



WHERE WAS THE RED SEA? (Ex. 10:19)

The Hebrew slaves escaped Egypt by way of the Red Sea. In antiquity this Red Sea also included the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, the two gulfs into which it splits. The precise location of the Exodus crossing has been debated by scholars since antiquity without any agreement on a possible site.

The Red Sea is called *Yam Suph* in Hebrew, which is often translated as “sea of reeds.” The Sea of Reeds would refer to the marshes where bulrushes or reeds grow plentifully. In a number of Old Testament passages, *Yam Suph* is associated with the Gulf of Aqaba, which marked the southern tip of King Solomon’s empire (1 Kin. 9:26; Ex. 23:31). Yet in other passages *Yam Suph* probably refers to the Gulf of Suez, since the narrative indicates a body of water bordering on Egypt (Ex. 10:19; 13:18).

Although traditionally translated as “Red Sea,” the Hebrew term *Yam Suph* probably means “Sea of Reeds.” In various passages, *Yam Suph* is identified as the sea of the Exodus (Ex. 15:4, 22), where the Israelites crossed over on dry ground, escaping the Egyptians who were drowned. Nevertheless, the geographical location of this sea remains ambiguous, since descriptions of *Yam Suph* reflect the geography of Egypt as the biblical writer knew it. The majority of scholars favor a location somewhere in the eastern Delta region of Egypt, but the true location is still undetermined.



the LORD your God, that He may take away from me this death only.”¹⁸ So he went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD.¹⁹ And the LORD turned a very strong west wind, which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt.²⁰ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

The Ninth Plague: Darkness

²¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.”²² So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.²³ They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

²⁴ Then Pharaoh called to Moses and said, “Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be kept back. Let your little ones also go with you.”

²⁵ But Moses said, “You must also give us sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.²⁶ Our livestock also shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind. For we must take some of them to serve the LORD our God, and even we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there.”

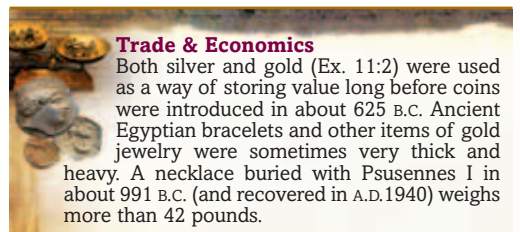
²⁷ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let them go.²⁸ Then Pharaoh said to him, “Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!”

²⁹ So Moses said, “You have spoken well. I will never see your face again.”

Death of the Firstborn Announced

11 ¹ And the LORD said to Moses, “I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether.² Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold.”³ And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants and in the sight of the people.

⁴ Then Moses said, “Thus says the LORD: ‘About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt;⁵ and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals.’⁶ Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again.⁷ But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.’⁸ And all these your servants shall come down to me and



Trade & Economics

Both silver and gold (Ex. 11:2) were used as a way of storing value long before coins were introduced in about 625 B.C. Ancient Egyptian bracelets and other items of gold jewelry were sometimes very thick and heavy. A necklace buried with Psusennes I in about 991 B.C. (and recovered in A.D. 1940) weighs more than 42 pounds.