

CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

Unusual Leading, Remarkable Results

Exodus 13:17–14:31

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

With a mighty hand the Lord brought plagues that destroyed the pride of Egypt. *With a mighty hand* the Lord humbled Egypt's exalted Pharaoh to beg before Moses. *With a mighty hand* the Lord released the Jews from the house of slavery. But this was only the beginning.

Today we'll walk with the Israelites who followed the pillar of cloud by day and the column of fire by night. We'll feel their suspense as Egypt hemmed them in near the Red Sea. We'll feel the awe they experienced when they witnessed *the mighty hand* of God form walls out of the parted waters.

From Exodus 13:17–14:31, Chuck Swindoll teaches us to trust God even when life seems impossible and to let Him fight our battles, so we can rest in His victories.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Can you imagine sitting near the evening fire after carrying bricks for fourteen hours and listening to your grandpa recount God's promises to Abraham:

"You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. . . . I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River." (Genesis 15:13–14, 18)

I wonder if it's been four hundred years? would probably be the first question to come to mind. For centuries, many lived without seeing *the mighty hand* of God, but during the time of Moses, God said, "Now!" He didn't lie or bluff Abraham. He wasn't too weak or busy. He waited, and at the best time, He acted.

Quotable

*Our Lord does
His best work
in impossible
situations. Never
doubt that He will
guide you through
the unpredictable.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Before we study the works of our unrestrainable God, pray that He will bless you in this study—that He will give you clarity to witness His works afresh so you can grow in your understanding of Him and His will for your life.



Observation

In the first study, we provided a *Searching the Scriptures* review chart for your reference as you study the Bible. Refer to it as needed during each of the steps in this study. We've divided *Exodus 13:17–14:31* into four paragraphs. The link provides these divisions for you and presents Chuck's two favorite versions of the Bible: the New Living Translation and the New American Standard Bible.

Heading South—Exodus 13:17–22

Read this passage slowly and note key observations below.

Peruse this [map](#) to visualize the exodus routes. Jot down any notes if you want.

Note the two unusual ways God guided the Israelites mentioned in the passage.



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God's Purpose with Pharaoh—Exodus 14:1–4

Read this passage slowly and note key observations below.

What is unusual about God's instructions in this paragraph?

Fear Before Egypt—Exodus 14:5–14

Read this passage slowly and note key observations below.

What two commands from Moses in 14:13–14 demonstrate God's unusual leading?



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Through the Waters—Exodus 14:15–31

Read this passage slowly and note key observations below.

What was unusual about God’s command to Moses and the Israelites?

How did the author characterize God’s work in 14:31? (Reference the NASB footnote *n* for the literal translation of *power*.)

In epic fashion, God confirmed His promises to the Israelites and publicized His power as Moses led the Jews in the beginning of their journey. God likes to lead us in unusual ways because He specializes in remarkable results that only He can accomplish.



Interpretation

Sometimes the author of a book in the Bible will help us understand God’s work by commenting directly on God’s purposes. Let’s begin by looking at these explicit comments.



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According to Exodus 13:17–18, why did God lead the Israelites south instead of northeast? What does this tell you about God's ways?

According to 14:3–4 and 17–18, why did God cause Pharaoh and the Egyptian army to chase after the Israelites? What does this tell you about God's ways?

Biblical authors also illustrate their theology through the actions and words of the people in the story. Compare what Pharaoh said about the Israelites in 14:5 with what the Israelites said to Moses in 14:12. What do their statements reveal about the necessity of God's influence in our minds and hearts to help us interpret His works?

How did the Egyptians' words in 14:25 accomplish God's plans mentioned in 14:3–4 and 17–18?



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What would be the evidence of Israel's faith if they obeyed Moses' commands in Exodus 14:13?

After God's unusual leading depicted in this passage, how did the Israelites have a change of heart according to 14:31?

If you want to dig deeper, consult your commentary, dictionary, or [Lumina](#) to read about Exodus 13:17–14:31, and record your notes.

Not long after God initiated the fulfillment of His promises, the Israelites wanted to return to slavery at the sight of Pharaoh's army behind them and the Red Sea in front of them. "It's better to be a slave in Egypt than a corpse in the wilderness," they cried out in fear (Exodus 14:12). They couldn't imagine if or how God would help them. But He did help them because He is the God who fights for His people.

Fast-forward more than 1,400 years, and we see God wrestle sin and death, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, to give us life and peace. Just as the Israelites worshiped God who made a way through the sea and defeated Pharaoh's army, take a moment to pause and sit in awe of the same God we also worship.



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Correlation

Israel's passing through the sea became a dominant theme in the minds of the biblical authors. They worshiped the God who divided the waters, led them to their own land, and formed them into a nation. Later, when the Israelites rebelled against God, He exiled them to foreign lands. However, God offered them hope that they would one day return. Writing about seven hundred years after the exodus event, the prophet Isaiah recorded these words from God:

*I am the LORD, who opened a way through the waters,
making a dry path through the sea.
I called forth the mighty army of Egypt
with all its chariots and horses.
I drew them beneath the waves, and they drowned,
their lives snuffed out like a smoldering candlewick.
But forget all that—
it is nothing compared to what I am going to do.
For I am about to do something new.
See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?
I will make a pathway through the wilderness.
I will create rivers in the dry wasteland. (Isaiah 43:16–19)*

About seven hundred years after Isaiah, John the Baptist probably quoted this passage when the Jews stepped into the water to be baptized and to prepare for the Messiah, whom we now know as Jesus Christ.

Later, the apostle Paul referenced the exodus overtones of slavery and freedom in [Romans 6](#), comparing Israel's redemption with the newer, more drastic redemption offered by God through Christ. Read [Romans 6](#) and summarize what Paul said about life prior to accepting God's grace. Compare that to the freedom we find when we place our faith in Christ. See a pattern in God's work?



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Application

Chuck wrote, “Application is the crowning accomplishment of Bible study—the finishing touch, the ultimate setting of the diamond in the ring of truth.”¹

How do you respond when you’re in a pressing situation—even a pressing season of life? When you’re getting the squeeze, do you try to avoid or control the situation, or do you turn to God in prayer, requesting His comfort and guidance? What does this look like practically?

Notice what Moses commanded the Israelites: “Stand still . . . watch . . . stay calm” (Exodus 14:13–14). Perhaps you simply need a full night’s sleep. Or you may just need to sit still and ask God to help release the grip of anxiety. Reflect and consider how you can be still and watch God work in your life.

Do you know someone who’s living frantically without rest in Christ? Say a prayer that God would grant this person rest so he or she can see God's power as He works in our world.

At the end of his sermon, Chuck reminds us that we begin to be worshipers when we realize the sea opens and closes at God’s choosing—not before or after but only when and if He commands it. Take comfort that our God “*chose* to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us” (1 Thessalonians 5:9, emphasis added).



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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, You are not a tame God who succumbs to the whims of Pharaoh or collapses beneath heavy waters. You are enthroned above the waters, and You steer the heart of Pharaoh. Thank You for softening my heart to see Your divine light and taste the new life I have in Your Son, Jesus. In His name I pray, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 160.



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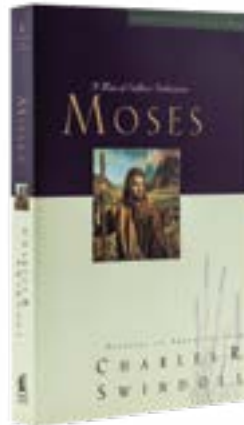
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For the 2018–2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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