Exodus 14

SLIDE 14-1

- Tonight we study the first stage of the Exodus, that is Israel's flight from Egypt and the Egyptians' pursuit
 - The Israelites have already begun to move eastward out of Egypt

- They moved from Rameses to Succoth and then again to Etham
- You may notice on my map or a map in your Bible that these places are marked with a question mark in many cases
 - The question mark reflects scholars' uncertainty about where the locations mentioned in the Exodus were actually located
 - This is an important detail to remember tonight in our study
 - As we go deeper into the events of the Exodus, it will be increasingly the case that the locations mentioned in the text are shrouded in mystery
 - We simply don't know for sure where they are, though there are clues in many cases to help us get close
 - Even though your maps may suggest the locations of these places, that doesn't mean those locations are correct
 - The maps in your Bible aren't inspired like the text of scripture
 - Most of the places mentioned in Exodus 14 and later including Etham, the various stopping points in the wandering, the Red Sea crossing and even Mt Sinai itself are all guesses
 - And those guesses are almost certainly wrong
- As we study the events, I will also suggest approximate locations for some events while leaving other locations unmarked
 - Obviously, I may be wrong as well, but I think you'll agree (at least in a few cases) that the conventional wisdom about certain places in the Exodus story are more legend than fact
 - And yet there are strong clues leading us to other locations, ones that traditional scholars may disagree about

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 Just remember the scholars' guesses are not inherently better than any other

- Especially since <u>there is no archeological evidence</u> to support any of the current locations claimed for the major events of the Exodus
- Tonight's lesson will include an examination of one those mysterious locations: the crossing of the Red Sea
 - I will enlist the help of a video presentation at the end of the lesson to examine a possible location for the crossing
 - The video is one researcher's opinion on the place of the Red Sea crossing
 - I think the video is provocative and personally convincing
 - It lines up with the Biblical text
 - And it provides some powerful circumstantial evidence
 - In the end, the video is still only one perspective
 - So I am leaving the video until the end of tonight's lesson simply as food for thought
 - But I want to be clear that the teaching for the night will come from scripture as usual
 - The video is for entertainment purposes only
 - Since I cannot make this copyrighted video available as part of the materials on our website, I am including a link to Amazon where you can purchase the video for less than \$9

http://www.amazon.com/The-Exodus-Revealed-Searching-Crossing/dp/B00005AUE2

- Last week we saw the nation preparing to leave on the week-long Exodus
 - The Angel of the Lord (the Second Person of the Godhead) was leading the nation forward as a cloud by day and fire by night
 - The Lord's presence will accompany the nation in this manner for the entire 40 years they spend wandering in the desert

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Ex. 13:21 The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.

Ex. 13:22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

- Some scholars suggest that the cloud had the effect of covering the nation from the effects of the hot sun during the day
 - While the fire gave light and warmth during the cold evenings
- We also noted last week that these two objects made it possible for Israel to travel for seven straight days nonstop
 - Remember, the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread was given specifically to remember Israel's flight out of Egypt in haste
 - That flight was seven days
 - And in 13:21 we're told they traveled "by day and by night"
- How could 2+ million people travel for seven straight days?
 - Only by the supernatural provision of God
 - God enables this remarkable feat
 - Just as He enables many remarkable things in this story
 - Why does God insist that their travel happen so quickly?
 - The events of chapter 14 give us that answer

SLIDE 14-3

Ex. 14:1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Ex. 14:2 "Tell the sons of Israel to turn back and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you shall camp in front of Baal-zephon, opposite it, by the sea.

Ex. 14:3 "For Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, 'They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.'

Ex. 14:4 "Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." And they did so.

The nation moves into the wilderness under the Lord's direction

Exodus 14 4 of 18

 As the nation moves out, the Pharaoh has sent spies to follow the people and report back their location to Pharaoh

- So the Lord tells Israel even as they begin their trek that Pharaoh will be watching
- And what he sees will convince him that Israel is lost and trapped and vulnerable
- But then in v.4 the Lord reveals to Moses that Pharaoh's perception is intentionally created by the Lord to cause Pharaoh to chase after Israel
 - In fact, the Lord is not finished hardening Pharaoh's heart
 - The Lord will once again cause Pharaoh to think he can defeat Israel and their God with his army
 - But the Lord is using Pharaoh's sin to glorify Himself through a display of His power
 - Remember what the Lord told Moses in the very beginning concerning Pharaoh
 - The Lord raised Pharaoh up for the very purpose of displaying His power in Egypt
 - Pharaoh existed for one reason: to be defeated by God
- In these first verses of Exodus 14, we're already given numerous place names to indicate the place where Israel camped in the desert after leaving Egypt

