

Teaching Plan
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: September 24, 2017
Lesson Title: "Victory"
Lesson Passage: Exodus 14:13-28

ABOUT THIS LESSON

As they made their way out of Egypt, the Israelites found themselves in an extremely difficult situation. With water in front of them, impassible terrain on either side, and Pharaoh's army bearing down on them from behind, they found themselves in a deadly trap. But what made the difference was that God was still on their side.

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

(1) Describe the circumstances that led to the confrontation with Pharaoh's army. (2) Summarize the outcome of this encounter.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

Let someone read the summary statement in Exodus 12:51, then use a map (or maps in the Bibles of class members) to illustrate the following explanations: (1) The shortest route from Egypt to Canaan lay along the sea coast to Gaza. (On a map, trace the route from Raamses to Gaza.) But the Philistines had settled in this coastal plain, and their territory was heavily guarded; for this reason, the Israelites were led to avoid this route (read Ex. 13:17). (2) Ex. 13:18 says that God directed the people "by way of the wilderness" toward the "Reed Sea." NOTE: In v. 18, the Hebrew term "Yam Suph" (frequently rendered "Red Sea") means "Sea of Reeds" or "Sea of Rushes." The translation "Red Sea" appeared later in the Septuagint, the 3rd-century B.C. Greek version of the Old Testament. (3) The Israelites began their departure from Egypt, traveling southward as far as Etham, just beyond Succoth (13:20). But, then, the Lord told Moses to turn northward and encamp by the sea (Exod. 14:1-2). This ruse would evoke an attack by Pharaoh's troops, an attack that was doomed to fail (14:3-4). This was to become the setting for the climactic event of the Exodus account. EXPLANATORY NOTE: Some Bible maps show an Exodus route through the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula (the "Wilderness of Paran"); some trace a more northerly route. Actually, the route cannot be established with absolute certainty, given the information that is available today.

TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. To "set the stage" for the crisis that is highlighted in this lesson, ask someone to read Exodus 14:5-9, then share these thoughts:
(1) The chariot was the weapon for which the Egyptian army was known and feared. The "horsemen" (v. 9) were actually charioteers; in each chariot there was a driver and an archer. (2) The other enemy, no less sinister to the Hebrews, was the sea. It was more than just a natural barrier to

their retreat; the sea terrified the ancient Israelites, who regarded it as the realm of evil. (*To illustrate, cite Ps. 74:13.*) So, the fleeing Israelites feared the sea in front of them as much as the Egyptian army behind them.

2. Comment on the reaction of the people, described in vv. 10b-12:

(1) The hopeless reaction of the Israelites was an expression of the slave mentality they had developed through generations of oppression. They had come to value safety more than freedom. (2) The question in v. 11 ("Were there no graves in Egypt?") is ironic, for Egypt was famous for the pyramids, the tombs of the Pharaohs, even in ancient times.

3. Call attention to the three-point formula in v. 13: FEAR NOT.

This injunction, rooted in the assurance of God's presence, appears repeatedly in the Bible (refer to Gen. 26:24; Num. 14:9; Deut. 1:21; Ps. 27:1-3; Lk. 12:32). APPLICATION: Suggest that fear is a paralyzing force that often keeps God's people from doing His will (for instance, bearing a Christian witness in a pagan world). **STAND FIRM.** "Stand firm" means "take a position," or "take a stand," something that Christians must sometimes do when confronted by that pagan world just mentioned. APPLICATION: Ask class members to give examples, such as when business associates engage in immoral conduct in daily work or at out-of-town conventions. (Read Eph. 6:13.) **SEE THE SALVATION OF THE LORD.** "You have only to be still" in Ex. 14:14 implies "you only have to stop complaining, God will do the rest." APPLICATION: Suggest that it sometimes takes a lot of faith to wait in quietness while God does His work. Modern Christians are not good at "being still" and waiting for God to act.

4. Focus on the account of God's victory over the forces of Pharaoh in Ex. 14:21-31. Ask volunteers to describe the scene portrayed there:

(1) Verse 14 tells exactly what happened. This was God's battle; He alone fought the Pharaoh's forces--"the Lord drove the sea back" [v. 21], "the Lord clogged the wheels of the Egyptian chariots" [vv. 24-25], "the Lord saved Israel" [v. 30]--while the Israelites just looked on and "saw the great work which the Lord did against the Egyptians" [v. 31]. (2) Recall, also, God's victory over the evil power of the sea, referred to earlier (refer to Ps. 74:13). (3) Note the two responses to God's triumph (v. 31): They feared (revered) the Lord, and believed in Him and His servant Moses.

CLOSING THE LESSON

Share this anecdote: In 1953, Cecil B. DeMille recommended that Paramount Studios remake his 1923 movie, "The Ten Commandments," which included a dramatic portrayal of the "parting of the sea." The executive board resisted the idea. But Adolf Zukor, the Hungarian Jew who founded Paramount, agreed with DeMille, and said: "Well, I find it embarrassing that it takes Cecil here--a Gentile, no less--to remind us Jews of our heritage." (The 1956 "Ten Commandments" became one of the highest grossing box office films of all time.)

