



LESSON 21

God parts the Red Sea

EXODUS 14:1-15:21



God fights to protect His people.



“Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent” (Exod 14:13–14).

Supporting Truths

1. God is powerful.
2. God is a warrior.
3. God saves by Himself.
4. God fights in order to glorify Himself.
5. Because God fights for us, we ought to sing praise to Him.

Objectives

1. Describe how God rescued Israel through the Red Sea.
2. Describe how God fought against the Egyptian army.
3. Describe what Israel was supposed to do while God fought for them.
4. Explain God’s purpose in defeating Pharaoh.
5. Explain the three things Israel sang about as they praised God.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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Lesson Summary

After the 10 plagues and the Passover, God planned one more display of His power. He caused Pharaoh to lead his army against the Israelites so that He could win a huge victory while Israel just watched silently. He divided the Red Sea, and then after the Israelites crossed, He caused the sea to return to its place, drowning Pharaoh's entire army. In response, all Israel feared Him and sang about His great glory and power.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God saved His people and destroyed their enemies in the crossing of the Red Sea. Likewise, God will save the Christian from death and punish His enemies who have not repented and believed in the sacrifice of Christ.

LAST WEEK



God ordains the Passover
Exodus 11:1–13:22

THIS WEEK



God parts the Red Sea
Exodus 14:1–15:21

NEXT WEEK



God preserves Israel
Exodus 15:22–17:7

DELIVERANCE

Lesson Commentary

God fights to protect His people.

God displayed His great power in the tenth plague, killing all the firstborn of Egypt and delivering His people Israel from slavery. But before leading Israel out of Egypt, He chose to give one more display of His power. God chose to fight for His people, personally delivering them from the army of the Egyptians. He did this so that all the nations would fear Him and so that Israel would also trust Him as their strong deliverer.



THINK ABOUT IT

God's ultimate purpose for all things is the declaration and praise of His own glory.

The Plan: The LORD chose to fight against Pharaoh and his army (14:1–12)

The LORD told Moses to lead the Israelites back toward Egypt in order to lure Pharaoh to attack (14:2). He

wanted Pharaoh to think the Israelites were lost and were no longer being cared for by their God (14:3). The LORD also hardened Pharaoh's heart; all this was in order to glorify His own name and cause the Egyptians to know that He is Yahweh (14:4). When trouble arises, God is still in control; He plans trouble in order to display His **glory**, His honor, splendor, greatness, and perfection (Rom 9:17).

When Pharaoh saw the Israelites “wandering,” he fell for the trap. He forgot the destruction caused by his recent stubbornness in letting God's people go. All he and his servants could think about was the large number of slaves they were about to lose (14:5). So Pharaoh immediately pursued them with 600 of his best chariots, but he also summoned his entire army (14:7–9). They caught up with them as Israel was camped by the sea. From the human perspective, there seemed to be no hope. What hope did unarmed, untrained Israelites have against the powerful Egyptian army? The Israelites were terrified (14:10) and upset at Moses for rescuing them from slavery (14:11–12). They would have rather been

slaves than die in an attempt to gain their freedom. But from God's perspective, everything was going exactly as He planned.

The Battle: The LORD fought for Israel (14:13–30)

Moses reassured the people that the LORD was still on their side. In fact, the LORD would do all the fighting. All the Israelites needed to do was to stand firm, be quiet, and watch the LORD fight (14:13–14). This is how God always saves: He always saves for the sake of His name (Isa 48:11) and by His own power without needing any human effort (Eph 2:8). All that is required is to believe that He will save (Heb 3:12). Moses spoke by faith: he knew God had a plan to glorify Himself, but he did not yet know exactly how God planned to save Israel. Then, after Moses spoke, God revealed His plan to divide the sea (Exod 14:15–18).

All night long the Israelites crossed through the sea on dry ground as the Angel of God stood between them and the Egyptians (14:19). The Angel of God appeared as a cloud that gave light to the Israelites but darkness to the Egyptians (14:20). This Angel of God is the messenger of the LORD's presence (Isa 63:9) who is often equated with the LORD Himself (14:24; Judges 13:18, 21). This is the second person of the Trinity, Jesus (John 1:18). His appearance here, giving light to the path of some and confusing the path of others, shows how God's glory appears good to those who believe but repulsive and terrifying to those who do not (2 Cor 2:14–16).