SLIDE 14-4

- But as I mentioned at the start this evening, the location of these places are a mystery to us today
 - Even if your Bible or a map suggests a location, be aware that they are guessing and are likely wrong
 - We have no archeological evidence to support the supposed locations of these places
- So can we determine an approximate location for them from scripture alone? Perhaps
 - Let's begin by simply noting the geographical boundaries of the event

SLIDE 14-5

First, they are moving into the wilderness

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- This refers to the Sinai Peninsula.
- The event happened east of Egypt next to the sea and opposite some location on the opposite side of the sea
 - If we look at the geography of the Sinai peninsula, we can immediately narrow down the possibilities
- The Sinai has the Red Sea on either side
 - And we know that Israel is fleeing from Egypt, so they must be traveling eastward
 - It makes no sense to assume they crossed the Red Sea in a westwardly direction, because that would send them back in the direction of Egypt
- Some of suggested that Israel was backed up against some other body of water, like the Reed Sea
 - These suggestions are not consistent with scripture
 - The Hebrew words for Red Sea (yam sup) are not translated "Reed Sea" despite sounding similar in English
 - Secondly, the descriptions of the cross itself don't fit with a shallow marshy body of water like the Reed Sea or similar locations
 - We are talking about the depths of the Red Sea, either the Gulf of Suez or the Gulf of Aqaba
- So if Israel wandered to a point that they were backed up against the sea and assuming they were attempting to move east away from Egypt, that leaves only two places they could be
 - Either they were trapped on the western side of the Gulf of Suez or the western side of the Gulf of Aqaba
 - Let's consider the possibility they crossed from the western side of the Suez
 - Could they Red Sea crossing have been from the western bank to the eastern bank of the Suez?
 - There is two serious problems with this possibility
 - First, Israel would not be wandering in the wilderness

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- Rather they would still be sojourning in Egypt
- They would not have gone out of Egypt

SLIDE 14-6

- Secondly, if they were to cross the Red Sea at the Gulf of Suez, they would still have been in Egypt when they made it to the other side!
 - Remember, the Egyptians largely controlled the Sinai Peninsula, as they still do today
 - So crossing from the western side of the Suez to the eastern side would have left Israel still in Egypt
- This leaves us with only one likely location for the Jewish encampment described in Exodus 14

- The western side of the Gulf of Aqaba is the only location that fits all the data we find in scripture
 - It's in the wilderness, not in Egypt
 - It is hemmed in by the Red Sea
 - And it provides for an escape by crossing the Red Sea from the West to the east away from Egypt
- With this conclusion comes an important implication
 - If the nation crossed the Red Sea at the Gulf of Aqaba, then it would mean that Mt. Sinai is not actually located in the Sinai Peninsula
 - It would have to be located in present-day NW Saudi Arabia
 - Could this be possible?
- We are going to examine the location of Mt. Sinai later in a few chapters,
 - Including watching another video that examines the archeological evidence for the location of the mountain
 - For now, let's see if the Bible leaves room for this possibility
- First, let's remember what we've already read back in Exodus 3 concerning the location of this mountain
 - Mt. Sinai is the same mountain where Moses first heard from the Lord in the burning bush

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Ex. 3:1 Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

SLIDE 14-8

- This mountain, also called Mt. Horeb, is said to be located in the land of Midian, on the western side of the land
- If we look at a map, we find that ancient Midian is the ancient strip of land located to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba
 - And the mountain is located in the western part of Midian, that is near the Red Sea
- Later in that chapter, we read this:

Ex. 3:12 And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."

