

# Torah Portion Preview for B'shalach

*Shabbat beginning February 3, 2023*

We celebrate the great portion of B'shalach (let go) almost every week by singing Mi Chamocha. Pharaoh lets our people go but sends his army after them. Fog slows the army until the Israelites get across the drained Sea of Reeds. When the army follows, the sea refills, inundating the chariots, horses, and riders. Moses sings our triumphant song (the Torah text blocks it like poetry), and his sister Miriam follows with a short chant accompanied by tambourines brought from Egypt by the women. In the wilderness the Israelites face food and water shortages plus attacks from an army of Amalek, here and in Ki Teitzei on September 9 to be blotted from memory. God provides manna and doves from heaven plus water from the rocks.

The portion describes many dimensions of God's salvation including sustenance, protection against overwhelming enemies, and strength for battle with lesser armies. Talmudic and modern scholars alike reveal that the enemies were also God's children. In doing so, they caution against the disdain for others that in any context encourages victors to continue destroying until they become destroyed themselves. Even the ancients knew that fast-growing arrogance eventually brings catastrophe even to superior powers.