**8**

**Crossing the Red Sea**

**From Crisis to Triumph**

**Exodus 13:17–14:31**

**Purpose: To learn to trust God in the midst of crisis.**

Impossible jams converge on us at the most unlikely moments. One minute we're cruising down the freeway at 60 m.p.h., and the next instant we jam on the brakes. For the next two hours we're stuck. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could wave a magic wand and unclog the whole mess? Life is like that. God leads us in and out of jams to test our mettle. In this study, Israel's moment of glorious freedom was shattered by an advancing army. Seemingly, disaster loomed. But God had some things to prove to Egypt, Israel and Moses. Painful lessons indeed.

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1. What recent crisis has brought you to your wit's end, and why?

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**2.** Read Exodus 13:17–22. Why did God not take Israel the shortest route to Palestine?

Of what possible benefit are God's “detours” in our lives?

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**3.**  God provided clear guidance for the journey through the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire (vv. 21–22). How does God guide Christians today?

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**4.** Faith operates both long-range (Joseph) and short-range (following the pillar). What areas of your life require long-range or short-range trust in God?

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**5.**  Read Exodus 14:1–14. What plan does God reveal to Moses (vv. 1–4)?

What is God's ultimate purpose (v. 4; see Ex 7:5)?

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**6.** How did the Israelites react to the onslaught of the Egyptians, and why (vv. 10–12)?

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**7.** What did this test reveal about their hearts?

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**8.** In what circumstances have you caved in to fear and second-guessed God?

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**9.** Compare each part of Moses' commands (vv. 13–14) with the Israelites' conditions and attitudes (vv. 10–12).

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**10.**  What did God's plan for escape require of Moses and the people (vv. 15–18)?

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**11.** Read Exodus 14:15–31. What was the outcome of this hair-raising experience for the Egyptians, Moses and Israel (vv. 17–18, 30–31)?

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**12.** Think about times when you have felt like Israel, trapped between the Egyptians and the Red Sea. What did you do and why?

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**13.** How can this passage help you in threatening experiences you face in following God, now or in the future?

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**14.** God allowed the Israelites to cross safely on dry ground. Reflect on similar “dry ground” experiences in your life. In what ways have you thanked God for them?