

# PARASHAT BESHALACH

*Exodus 13:17–17:16*

---

*Parashat Beshalach* takes its name from the second word of the Torah portion. *Beshalach* means “when he sent forth” and refers to Pharaoh’s decision to free the Israelites. Led by Moses, they depart from Egypt, but Pharaoh changes his mind and decides to pursue them. When the Israelites see Pharaoh and his army approaching, they complain to Moses that he has brought them into the wilderness to die. He assures them that God will save them and leads them through the Sea of Reeds. From the other side they watch as the pursuing Egyptians are drowned. In celebration, Moses and the Israelites sing a song of praise to God. Afterwards they begin their journey through the Sinai desert. Despite their victory over the Egyptians and their liberation, however, the Israelites continue to complain to Moses. They cry out that they have no water to drink, no bread to eat. God grants them water and provides them with “manna,” a food substance resembling flour. While the Israelites are camped at Rephidim, they are attacked by the Amalekites. Joshua, who has been appointed by Moses, successfully destroys the Amalekite forces.

---