After the Israelites had miraculously crossed the sea—with water like walls on each side (Exod 14:22)—dawn came and the Egyptians began to pursue (14:23). But the LORD looked down from the fiery cloud and caused their chariots to go out of control (14:24–25). The Egyptians realized the terrifying truth: “The LORD is fighting for them against the Egyptians!” (14:25). They tried to retreat, but God brought the walls of water back down over them and not a single one who had entered the sea survived (14:26–28). How terrible it is to fight against the

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omnipotent God (Heb 10:31)! He is so powerful He cannot be beaten.

The Celebration: Israel sang praise to the LORD their warrior (14:31–15:21)

The Israelites responded by fearing the LORD and believing both in the LORD and in

Moses (14:31). Those who worship God **fear** Him: they have great respect for His power and tremble at the thought of being His enemy. So they joined with Moses in singing to the LORD.



THINK ABOUT IT

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:31).

First they sang of the LORD's character, focusing on who the LORD is. He is highly exalted (15:1). He is our strength and song and salvation (15:2). He is a warrior (15:3; Isa 42:13),

and He is mighty in power (15:5). It is by His power alone that any can be saved (Col 2:15). So those who worship God praise Him for who He is.

Second, they sang of the LORD's actions, focusing on what the LORD has done. He shattered the enemy (15:6), overthrew His enemies and devoured them with His fiery wrath (15:7), split the sea (15:8), and caused the enemy to sink like lead into the waves (15:10). The words of the enemy come in short, proud phrases, like the boasting of a warrior confident that he will be victorious (15:9). But all it took was God's breath to utterly confuse and destroy this proud enemy (15:10).

Third, based on who the LORD is and what He had done (15:11–12), they sang of their confidence in the LORD to continue to fight for them in the future. They had **faith**: they trusted Him to lead and guide, because they had seen His commitment to His people and His power to save (15:13). They trusted Him to bring them into the land, knowing that all their enemies would be terrified when they heard what God had done to the Egyptians (15:14–16). Seven different words for fear are used in these verses in order to emphasize the fear inspired by God's power. When Israel finally did come to the land, the Canaanites were in fact terrified (Josh 2:8–10). Like Israel, we also ought to remember God's actions in the past, for our faith is built upon evidence of God's faithfulness (Ps 105:5).

God had done just as He planned. First, He developed a battle plan. Then He engaged in battle single-handedly and won a stunning victory. Finally, He received the praise due to a victorious warrior as His people sang His praises. If the plagues in Egypt had not been enough, the Israelites now should have had no doubt that this was the true God, worthy of their total trust. He is still worthy of our total trust, for we know He has not just conquered the king of Egypt. By saving Israel, God also saved the line of the Messiah, and through the Messiah He has conquered the ruler of this world, Satan (Col 2:15). One day Jesus Christ will return like a warrior to destroy all His enemies and be the King of His people (Ps 2:6–9).

THINK ABOUT IT

The life of faith is living actively in light of the past, present, and future work and person of God.



Lesson Outline

God fights to protect His people.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The Problem: Pharaoh and his army chased the Israelites (14:1–12).
2. The Rescue: The LORD parted the Red Sea to save Israel (14:13–22).
3. The Victory: The LORD drowned the Egyptian army (14:23–28).
4. The Song: Israel sang praise to their Deliverer (14:31–15:21).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The Plan: The LORD chose to fight against Pharaoh and his army (14:1–12).
 - The LORD lured Pharaoh to attack in order to glorify Himself (14:1–4).
 - Pharaoh and his whole army came to capture the Israelites (14:5–9).
 - The Israelites were terrified and wished they had never stopped being slaves (14:10–12).
2. The Battle: The LORD fought for Israel (14:13–30).
 - The LORD said, “Just be quiet and watch me save you.” (14:13–14).
 - The LORD planned to show the Egyptians that He is LORD (14:15–18).
 - The Angel of God gave light to Israel but darkness to the Egyptians (14:19–20).
 - The LORD divided the sea and Israel walked through on dry ground (14:21–22).
 - The LORD drowned all the Egyptians who tried to cross (14:23–30).
3. The Celebration: Israel sang praise to the LORD their warrior (14:31–15:18).
 - Israel feared the LORD and believed in Him (14:31).
 - Israel sang of the LORD’s glorious power (15:1–6a).
 - Israel sang of the LORD shattering the enemy (15:6b–10).
 - Israel sang of their confidence in the LORD to fight for them in the future (15:11–18).



