angel in the pillar of cloud rose up and, instead of being in front of them, went behind them. It stood between the Israelites and the Egyptians. It was a pillar of fire on the Israelite side, lighting up the night so they could see where they were going. On the Egyptian side it was a dark cloud, blotting out the moon and stars, so they couldn’t see a thing and couldn’t even find the Israelites.

God told Moses to hold up his rod and stretch it out over the Red Sea. Moses did, and something amazing happened. God sent a strong east wind that blew the sea until it parted in two. There was a pathway between the two walls of water!

The Israelites went down through to the bottom of the sea, walking on dry land. Can you imagine how odd that must have seemed to them? Perhaps they could see fish swimming around in the tall walls of water, like in a giant aquarium. They could certainly see the things that had been hidden at the bottom of the sea for years as they walked across to the other side.

It took a long time for everyone to get across, and the Egyptians were coming quickly, especially after it was light. They weren't any bother to the Lord, though. He gave them trouble, and even made the wheels come off their chariots so they couldn't go fast.

Finally, the last of the Israelites were across and safe on the other side of the Red Sea.

“Stretch your hand back over the sea,” God told Moses.

He did, and the waters came crashing back down and covered the Egyptians. They and their horses drowned. When the Israelites saw that they were across, and that the soldiers were all dead, every one of them, they realized God had saved them, and they sang a song of praise to Him.

But there were many more exciting adventures and important lessons ahead for God's people. The journey to the promised land was just beginning.

The Life Lesson

Sometimes we find ourselves in situations that seem almost as bad and as dangerous as the fix the Israelites were in. God had a purpose and a plan for the Israelites, and he is able to teach us and take care of us, too. Things that seem to us like huge problems that can't be solved are easy for God. He already has everything planned and know just how to take care of those big difficulties. To Him, they are no problem at all!

Review Questions

Where were the Israelites going?

To the promised land.

Did they go the shortest way?

No.

Why didn't they go the short, easy route?

Because the Philistines were in the way, and they weren't ready to fight them.

How were the Israelites trapped in the wilderness?

The mountains were on one side, the Red Sea on the other, and the Egyptian soldiers were coming from behind them.

How did God lead them?

He sent an angel in a pillar of cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night.

How did God protect the Israelites from the Egyptian army?

The pillar of cloud went between them, making it light for the Israelites and dark for the Egyptians.

How did the Israelites get across the Red Sea?

God divided the water so they could walk across on dry land.

How did God slow the Egyptians down?

He made the wheels come off their chariots.

What happened after all the Israelites were across to the other side?

The water came back down and drowned the Egyptians.