

REDEMPTION TALES

BOOK TWO

# THE PROPHECY AND THE HOPE

MARTY MACHOWSKI

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# INTRODUCTION

**W**elcome to the Redemption Tales—a series of Bible stories retold from the perspective of animals who could have witnessed the events firsthand. Follow the conflict between good and evil, the hope of the Promised One, and the long-anticipated return of the King. These books join a rich history of memorable stories that feature talking animals. There is something marvelous about a talking animal that makes for a good tale. While the animals are fictional, the truth behind each of the tales is taken directly from the adventures in the Bible.

Why are the stories of God's work in history so fantastic? For example, why did God use a miraculous staff, numerous plagues, and opening a body of water to deliver his people from Egypt? Why did God go through all that trouble when he could have delivered his people with a single word? He did it to show his mighty power to his people then and to create a grand salvation story for the generations to come (see Exodus 10:1–2). He wanted us to know him and his power, holiness, mercy, and most of all, his unfailing love, so that we

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too might believe. The Redemption Tales are more than fiction—their truth has the power to transform you completely.

This book, *The Prophecy and the Hope* is the second of the Redemption Tales series. Its stories cover the period of the Bible in Exodus and Isaiah.

For a deeper study of the truth hidden in the tales, go through the Bible study questions at the back of the book.

*Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;  
let the sea roar and all that fills it;  
let the field exult, and everything in it!  
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy.*

PSALM 96:11–12

CHAPTER

1

# GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE

**W**ithout warning, Israel was trapped between the advancing Egyptian forces and the sea. The thunder of Pharaoh's army echoed off the mountains with squeals of chariot wheels spinning and tackle clanking. *What's happening?* they wondered. Then, when they realized it was Pharaoh's army, they panicked.

"So much for the land of milk and honey," Oscar the ox shouted to his brother. "We're trapped."

"You know what they say," replied Otto. "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."



Suddenly, the thunderous roar came to a screeching halt and gave way to the clatter of chariot wheels and the neighing of horses.

“Listen,” barked Scrapy, their street dog friend. “The chariots are coming through the pass. Remember how narrow it was? That should slow them down and give us time to get away.”

They, along with everyone else, looked behind them and then turned to look in front of them. There were only mountains and the Red Sea. No path to freedom.

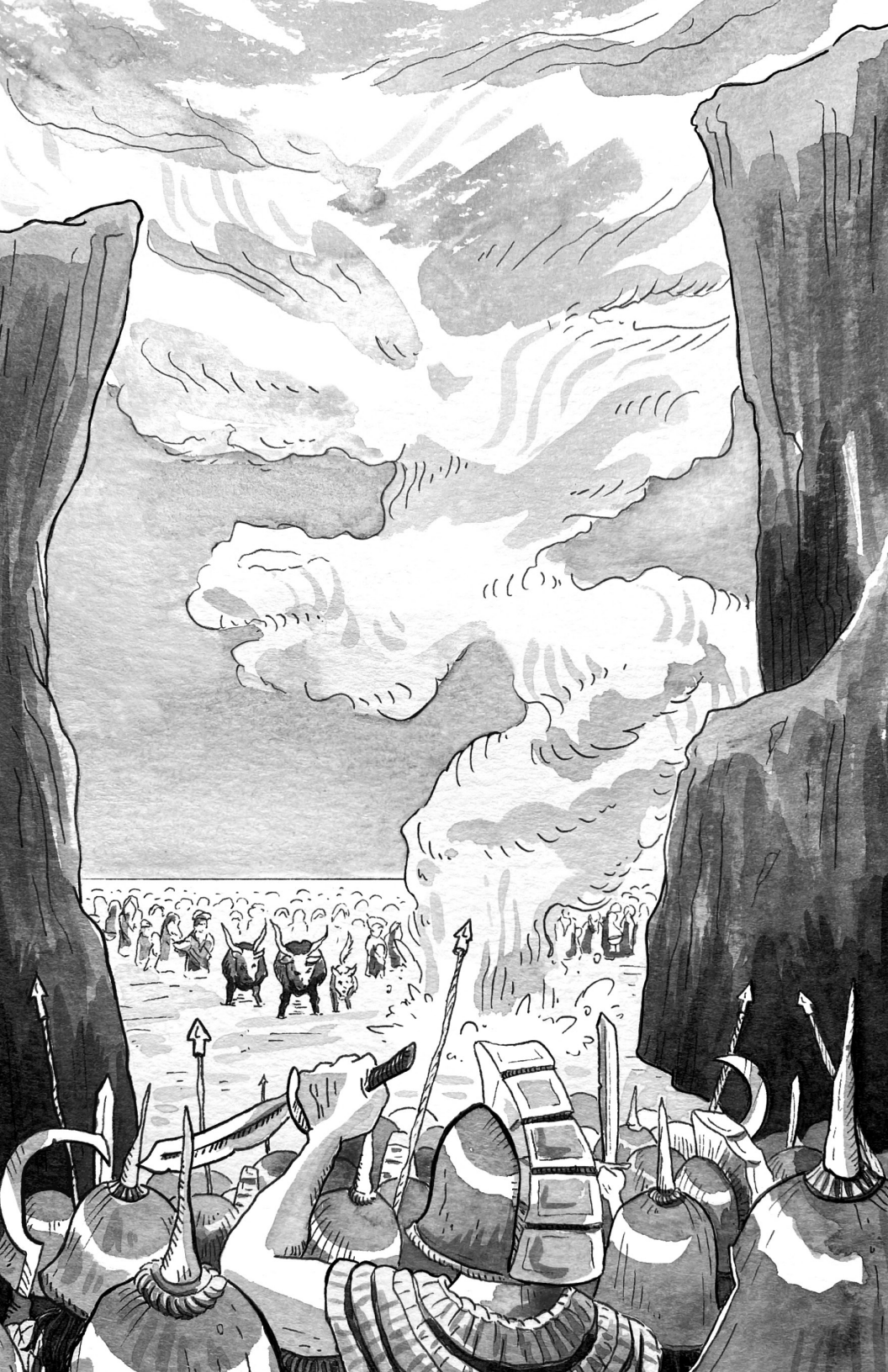
Then the advancing enemy grew quiet. “Scrapy was right,” the oxen murmured. “The Egyptians are caught in the pass.” But in the silence, they heard the voices of the Israelites complaining to Moses.

“Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?” one man shouted. “Why else would you bring us here?”

“Good question,” Otto said. “The Hebrews were slaves in Egypt, but we had a decent life there. I’d rather feel the sting of the whip than get run over by an army.”

“Or worse,” Oscar gulped, “get driven into the sea. I can wade the shallows, but I don’t swim—I sink.”

All at once the command “Charge!” echoed from the mountain pass and the Egyptians strained ahead full speed, hooves pounding, wheels turning, shouts booming.



“Here they come!” Oscar shouted.

“I can’t bear to watch,” Otto said, pulling toward the right.

An Israelite screamed, “We were better off serving the Egyptians!” Otto closed his eyes and looked away.

Above the din, Moses shouted, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

“Look!” Scappy barked. “The pillar of cloud is rising! It’s on the move against the Egyptians. Look, it’s blocking their advance! Remember what I told you—complaining blinds you to the blessings around you.”

The Egyptians watched in disbelief as an angel of the Lord blocked their advance. They had seen great storms in Egypt, but nothing like this! The dark, ominous cloud billowed up from the sand and formed a pillar up to the sky. The chariots came to a halt, horses rearing, refusing to advance. Then, as the sun set behind the mountains, the pillar of cloud transformed into a pillar of fire.

“Hey, Mr. Sunshine,” said Otto to Scappy. “Where’s the bright side now? That cloud can’t hold them back forever!”

“Careful, Otto,” mocked Oscar. “Complaining blinds you to the blessings around you. Keep complaining, and you’ll miss the mountains and beautiful shore! Looks like a vacation paradise to me! Too bad we don’t have any fresh water to

GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE

drink. Maybe the cloud can hold off long enough for us to die of thirst.”

“Ok, Oscar. I’ll look at the bright side. Just think of the sandcastles we could make in the night while we wait to be pounded down by chariot wheels. Won’t that be fun!”

“Alright, you two,” said Scappy. “The angel won’t block the way of the Egyptians, only to have us die of thirst. You heard Moses. The Lord will fight for us. He must have a plan to save us.”

“And so he does,” said a voice from atop a nearby wagon.

“Daniel!” Scappy shouted. “Where have you been?”

“Right here, listening to our oxen brothers join Israel in complaining. Grumble, grumble, grumble,” Daniel said.

“So, what’s the plan?” asked Otto. “Do we sprout wings and fly away like doves?”

“Or fins and gills and dive into the sea?” joked Oscar. “Let’s see . . . what size fins should I order?”

“Triple extra-large,” laughed Otto. “You’ll find them in the whale section of the market.”

“Ok, you two, this is no time for joking. What’s the plan?” Scappy asked the dove.

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Before Daniel could reply, Moses mounted a boulder and shouted to the people, "Advance to the sea! In the morning, we shall continue."

Daniel explained, "The Lord has given Moses his plan. Moses is to lift his staff and stretch it out over the sea. The Lord will divide the water and allow us to cross on dry ground."

"Well, Oscar, you were right. Get ready to buy those fins!" jeered Otto. "The sea is fathoms deep. I don't see how God could divide it. You better get ready to learn the cattle paddle. It's a combination of a doggy paddle and eight hundred pounds."

"This is no time for joking," said Oscar anxiously. "Remember I can't swim. I'm afraid of water."