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Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **Why were the Israelites so afraid?**
Pharaoh's whole army had come to attack them.
2. **How did God save the Israelites?**
He parted the Red Sea, and they crossed on dry ground.
3. **What happened to Pharaoh's powerful army?**
Every soldier who followed Israel into the sea drowned.
4. **What did the people do after God saved them?**
They sang a song about how good and powerful God is.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **Why did God tell Moses to lead the people back toward Egypt?**
God wanted to make Pharaoh think the people were lost so that Pharaoh would try to attack them.
2. **Why did God want Pharaoh to come after the Israelites?**
God wanted to show His glory and power by defeating Pharaoh and his army.
3. **Did the Israelites trust God when they saw the army?**
No. They were afraid and wished they were still slaves in Egypt.
4. **How did Moses answer them?**
Moses told them to be quiet, stand firm, and watch God defeat Pharaoh and his army.
5. **How did God rescue Israel?**
He parted the Red Sea so that they crossed on dry land.
6. **How did God protect Israel while they were crossing?**
The Angel of God stood like a fiery cloud between the Israelites and the Egyptians.
7. **What happened to the Egyptians when they tried to cross?**
God made their chariots lose control, then He caused the water to come back and drown them.
8. **What did Israel sing about after God saved them?**
They sang about God's character (His glorious power), His actions (His victory over Egypt), and their faith in Him to guide them and fight for them in the future.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE

Tell the children that God led Israel with a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. Construct your own pillar of cloud and pillar of fire and use this to lead the children around the room or church. Using the red, orange, and yellow construction paper, create flames. Cover one side of the flames completely with cotton balls. Attach the flames and cotton balls to the top of the yardstick.

READY, SET, GO!

Tell the children that they must be ready to leave the classroom at a moment's notice, just like the Israelites when God led them out of Egypt. Tell them that as soon as they see the pillar of cloud (see activity above) they must stop whatever they're doing and line up at the door. Provide the children with an activity to work on while they wait for the pillar of cloud.



FOLLOWING THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE

Use the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire (see above activity) to "lead" the children through the different scenes in the Bible lesson.

Exodus 14:1–4 Divide the class in two (Israelites and Egyptians). Lead the Israelites back towards Egypt in order to trick Pharaoh.

Exodus 14:5–12 Tell the Egyptians to move towards the Israelites.

Exodus 14:13–20 Move the pillar of cloud and fire between the Egyptians and Israelites to separate them.

Exodus 14:21–22 Tell the Israelites walk through the midst of the sea.

Exodus 14:23–30 Tell the Egyptians to follow Israel through the sea.

Exodus 14:31–15:21 Finish the story on the other side of the sea.

PARTING THE WATERS

Fill a small tub or bucket with water. Ask the children whether they think you can separate the water with your hand. Run your hand through the water and emphasize the fact that you cannot do it. What about using a straw to blow the water apart? Allow volunteers to try this method. Explain that in today's lesson, we will learn that God separated an entire sea of water and that only God could do such a miracle.



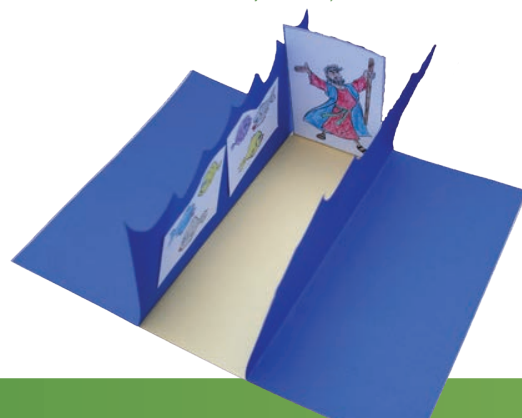
MOSES PARTS THE RED SEA

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheet, tan cardstock, blue paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Before class, cut out the pictures from the craft sheet. Take two sheets of blue paper and cut off 3 inches from the bottom of each sheet. Fold the two sheets of blue paper in half lengthwise. Design waves by cutting into the top edge of the two the papers (see below). In class, have children color the pictures and glue them onto the locations shown in the picture below.

Moses Parts the Red Sea
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.



