



August 25-26, 2012  
Exodus 13-14  
*"It's Time to Move On"*  
Pastor Gary Hamrick

This account is one of the most dramatic, miraculous scenes in the Bible. Hollywood has tried to portray it, skeptics have tried to dismiss it, but Christians believe it. If there were one word to describe what's going on, that word would be escape. God is helping the Hebrews escape from Egypt after nearly 400 years of slavery. This is the reason the book got its name in English Bibles; it's when the Hebrews made their mass exodus from Egypt. Exodus means "going out" or "departure."

The Bible tells us that God chose a specific route for the Hebrews to take on their journey out of Egypt to the Promised Land of Israel. [Exodus 13:17](#) says, *"When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, 'If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.' "* It was God's plan to toughen them and mature them. He knew they weren't ready for what lay ahead, so he took them the longer route through the desert instead of the shorter route along the Mediterranean coast.<sup>1</sup>

### Don't Always Look For The Shortest Route In Life

1. The short way and the quick way are not always the best way.
2. We usually look for the quickest route to success, finding a spouse, making money, and solving a problem.
3. We should never forget that God sometimes take us on a longer more difficult journey to prepare us for his ultimate best.

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<sup>1</sup> God's route may have been longer, but it wasn't his intention to have them wander through the

4. It's also important to remember that the long journey will often be like a desert experience, where the waiting is long, the answers are few, and the disappointments are great.
5. If we'll let him, God will build our character and teach us about trust, while he prepares us to receive his ultimate best.
6. Simply put, there are no short cuts with God. <sup>2</sup>
7. Examples of God's timing and leading include:
  - a. Moses lived 40 years in the wilderness before he was ready to deliver Israel.
  - b. David became king when he was 30 years old.
    - i. He was anointed king by Samuel years earlier when he was a shepherd boy of about 15, so he had to wait 15 to 20 years before he became king.
  - c. From the time Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus, it was about 10 years before Paul ever preached his first sermon.
  - d. While they waited, God was molding their character, teaching them about trusting God, and preparing them for his best.
8. Christians need to be confident that God hasn't abandoned them when they pray about something and the matter isn't resolved or the answer doesn't come in a few days.
9. Shortly after the Hebrews started on their way out of Egypt, Pharaoh had a change of heart and he determined to go and get them and bring them back by force.
10. The Bible says they left Ramses, camped in Succoth, and then made their way toward the Red Sea and the Sinai Peninsula.
11. Bible scholars don't know for sure where the parting of the Red Sea took place, but it's generally accepted that this happened somewhere along the northern Suez Canal of the Red Sea.

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<sup>2</sup> Pastor Gary used the illustration of Rose Ruiz, the woman who was temporarily thought to be the winner of the 1980 Boston Marathon. Race officials found out upon further investigation that she had secretly slipped off of the course and took a subway train to a station. She got off the train and re-entered the race, crossing the finish line first. She received the laurel wreath, which is awarded to the winner, a photo with the Mayor, TV interviews and the whole gamut of race winner recognition. Her deceit was proven when officials examined video, only to find that she did not pass through the checkpoints.

12. Exodus 12 tells us that the Israelites crossed on a single night, which means that the 600,000 men, would actually be as many as 3.5 million men, women and children.
  - a. If there were only two people crossing at the same time, the line would have been 800 miles long, which means it would have taken 35 days and nights for them to cross over.
  - b. It's been determined that the dry ground of the Red Sea bed would need to have been three miles wide to accommodate 5,000 people at a time for a one-night crossing.
  
13. We can understand why they would be terrified at the sight of the entire Egyptian army hot on their trail, what's hard to believe, however, is how quickly they turned against Moses.
  - a. [Exodus 14:11-12](#) - *"They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!'"*
  - b. It's a sad day when slavery seems like a better alternative than freedom, and the past seems brighter than the future.
  - c. God must have become irritated with them because [Exodus 14:15](#) tells us that he said to Moses, *"Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on."*
  
14. Some people can't break free from a bad past, and in doing so they rehearse their past over and over again.
  - a. For some, it seems as though they are strangely comforted by their past (good or bad), as the Israelites were, because that's all they've ever known.
  
15. Some people don't move on from their good past because they want to relive the glory days, and somehow try to hold on to what was, even though there's the likelihood that the good past will never repeat itself again.
  
16. No matter whether you're stuck in the bad past or the good past, the potential exists for you to be robbed of what God is doing now or you will be robbed of the future he has for you, because you're always looking at life in the rearview mirror.
  
17. Biblical examples include:
  - a. Lot's wife ([Genesis 19](#))

- i. Lot and his wife were fleeing from Sodom because God had warned them in advance he was going to destroy their city because of the peoples' sins.
  1. They were told to run for their lives and not look back, but Lot's wife wasn't able to resist the temptation, because she longed for what she was leaving behind.
- b. In [Luke 9:62](#), Jesus said, *"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."*
- c. Paul encouraged Believers to forget what was in the past when he wrote in [Philippians 3:12-14](#): *"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."*

### Move On From The Past

18. Moving on from the past means discovering and celebrating what God is doing in the present, it doesn't mean we can't be sentimental or celebrate the past.
19. We can't get stuck in a place in which we miss what God is doing now.
20. [Isaiah 43:16-19](#) - *"This is what the Lord says - he who made a way through the sea, a path through the might waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: 'Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?'"*<sup>3</sup>

### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Exodus 13:17-18](#) and [14:5-31](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Allow the people in your group to share experiences about times when unanswered or a delayed answer to prayer has caused them to feel the Lord has forgotten them.

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<sup>3</sup> The implication of the last sentence is that we can miss what God is doing.

4. Have you experienced a miraculous intervention (i.e. Red Sea crossing) from the Lord?
  - a. Was your faith in the Lord given a long-lasting, permanent boost or did the wonder and awe of God's intervention quickly dissipate?
5. Has there been a time in your life when you were tempted to longingly look back?
  - a. Read and discuss [Luke 9:62](#) and [Isaiah 43:16-19](#).
  - b. Is it beneficial to ever look back or is it okay to look back for the purpose of remembering what the Lord has done in your life?
  - c. Do you know people who can't seem to move forward because they are stuck in their 'bad past' or their 'good past'?
  - d. What comes to mind when you see men with a comb-over hairstyle or people who wear clothing that is way past "that's *really* outdated"?
6. Spend time talking about the encouragement and instruction Paul gives Christians in [Philippians 3:12-14](#). (See #17c above)
7. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: wait on the Lord to reveal his leading and his timing, no matter whether it looks like he's taking them on the short or long route; trust God's desire to give each person their ultimate best if they'll trust him; look forward, move forward, and move on with God!

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).