**The Israelites Leave Egypt**

**A Bible Story From**

**Exodus 13:17–14:14**

**Bible Story Number: 1010530**

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**The Israelites Leave Egypt**

**Bible Story**

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**Background**

God made a profound promise to Abraham (called a covenant):

I will bless you and make you the father of a great nation.

I will make you famous throughout history.

I will protect your allies and punish your enemies.

I will bless the entire world through your descendants.

This promise (covenant) was passed on to Isaac and Jacob. God reconfirmed His promise to the descendents of Abraham. The nation of Israel continued to be God’s chosen people.

The Israelites (descendents of Jacob) moved to Egypt as a part of God’s plan. God used what Joseph’s brothers intended as evil as a way to bless Joseph and rescue the entire family.

After the tenth plague that God sent on the Egyptian people, Pharaoh finally let the Israelites leave. They had been in Egypt 430 years. The day they left, there were approximately 600,000 foot soldiers in the Israelite army. The total number of people was much larger because this did not include their families.

**Story from the Bible**

**Exodus 13:17–14:14**

This is what the Bible says.

When Pharaoh let the Israelites go, they left in battle formation. God did not take them in a direct route to the land of the Philistines (and the land He had promised), even though it was closer. God knew they were not ready for war, so God led them around toward the Rea Sea, by way of the wilderness.

The Israelites were led by God. He went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud during the day and in a pillar of fire at night. The fire gave enough light to allow them to travel day or night. The cloud and fire never left. It was in front of the people leading them.

God instructed Moses to tell the people to go back so they would be camped between Migdol and the sea. Pharaoh would think the people were wandering around in confusion and that they were boxed in by the wilderness.

God hardened Pharaoh’s heart once again. He decided to pursue the Israelites. God did this so He would receive glory when He would destroy Pharaoh and all his army.

The Israelites did as God commanded. They camped in front of the sea.

Pharaoh and his officials saw that the Israelites had left and they changed their minds. They realized that they had freed their slaves and decided to go get them back.

Pharaoh got his chariots and troops ready. He took 600 of his best chariots plus all the rest of the chariots of Egypt. Each chariot carried an officer. They pursued the Israelites and caught up with them as they camped by the Red Sea.

When the Israelites saw Pharaoh and his army coming, they were frightened. They complained to Moses that he had brought them out there to die. They asked, “What have you done to us?” They wanted him to surrender and let them go back to Egypt as slaves. They said, “It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”

But Moses had spoken with God and told them not to be afraid. He told them to stand firm and see what God would do. He told them that they would see God fight for them that very day and that they would never see these Egyptians again after that day.

That concludes this story from the Bible.

**Retelling the Story**

Let’s review this story by retelling it as a group. We want to retell it as faithfully as we can to the story from the Bible. We do not want to add to it or leave out anything important. Who will get us started?

**Questions**

* What did God do that caused Pharaoh to think the Israelites were confused and boxed in by the wilderness?
* Who hardened Pharaoh’s heart and why?
* How many chariots did Pharaoh use to pursue the Israelites?
* How did the Israelites respond when they saw Pharaoh and his army coming?
* What did Moses say to the Israelites?
* What did you like about this story?
* What did you not like about this story?
* What did you learn about God from this story?

**Prayer**

Prayer is more than a way to end the session. It is time to talk to God. Public prayer is a model for others. Boldly ask God to guide participants to use the Bible story with others. Ask God to give you and the participant’s insight and understanding as you think about this biblical event.