- The Lord commanded Moses to bring the nation of Israel back to this very same place to worship
- This mountain in the land of Midian will be the place that Israel will worship the Lord and receive the Law

SLIDE 14-9

- Therefore, the Biblical text seems to support the conclusion that the nation crossed the Red Sea at the Gulf of Aqaba
- From this point, they would have moved eastward into the land of Midian
- Thirdly, we have Paul's description of the mountain of Moses from Galatians 4

SLIDE 14-10

Gal. 4:24 This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Gal. 4:25 Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

Paul says that Mt. Sinai is located in Arabia

SLIDE 14-11

 The land of Arabia has always been identified with present day Saudi Arabia Exodus 14 8 of 18

- This further confirms that the Jews would have crossed into Midian to meet God at the mountain
- So from these details in scripture, we can construct a theoretical exodus path for Israel

o They left Etham headed east into the Sinai wilderness

SLIDE 14-12

- They probably started by following the desert trading route that wandered through the Sinai
- At some point, the Lord led the nation off that path toward the south and into the rugged mountains of the southeastern tip of the peninsula
- Could Israel really travel so far in just seven days?
 - The distance is about 180 miles as the crow flies
 - If we add another 30 miles for the back and forth wandering we arrive at 210 miles traveled in seven days
 - If the Jews walked day and night stopping only occasionally, we could assume 20 hours of travel per day
 - That would mean they only needed to walk at about 1.5 miles per hour on average
 - The average person walks at 3-3.5 miles per hour
 - So if we were to increase their average walking speed to 3.5 miles per hour, the Jews would only have needed to travel about 9 hours per day over that week
 - So this is a very reasonable distance to walk, and they could do it at a leisurely pace given the Lord's leading them day and night
- Eventually, they landed most likely at a large flat beachhead on the western bank of the Gulf of Agaba

SLIDE 14-13

 This is the only place along the gulf that could sustain millions of people under the conditions mentioned in the Bible

- Backed up to the sea, shut in by the wilderness
- And there is only a single way in and out through a narrow channel

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• As Pharaoh's spies reported to Pharaoh that the Israelites had left the trade route and were headed south, the Pharaoh thought he had an opportunity

 He knew that there was no escape from the southern tip of Sinai, since the Red Sea prevented the Jews from preceding further

SLIDE 14-15

- Once they had entered into the steep mountain terrain of the Sinai, they lost the ability to maneuver freely
- They would have been like rats in a maze with no way out
- From that point, Pharaoh would only have to drive his chariots into the mountains and then let the mountains hold the Jews until his army crushed them
 - This was exactly the idea God intended Pharaoh to have, so that Pharaoh would lead the charge against Israel
 - In the end, the nation would escape Pharaoh's army through the sea crossing

Ex. 14:5 When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?"

Ex. 14:6 So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him;

Ex. 14:7 and he took six hundred select chariots, and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them.

Ex. 14:8 The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were going out boldly.

Ex. 14:9 Then the Egyptians chased after them with all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and they overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

- God hardens Pharaoh's heart once again, but notice the people join him in this change of heart
 - Now that Egypt has lost it's source of free labor, the work of building will have to be done by the people of Egypt
 - Once this realization sinks in, the Egyptian people decide that maybe letting Israel go wasn't such a good idea after all
 - So Pharaoh readies his own chariot and six hundred more of his army
 - And they set out after Israel

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By this point, Israel is already camped at the edge of the Red Sea

- And in v.9 we're told that the Egyptian army overtakes Israel by the sea
 - At the point where Israel is encamped and trapped by the sea and the mountains
- The chariots of the eighteenth dynasty of Egypt were feared throughout the ancient world

SLIDE 14-16

- They were fast and nimble, enabling a warrior to quickly overtake an adversary, dodge any attack, and turn quickly for a second pass
 - The design of chariots in Egypt evolved over the centuries
- At this time, two designs were common
 - A four spoked wheel and a larger six-spoked wheel

Ex. 14:10 As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD.

Ex. 14:11 Then they said to Moses, "Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt?

Ex. 14:12 "Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, '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."

Ex. 14:13 But Moses said to the people, "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever.

Ex. 14:14 "The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent."

Ex. 14:15 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward.

Ex. 14:16 "As for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land.

Ex. 14:17 "As for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen.

Ex. 14:18 "Then the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen."

