

**Crossing your Red Sea**

**Exodus 13:17-14:31**

**Message**

The Red Sea Miracle is mentioned 25 times in Scripture – it's one of the great stories of the bible.

**Isaiah 63:12** uses the passage to illustrate God's power over all other gods.

**Acts 7:36** Stephen, before he is stoned, tells the story of the Red Sea crossing reminding Jews of God's power to save and deliver.

**Hebrews 11:29** uses the passage to show how the Red Sea miracle was another example of faith

**1 Corinthians 10:1** Paul uses the story as an example of baptism – the start of a spiritual journey

**What actually happened?**

The most likely place for the miracle is at the head of today's Gulf of Suez when the Israelites crossed a shallow sea of reeds. They were hemmed in by mountains to the north, desert to the south and Egyptians behind them! The passage mentions a strong east wind and so some commentators suggest that overnight the wind (combined with an ebb tide) dried out the Reed Sea and enabled them to cross over. But the bible talks about 'walls of water' on either side – and how do you drown an army in very shallow water?! So it was indeed a miracle, but the water depth might have been only 3-6 feet. Easy enough to drown in if you cannot swim and the waves are strongly disturbed!

**What does it mean for us?**

**Fear:** Like the Israelites we face fearful decisions and wonder why God has led us into these situations. We should not feel guilty about this – it is a normal Christian experience. We are not immune from fear and frustrations!

**Faith:** Moses said (14:13) 'Don't be afraid. Stand firm! The Lord will fight for you and you need only be still'. Sometimes we need to stop and pray and get God's perspective in a situation. It may be applying for a job, looking for a life partner, experiencing a relationship problem or facing worry about ill health.

**Forward!** Moses said (14:15) 'Stop praying and start moving!' (Living Bible translation). There are times when we need to get on with things and 'help ourselves'. We must pray first but then be ready to take action ourselves!

**Questions**

Why is this passage so important to Bible writers?

What do you believe actually happened?

What characteristics of leadership does Moses demonstrate?

Talk about your own experiences of feeling fearful?

Has it been your experience that having faith and then moving forward was the best solution?

In what sense do you think they were 'baptised' by this miraculous experience?