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AGES 6–8



THINGS THAT FRIGHTEN

Ask the class what things make them afraid. In today's lesson, we will learn what made the Israelites afraid and what Moses told them God would do.

HEARTS OF CLAY

Before class, mold two hearts out of red modeling clay. Bake one heart in the oven to make it hard. Before the lesson, present the hearts to the class. Explain that a “soft heart” is one that can be molded by God because God has shown mercy to that person. An example of someone with a soft heart is Moses. In contrast, a hard heart is fixed in that condition and cannot be changed. You may choose to pass around the hearts so that children can feel the difference between the two. Emphasize that the “hard heart” will represent Pharaoh during the lesson. Read John 12:40 and Romans 9:18 to explain how God can justly show mercy to some and at the same time harden the hearts of others to fulfill His sovereign will.



HEARTS OF MOSES AND PHARAOH

While teaching through the lesson, alternate holding the two hearts (see “Hearts of Clay”) when talking about Moses and Pharaoh.

WATER TO THE LEFT AND RIGHT

Supplies: 3–4 rolls of blue cellophane, cutouts of fish and other sea creatures.

Directions: Before class, cover a section of wall with wide pieces of blue cellophane, leaving a two-to-three-foot gap between the pieces. Attach the fish cutouts behind the cellophane with tape or thumbtacks. (Variation: If a dry-erase board is available, draw several large fish on the right and left ends of the board, and then cover the drawings with blue cellophane, leaving a gap in between.) When you begin your lesson, ask the children to guess what they will learn today. Explain that they will learn about a miracle by which God separated a sea of water, creating walls of water on the right and left. Use the backdrop during your lesson to illustrate the story.



GOD PROTECTS THE ISRAELITES

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheet, tan construction paper, blue paper, crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Have children fold a sheet of tan construction paper in half lengthwise. Create waves that are curling inward out of blue paper. Color the pictures and cut them out. Glue the fish to the waves. Glue everything to the tan construction paper as shown below.



*God Protects the Israelites
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1.*

AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

MAPPING THE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS

Using a map (print or digital) show the class the route the Israelites likely took when they left Egypt. Tell the children that although the locations of Pi-hahiroth, Migdol, and Baal-zephon are uncertain, it is likely that the Israelites, instead of continuing to head east into the Sinai north of the Bitter Lakes, turned to go south on the Egyptian side of the Bitter Lakes. In this case the Red Sea crossing would have taken place at the Bitter Lakes. Explain that this does not make the account any less miraculous, because the Bitter Lakes are large enough that battleships and aircraft carriers have passed through them. Remind the children that the body of water was deep enough to drown every single soldier in Pharaoh's army when God caused the water to return to normal.

DIVIDING THE WATER

Tell the children that you will demonstrate how to divide water before their very eyes. Do they think you can do this? Hold two ice cubes together and slowly pull them apart. Use this funny activity to prepare the children to learn about God's miraculous power to part the water of the Red Sea.



ILLUSTRATE

THE HOOVER DAM

Bring in a picture (print or digital) of the Hoover Dam. Use this illustration to show God's miraculous power to part the Red Sea. The Hoover Dam, located on the border between the states of Arizona and Nevada, was built across the Colorado River and created Lake Mead, the largest reservoir in the United States (by volume). The dam took 5 years to build (1931-1936) and cost \$49 million dollars (almost 1 billion in today's currency). This monumental project, constructed out of concrete, employed thousands of workers, hundreds of which lost their lives during construction. However, when God divided the Red Sea He did it instantaneously, by Himself, used water (not concrete) itself to create two walls, injured none of the Israelites, and returned the sea to normal at the exact time He wanted, killing every member of Pharaoh's army.

GOD FIGHTS FOR HIS PEOPLE

The Red Sea is not the only instance of God fighting for His people. Use the following sword drills to talk about other times God gained the victory for Israel.

- Joshua 6:20 God destroyed the walls of Jericho.
- Joshua 10:8–14 God defeated the Amorites.
- 2 Kings 19:35 The LORD killed 185,000 Assyrians.



APPLY

THE FIRST PROPHETESS

Miriam is the first prophetess mentioned in the Bible, but she is not alone. Ask the children if they can name any other women given this honor. Other women to receive this special honor: Deborah (Judg 4:4); Huldah (2 Kgs 22:14); Isaiah's wife (Isa 8:3); Anna (Luke 2:36); and Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:9).