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• In a sign of things to come, the people of Israel begin to complain to Moses at the first sight of the approaching Egyptian army

- We certainly can't blame the Israelites for being scared
 - The sight of the world's strongest army bearing down on you with your backs to the Red Sea would scare anyone
 - But they have also seen the power of God unlike anyone else to that point in history
 - And so their words are completely unreasonable in light of what they have seen God do on their behalf
 - They turn against Moses and declare that Moses is at fault for freeing them from slavery
 - In a sarcastic statement, they ask Moses if there weren't enough graves in Egypt for all Israel, so is that why you brought us out here to die?
 - Besides being an exaggeration, the statement is ironic since Egypt was known worldwide for its elaborate graves, the pyramids
- Remember earlier in our study when we studied the way God called Moses into leadership
 - Among other things we noted that God was prepared to give Moses what he needed to succeed
 - And we also noted that God would make clear to His people that Moses was their appointed leader
 - Well, here we see the reality of life as a spiritual leader among God's people
 - As much as we like to think we are mature and reasonable, the truth is we're all sheep
 - And like sheep, we are prone to stray, to get lost, to run in fear and to follow the herd
 - Moses is getting his first taste of what's in store for him in leading a stubborn and stiff-necked people

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 The Israelites possess two of the worst personality flaws combined together: incredibly short memories and no appreciation for irony

- That's the only explanation for some of the things they say to Moses
- Here they ask Moses if he freed them because he felt this was a better place to die than in Egypt
 - As if to suggest that it was Moses alone who imagined the whole caper and orchestrated the plan by himself
 - Have they already forgotten how the Lord was the One running the show?
 - Anytime we are called to lead God's people, in any capacity, be prepared for a similar response
 - Even our best people might let fear and doubt cloud their memories and leave them vulnerable to saying dumb things
 - Not every decision we make will lead to stunning success, and sometime our apparent defeats are outcomes God intended to achieve some greater purpose
 - God lets events fail, programs fail, ministries fail, churches fail so that His purposes may be met
 - Human accomplishment and satisfaction is never God's purpose
 - Spiritual growth and holiness in His people and the increase of His glory are the only imperatives driving His purposes
 - And trials and disappointments are some of the best experiences to achieve those outcomes
- In response, Moses says exactly the right things
 - First, he orders the people not to fear
 - The fear of the Israelites is obvious in this situation, but I think fear drives more conflict in the church than most people realize
 - Fear of rejection, fear of judgment, fear of change, Fear of failure, fear of success

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 Certainly, there are other causes of conflict like envy, but fear is a key driver

- And fear is ultimately the result of a failure to trust in the Lord to respond in a crisis, to meet needs, to bring loose ends together
- So Moses orders the people not to fear, and we have a similar responsibility
 - Remind people, exhort people not to behave out of fear
 - Remind them to trust the Lord to direct the activities in His church
 - Don't fear; trust in the Lord
- Secondly, Moses tells Israel to watch for the work of the Lord in saving them from Egypt
 - The call to watch for the work of the Lord is the necessary corollary to the call not to fear
 - We conquer fear best when we remember that the Lord is always at work around us, and His work will be the solution to our problem
 - Always be ready to echo Moses words in the face of fear and doubt:
 - Take note of God's work and be prepared to see Him show up and address the needs of His people
 - Don't be so consumed by your doubts and fears that you fail to take note of the way the Lord is already working
 - Like Abraham's servant at the well
 - Or the mourners at Lazarus' tomb
- Thirdly, Moses tells the people to be quiet
 - Discontent breeds discontent
 - The more the people grumbled, the more they tested God and provoked His anger with their unbelief

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 This pattern will grow much worse over the coming months, but even now Moses recognizes that the people are their own worst enemies in this battle

- There comes a time to remind people to stop grumbling, stop testing the Lord with our sinful doubts and questioning
- Instead, be guiet and let God work
- Though the text doesn't record Moses' words to the Lord, we can tell by the Lord's response in v.15 that Moses appeals to God for help
 - In a fascinating response, the Lord asks Moses why are you crying to Me?
 - God's answer to Moses is I made you the leader, I gave you my staff, and the answer to your dilemma is obvious
 - Raise your staff, the waters will part, and then order the people to go forward
 - How was Moses supposed to know to drive the people forward into the sea?
 - Because God had already told Moses in the burning bush that he was to return to the mountain and to worship him
 - And Mt Horeb, lies directly across from the gulf
 - In fact, Moses would have known that land well after living there for 40 years
 - And have you noticed how Moses' staff plays a prominent role in many of the supernatural acts of God?
 - Obviously, the staff is not special except that God has purposed to work through it
 - The obviously point God is making to Moses is that I've already equipped you to lead this people, I've given you clear instructions, the path forward is obvious...but it requires a step of faith
 - Yet here you stand crying out to Me?
 - It's as if God is telling Moses that if you aren't going to use the things I've given you for the your mission, why do you return to Me for more?

