



# EXODUS

FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM

## BIBLE TEXT | EXODUS 14:1-14

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**1** Then the Lord said to Moses, **2** "Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. **3** For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, 'They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.' **4** And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord." And they did so.

**5** When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" **6** So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, **7** and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. **8** And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. **9** The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

**10** When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. **11** They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? **12** Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." **13** And Moses said to the 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. **14** The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."



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## DEVOTIONAL FOR EXODUS 14:1-14

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Sometimes, it's easy to forget that the "stories" that we've been hearing for all of our lives are not just simply stories, but they're a history of real people. I find myself having to differentiate between make-believe stories, outright fantasies, and historical and biblical figures when I'm talking with our 3-year-old to make sure that she doesn't grow up associating Moses with the Tooth Fairy and unicorns.

In Exodus 14, Moses and the Israelites have just experienced victory and freedom. After 430 years of slavery, it's hard to imagine what you'd be thinking if you were in their shoes. The Israelites had just hurriedly left Egypt while the Egyptians were still burying their dead (Numbers 33:3-4), and with a 3 day head start, they were starting to escape. Then God tells Moses to turn back around and to camp at Pi-Hahiroth, meaning "the mouth of the canal." That way, Pharaoh will think that they're lost and trapped, and God will use Pharaoh's mistake to show His glory yet again.

Just like Pharaoh, the Israelites probably thought that they were lost and trapped, too: "Why are we waiting here???" I wouldn't be able to imagine longing to be free for so long, to finally achieve that freedom, and then to stop after a few days and just sit there. The restlessness, the fear? In hindsight, we know that they should have trusted in God. But how often do we struggle with trusting that God will help us with finding a new house, or handling a difficult conversation with a friend, or finding the right job after being out of work for six months?

These real people, the Israelites, are in a wilderness, and then they see the 600 chosen chariots (likely the royal guard) and all the rest of Egypt's chariots. The Israelites know they can't run. Somehow, they don't remember how faithful God has been the rest of their life, and they cry out in verse 11. "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." I can't imagine how terrified they were. And they didn't have Jeremiah 29:11, Philippians 4:6-7, Matthew 6:25-34, or even Proverbs 3:5-6 yet.

Moses shows his faith that earned his spot in Hebrews 11:23-28. He speaks to the Israelites, knowing there's a reason why they were there saying, "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." Moses knows what will happen next, and just says, "Watch this."



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## Questions:

1. Do you stop to put yourself in someone's place when you're thinking through their story? In the Bible? In the news?
2. Would you have reacted differently in the Israelites' position? Has there been a situation in your own life where you doubted God?
3. Are you trusting in God's provision in your life? Your family? Your finances? Why or why not?