

Cindy Cottone

The Bible Corner



I will provide

Moses looked out over the vast sea of people camped in the wilderness. Two days before, nothing but sparse vegetation had existed here and the Hebrews had still been the slaves of Pharaoh. But now, a small city had grown overnight in the desert. The Hebrews had fashioned a temporary home here with their children, livestock and all of their possessions.

The people of Egypt had been so eager for them to leave the country that they had loaded the Hebrews with presents of gold, silver and jewelry. Moses, who was worried about this sudden gain in wealth, was so preoccupied with these thoughts that he didn't notice the young man approach.

"I wish to thank you, Moses," he said, smiling. "You have given us a whole new life."

"Ah, but it is not I, but the Lord who gives it," Moses replied. "What is your name?"

"I am Joshua, and I come to offer you my assistance," he said eagerly.

"Pray for us," Moses answered. "Pray that we always remember the giver of life. I fear the people will instead begin to trust in their own possessions."

"Surely they will not forget the miracles of the plagues in Egypt so easily?" Joshua asked.

"Today the Hebrews are well fed and just a few days from Egypt. But there is a huge desert to cross that will be full of obstacles."

"I am not so foolish as to think that we will have an easy journey," Joshua agreed.

"I do know that our God who has already proven His faithfulness will provide. One only has to look up at the sky and see the cloud He has provided to lead us by day and the pillar of fire we follow by night."

"It is good that your faith is strong," Moses observed. "Encourage the others, pray that their faith in God will not crumble when the testing comes."

At dawn on the fourth day, the huge pillar of cloud started to move from the camp in advance of the Hebrews. The people hastened to pack up and follow the cloud, just as the Lord had instructed Moses. Whenever the cloud stopped, they did likewise.

Meanwhile, back in Egypt, Pharaoh summoned his government officials to a meeting. "In my benevolence," Pharaoh said, "I granted the Hebrews permission to go into the desert and worship their God. Now I was informed that they do not plan to return and continue as my slaves."

Pharaoh's voice rose shrilly in exasperation as he stood and commanded, "I myself will lead the cavalry into the desert. These slaves must be taught a lesson."

The Egyptian army prepared to leave at once. Pharaoh led the chase in his chariot, followed by 600 of the best Egyptian officers in their chariots and the rest of the army on horseback.

Pharaoh glanced all around him and boasted, "Those Hebrews with their broken-down carts, children and livestock are no match for my magnificent army. 'After them!' he shouted.

The Egyptians traveled with such speed that a great roar in the distance could be heard by the Hebrews and a huge cloud of dust rose in the desert. Instead of keeping their eyes on the cloud before them, the people all turned around to watch the approaching army.

"Do not be afraid," Joshua said. "The Lord has not taken us out of Egypt to kill us."

But the people would not listen. Instead they turned against Moses and cried, "Better to have stayed in Egypt as slaves than to die out here in the desert!"

"No," Moses protested, "you are wrong. Where is your faith? Stand firm, and you will see again how God will rescue us. And you won't even have to fight!"

"We were safe in Egypt," they moaned. "Where will we go? The army is almost on us and the Red Sea is before us. We will die!"

The Hebrews were so busy murmuring that they didn't notice the cloud moving from in front of them to the rear of their camp. It now stood between Pharaoh's army and the Hebrews. The cloud gave light to the Hebrews, but the Egyptians were enclosed in darkness.

Moses took his staff and stretched it over the Red Sea and the Lord caused the waters to split. A huge wall of water stood on both sides of a path that had opened in the middle of the sea.

"Now do you believe in the saving power of our God?" Moses demanded. "Go over to the other side."

When Pharaoh saw the Hebrews escaping, he gave the command, "Go after them! Our chariots are faster than the Hebrews."

As soon as the army reached the middle of the path, the wheels of their chariots got

stuck in the mud and started to fall off. "We are not fighting against the Hebrews, but against their God!" cried Pharaoh's soldiers. "Let's get out of here!"

When all of the Hebrews were safely on the other side, Moses again stretched his staff out and the wall of water came crashing in on the Egyptians. All of Pharaoh's army drowned.

"Hurrah! We are saved!" the Hebrews cried joyfully. "The Lord has created a mighty miracle!"

Miriam, Moses' sister, led all of the women in dance and the people sang in praise and thanksgiving. "There is no one like our God! He has triumphed over our enemies in glory."

This was only the first obstacle the Hebrews would encounter in their journey to the Promised Land. Moses and Joshua had already learned to wait for the Lord and trust Him. They prayed that the people would also learn this lesson in the wilderness.

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For discussion:

- 1) Why was Moses worried about all of the presents that the Hebrews had been given before they left Egypt?
- 2) God provided a pillar of cloud and fire to lead the Hebrews through the desert into the Promised Land. How does he lead us today?
- 3) What happened when the Hebrews stopped watching the cloud that God had provided to lead them and turned to watch the Egyptians?

For further reading:

- 1) The story of the miracle at the Red Sea is found in Exodus, Chapter 13:20 through Chapter 15:21.
- 2) Read in the New Testament, Ephesians Chapter 5:5, to see what Paul says about trusting in possessions.

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