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This is a fundamental principle of Scripture that comes up over and over again

- God has equipped us in faith to do many great things according to His will
 - If we step out in faith and take advantage of those gifts we've already received, then we can meet every test successfully
 - Chief among those tools is God's word
 - But if we haven't availed ourselves fully of what God has given us, why should we be surprised when get stuck and God doesn't seem to answer our cries
- Furthermore, the Lord says He would be working along side Moses, but in unexpected ways
 - The Lord will once again harden Pharaoh's heart so he would pursue the people
 - If you had taken a poll of the Israelites in that moment, I'm sure the option for the Egyptians to go straight home would have won in landslide
 - While the option for God to cause the army to chase them into the sea would have run a distant second
- o But in the end, God's purpose is that Pharaoh's army drown in the sea
 - So that the Lord's might is shown all the more
 - The story of Israel's flight from Egypt wouldn't be half as memorable if it were not for the Red Sea crossing
 - It is a crescendo that puts to rest any question of what produced Israel's freedom - it was God's might
- What a great example of how we work with the Lord in accomplishing His purposes
 - He puts us on a path that is aligned with His will and purposes
 - He asks us to follow the plan He gives us and use the tools He provides
 - And then He works in strange and unexpected ways to make the most of our meager efforts

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- Moses raised a stick in the air, the Israelites ran like scared children
- But those steps of obedience created the backdrop upon which God worked a great display of power and glory

Ex. 14:19 The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.

<u>Ex. 14:20</u> So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night.

Ex. 14:21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided.

Ex. 14:22 The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Ex. 14:23 Then the Egyptians took up the pursuit, and all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen went in after them into the midst of the sea.

Ex. 14:24 At the morning watch, the LORD looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion.

Ex. 14:25 He caused their chariot wheels to swerve, and He made them drive with difficulty; so the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from Israel, for the LORD is fighting for them against the Egyptians."

Ex. 14:26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen."

Ex. 14:27 So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak, while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it; then the LORD

Ex. 14:28 The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained.

Ex. 14:29 But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Ex. 14:30 Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

Ex. 14:31 When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses.

This narrative stands almost unparalleled in all the Bible

overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

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 Why is it that the most memorable scenes in Scripture revolve around great displays of God's power through water

- Noah, Jonah, Elijah, Jesus on the Galilee
- None are more powerful than this scene
- The timeline of the event is a little more complex than the movie portrays
 - First, the army arrives shortly before nightfall, and they are met by the pillar of fire to hold them back
 - Secondly, the Lord brings an east wind to move the water back and to dry the sea bed
 - This was essential to allow the people to walk without getting stuck in the mud
 - Third, after the land was dry, perhaps some hours later, the people began to cross over the dry land
- The crossing is about 12 miles at this point, so if we assume a hurried 3.5 mile pace, it still took one person about 4 hours to cross the distance
 - Assuming we have 2 million people moving together, it probably added another hour or two to the travel time
 - During this time, the pillar of fire is holding back the army
 - But at the right time, the Lord let's them go, and they begin to chase
- The destruction of Egypt happens in several steps
 - First, the Lord awaits for morning to arrive to begin fighting against Egypt
 - The army is still moving through the Red Sea as Israel watches in fear from the opposite bank
 - Secondly, the Lord appears in the midst of the sea as a pillar of fire and cloud to confuse the Egyptian army
 - Chariot wheels mysteriously come off chariots, disabling the men and horses

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 Fear enters the Egyptian army as they realize the Lord is fighting against them

- But no one can retreat with their chariots and horses disabled
- Finally, God orders Moses to raise the staff again
 - And with that, the waters close over the army
 - And the bodies wash ashore
- While our attention is drawn to the sea opening and closing, I'm most fascinated by God's determination to use Moses and the staff to work the miracle
 - For example, why does God insist on having Moses raise the staff to close the waters?
 - The only plausible answer is to impress upon the people that Moses is their appointed representative and he works God's will
 - God is good to let leaders be seen to lead to encourage others to follow
- Rather than spend any more time on describing the scene we all know so well already, I thought it better to just show you the 2-minute version
 - [Show the Ten Commandments clip at this point...]

SLIDE 14-17

- We will return next week to a few of the details and images of this scene, including the pictures of Christ and baptism found in this story
- Finally, let's watch a video exploring the possible location of the Red Sea crossing...