

The Passover Story

Chapter Six: Splitting the Sea

At long last, the Jews were free! On the fifteenth day of Nissan, in the Jewish year 2448, they left Egypt, no longer slaves. There were 600,000 men over the age of 20, plus women and children- a tremendously larger group than the family of 70 that Jacob had brought to Egypt 210 years earlier.

As G-d had promised Abraham, the Jewish people left with great riches. In addition to their own belongings, they also had gifts of gold, silver and clothing that the terrified Egyptians had given them as payment for their many years of hard work.

Leading the Jewish people on their journey was a pillar of clouds during the day and a pillar of fire at night. These pillars, provided by G-d, not only guided the Jews, but also cleared the way before them, making their journey both easy and safe.

G-d led the Jewish people in a round-about way toward the land of Israel. Instead of following the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, He took them through the desert.

After three days, Pharaoh received word of their progress. The unexpected direction of their march made him think that they had gotten lost in the desert. Pharaoh now regretted that he had permitted them to leave. He immediately ordered his army to follow him in hot pursuit of his former slaves. He reached them as they were arriving at the banks of the Red Sea.

The Israelite's hearts filled with fear as they realized they were trapped between the Egyptian army and the powerful sea. Some of them wanted to fight the Egyptians; others preferred to drown in the water rather than risk losing to the Egyptians and being taken back as slaves. A third group began to complain to Moses, claiming he had taken them out of the safety of Egypt to die in the desert, and a fourth group started to pray to G-d.

But Moses calmly said, "Don't be afraid! Stand strong and see how G-d will save you today. He will fight for you, while you remain silent."

Moses led the Israelites onward, until they reached the very edge of the Red Sea. The pillar of cloud now changed its position, moving from the front of the Jewish people to the back, protecting them from the Egyptians behind.

At that moment, G-d spoke to Moses. "Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and split it, and the Jews shall cross the sea on a path of dry land between the water."

Moses did as G-d commanded. The waters of the Red Sea immediately split into two walls, leaving a dry path in the middle. The Israelites marched along that dry path, which extended from shore to shore, and safely reached the other side.

As soon as they were all safely across, the two walls of water crashed back down, drowning all the Egyptians who'd been chasing after them.

Then Moses and the entire congregation sang a song of praise to G-d for their miraculous rescue.

Additional resource: Click [here](#) to watch an entertaining video on What If?!