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Tsiyon News

Tsiyon Messianic Radio Newsletter - Vol 8.46 - 09/28/6013 TAM - 12/02/13 AD



Coming Soon!



Set Apart to Deliverance

Exodus 13+14

Set Apart to Deliverance



YHWH said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come again on the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen." ..The waters returned, and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even all Pharaoh's army that went in after them into the sea. ..But the sons of Israel walked on dry land in the middle of the sea.. Thus YHWH saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians. Exodus 14:26-31

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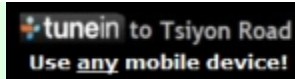
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Listener Q&A

Listener Question: *Did the Israelites cross the Red Sea or the Reed Sea?*

Upon leaving Egypt in the Exodus, the Israelites crossed the Yam Suf, which is traditionally translated in English Bibles as the Red Sea. This translation, however, is now said to be in error. Critics say Red Sea is a corruption of the correct Old English translation, Reed (Rede) Sea. Moses and the Israelites never crossed the Red Sea, they say. Instead they waded through some marshy swamp filled with reeds. So what was it really: the Reed Sea or the Red Sea?

Tsiyon Answer:

The Hebrew word translated *red* in *Red Sea* in over 20 verses is translated from the Hebrew word *suph*, said by some to be from an Egyptian word meaning *reed*. Rashi, the famed medieval Ashkenazi rabbi is the earliest source I could find for this translation, in the 10th century AD. However, only in modern times has this translation become widespread.

However, this is not the only possible meaning of the word. Some authorities suggest *suph* may be related to the Hebrew *suphah* ("storm") or may actually be *soph* ("end"), referring to the events of the Red Sea deliverance of Israel. Here is one such example:

The crossing of the sea signaled the end of the sojourn in Egypt and it certainly was the end of the Egyptian army that pursued the fleeing Hebrews (Ex 14:23-29; 15:4-5). After this event at *yam suph*, perhaps the verb *soph*, meaning "destroy" and "come to an end," originated (cf. Amos 3:15; Jer 8:13; Isa 66:17; Psa 73:19). Another possible development of this root is the word *suphah*, meaning "storm-wind"...The meanings "end" and "storm-wind" would have constituted nice puns on the event that took place at the *yam suph*. [Hoffmeier, James Karl (1999). *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 214]

Whatever the etymology of the word, the real question is: what body of water does *Yam Suf* refer to? We are not left to guess the answer to this question. From antiquity *Yam Suf* has been recognized as referring to what we today call the Red Sea. The Septuagint (LXX) the third century BC Greek translation, which was translated from Hebrew into Greek by seventy eminent Jewish sages, translated *Yam Suf* into Greek as *Erythra Thalassa* literally meaning "Red Sea"! This leaves nothing to the imagination and serves as a positive identification of the body of water so named. Surely, if seventy of the most eminent Hebrew scholars of 2,200 years ago identified said body of water as the Red Sea, then why should we have any regard for the contrary opinions of latecomers seeking to downgrade the miracle of the Red Sea deliverance to a shallow swamp of reeds? Further, we have another ancient witness. Josephus, the first century AD Jewish historian also identified *Yam Suf* as the Red Sea (Antiquities 2:15:3). The "Red Sea" translation was universally accepted, being continued in the fourth century Latin Vulgate, in which *Yam Suf* is translated as *Mare Rubrum* and *Mare Erythrae*, both meaning "Red Sea" (Exodus 13:18). These facts expose the red herring of a supposed Old English "error" responsible for the Red Sea translation in English bibles, since the "Red Sea" translation dates nearly 2,000 years before any English translation was ever undertaken.

Actually, a careful study of verses using the words *Yam Suf* identify this body of water as the Red Sea. For example, Solomon is said to have built a navy in Ezion-geber, approximately modern day Eilat, at the tip of the Gulf of Aqaba, the northern spur of the Red Sea.

And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. 1 Kings 9:26

I would add that it is less than unlikely that Solomon would have built his royal navy in a swamp! Clearly, *Yam Suf* refers to none other than the Red Sea.

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From Eliyahu

In our modern world differences between people are often considered a taboo subject, while sameness is celebrated. This attitude is often projected on God by inane statements like: "God treats everyone the same." Such statements reveal a profound ignorance of the Scriptures, where the Creator has a

uniquely different role for everything He has created. We have noted that when YHWH ordered the world He did so through making divisions. He divided heaven from earth, light from dark, night from day, the waters below from the waters above, and the waters from the land. He divided each plant and animal from every other plant and animal, according to their kinds, and he even made man and woman distinct from one another, and each for a distinct purpose. Later on he made each nation distinct from every other nation, and he made His own nation, Israel, distinct from all others, for His own special purpose.

By the Ten Plagues YHWH showed Himself distinct from and superior to all other gods. He also showed Israel to be "His people" when He brought plagues on Egypt but not on Israel. He made vessels of wrath for His glory of the unbelieving Pharaoh and Egyptians, while making His people vessels of His profound mercy. No, the Creator does not treat everyone the same, nor should He. Rather, He orders all things through divisions and separations according to distinctions He has made. In our latest Midrash, as Israel sets out toward freedom in the Exodus, YHWH separates them from bondage and then from their enemies, while He separates their enemies from their lives at the Red Sea. Yes, YHWH is always making divisions and separations, setting His people apart unto Himself.

Blessings and Shalom!

Eliyahu ben David
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