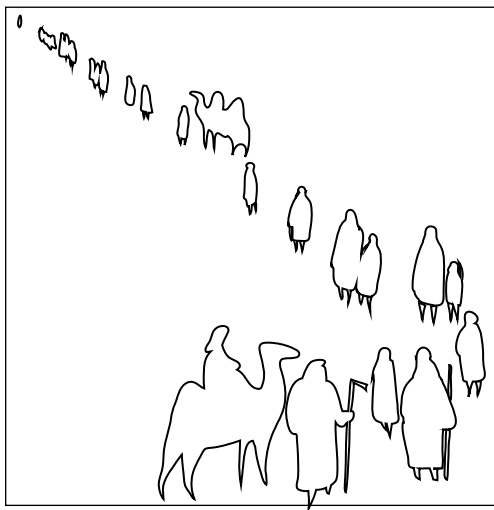
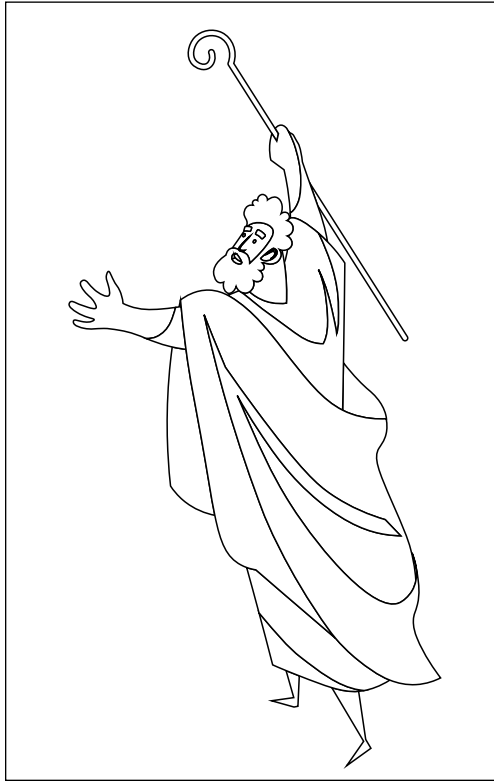


Crossing the Red Sea



Colour me!



Exodus 14:5-7, 10-22

When the king of Egypt heard that the Israelites had finally left, he and his officials changed their minds and said, “Look what we have done! We let them get away, and they will no longer be our slaves.” The king got his war chariot and army ready. He commanded his officers in charge of his six hundred best chariots and all his other chariots to start after the Israelites.

When the Israelites saw the king coming with his army, they were frightened and begged the LORD for help. They also complained to Moses, “Wasn’t there enough room in Egypt to bury us? Is that why you brought us out here to die in the desert? Why did you bring us out of Egypt anyway? While we were there, didn’t we tell you to leave us alone? We would rather be slaves in Egypt than die in this desert!”

But Moses answered, “Don’t be afraid! Be brave, and you will see the LORD save you today. These Egyptians will never bother you again. The LORD will fight for you, and you won’t have to do a thing.” The LORD said to Moses, “Why do you keep calling out to me for help? Tell the Israelites to move forward. Then hold your walking stick over the sea. The water will open up and make a road where they can walk through on dry ground. I will make the Egyptians so stubborn that they will go after you. Then I will be praised because of what happens to the king and his chariots and cavalry. The Egyptians will know for sure that I am the LORD.”

All this time God’s angel had gone ahead of Israel’s army, but now he moved behind them. A large cloud had also gone ahead of them, but now it moved between the Egyptians and the Israelites. The cloud gave light to the Israelites, but made it dark for the Egyptians, and during the night they could not come any closer. Moses stretched his arm over the sea, and the LORD sent a strong east wind that blew all night until there was dry land where the water had been. The sea opened up, and the Israelites walked through on dry land with a wall of water on each side.

Commentary

The miraculous crossing of the Red Sea is a great demonstration of God's power. Not that the people deserved this miracle! When they are trapped by the king's advancing army, all they can do is to say that they wish they'd never listened to Moses — that they would have preferred to stay in Egypt as slaves. But God overrules the weather conditions at just the right time so that the clouds, the winds and the tides change direction to the advantage of the Israelites trapped on the shore.

The wind blows back the water and makes a way through the reedy marshes of that part of the Red Sea. The escape from Egypt is complete and soon God's people are safe on the other side of this watery boundary, which later the heavy Egyptian chariots try to cross, only to be trapped and overwhelmed by the returning tide. There is no doubt that God performed a miracle in response to Moses' obedience, but also, more importantly, out of his great love for his people.

Questions

- ▶ Why do you think the Egyptian king changed his mind and chased after the Israelites?
- ▶ If you had been Moses, how would you have reacted to all the people's complaints?
- ▶ Has there ever been a time when you felt trapped in a difficult situation?
- ▶ Why didn't Moses give up and join in with the complaining?
- ▶ Imagine how you would have felt walking out across the Red Sea with the water on both sides. Do you think some people might have felt too frightened to go?



Visual aid

Use some blue bedsheets to represent the Red Sea. Practise making them move like water.



Activity idea

Re-enact the crossing of the Red Sea, using the blue sheets. Freeze the action from time to time and try to become the characters in the story, such as the people who complained because they were so afraid; Moses telling them to put their trust in God; the families crossing the Red Sea, looking both over their shoulders at the army and to either side at the water; groups arriving safely on the other side, amazed and relieved.



Prayer idea

It seemed like a dead end for the Israelites. No wonder they wanted to blame God and complain to Moses. But God showed them a way out. There are many times when we do not know what to do or pray for, or even how God can help us. Use the outline of a maze (in an activity book or downloaded from the internet) and trace your way through it with a finger, using the following simple prayer whenever you reach a dead end and have to backtrack: “Lord, I don’t know what to do next. Please show me the way to go.”

Key verse

Don’t be afraid! Be brave, and you will see the Lord save you today (Exodus 14:13).

New Testament story link

Luke 8:22-25: Jesus rescues his friends from danger on the water by commanding the waves and the winds to obey him.



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