"Daniel said we'd cross on dry ground," assured Scrapy. "Look, Moses is lifting his staff!"

The company watched as Moses stretched his arm over the sea. A great gust of wind blew from the east. It struck the sea and the water parted.

"I told you to look on the bright side," Scrapy shouted as the sea piled in a heap to the north and the south.

"In the morning, we will cross on dry ground," said Daniel.

"What about Pharaoh? Won't he just come after us?"

"Yes, he will, for his heart remains hard against the Lord. But when Israel is safe on the eastern shore, all of

Egypt—Pharaoh, his chariots, and horses—will know that the Lord is God over all.”

When morning dawned, the order to cross the Red Sea rang through the camp. Shouts of “Move out!” started at the shoreline. Josiah rang the morning bell, and the animals woke instantly. Scappy jumped out from where he had been sleeping beneath the wagon.

“It’s about time you got up,” said Oscar. “How could you sleep at a time like this?”

“The Lord’s got our back,” said Scappy, nodding to the pillar of cloud still blocking the pass. Then he turned his head to the shore, and stared at the walls of water formed by God.

“Breathtaking and unnerving,” gasped Otto.

“It reminds me of a box canyon,” said Scappy. “Except with water walls.”

“Let’s hope they hold,” said Otto.

“Brother, please,” objected Oscar. “Another word and I won’t go near the sea. Then we’ll both be lunch for their army!”

“Sorry, Oscar,” said Otto.

As Josiah pulled back on the reins and prepared for the descent down to the seabed, he said, “We can only do this by faith. God is with us.”





## GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE

As the Israelites descended into the sea between the magnificent walls of water, everyone watched with wonder.

When it was the oxen's turn to cross, Oscar froze. "I can't swim!" he snorted, shaking his head. He planted his hooves in the sand, and the wagon jolted to a stop.

"Come on, boys," Josiah called to the oxen.

"I can't!" Oscar said refusing to budge.

"Look down, brother. What do you see?" asked Otto. "There is nothing but dry sand before us."

"My eyes tell me it's sand, and my hooves tell me it's dry, but my brain is shouting that I will drown!" Oscar whined.

"Scrappy, would you please give us a hand?" asked Otto.

"Ok, if you say so," said Scrappy, who swung around to the rear and nipped Oscar's leg.

"OUCH!" Oscar roared, stepping down into the crossing.

"Look, Oscar, you're swimming!" shouted Otto.

"Very funny," said Oscar. Then he turned his head to Scrappy. "Thanks a lot."

It took hours for the six hundred thousand men and their families to cross the miles of dry ground through the sea. Now and then, they saw fish swimming along the walls of water held in place.



Once God's people arrived safely on the opposite shore, the pillar of cloud rose. It billowed in the sky, freeing Pharaoh's army. With orders to follow, the chariots of Egypt and all its army raced toward the sea. Soon the Israelites heard the squeal of the chariot wheels racing toward them.

"Look out!" Otto shouted. "They're coming!"

"Now what?" Oscar boomed.

"No need to worry," said Daniel from atop the wagon. "Just watch and see the salvation of the Lord."

Scrappy watched as the first of the chariots appeared—twin horses galloping at full speed. Then, without warning, the chariot sank in the sand and the horses reared.

"Wait! Something's happening! Their horses are spooked!" Oscar shouted.

"It looks like their wheels are stuck in the sand," Oscar added.

All Israel watched as Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. At once, the sea walls, which had towered above them, crashed down upon Pharaoh and his entire army. They covered the path the Israelites had just crossed and swallowed every Egyptian. Not one escaped.

"Mark my words," said Oscar, "That's the last time I'm crossing any sea."

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“No worries, my friend,” Daniel said. “You won’t be returning to Egypt.”

Within moments, the Israelites began to cheer and celebrate. God had delivered them! They were safe! They were free!

Then Moses stood upon high ground and called out, “I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him.”

Josiah removed the oxen’s yoke and led them to a thick patch of salt grass.



“Yoo-hoo!” yelled Scappy, racing around in circles.

Otto cheered, “Nothing but dry sand for miles! Scappy, you were right. We’ve got to look at the bright side. I’ll never complain again.”

“Don’t be so sure. You’re forgetting that tomorrow we go into the wilderness,” Oscar reminded him as he stared at the rocky expanse ahead.

“Enough of that, Oscar,” said Scappy. “Today, we celebrate! With the angel of the Lord to lead us in the pillar of cloud, what could go wrong?” Then Scappy ran to join the dancing and singing with all of Israel praising the Lord.

The celebration continued until sunset. Everyone slept well that night. And when morning came, they embarked on their journey through the wilderness.



The weeks passed. Though the Israelites stepped out to continue their journey full of hope, before long they grew discontented. God provided water and the miracle of manna, but even so, the tedium of the same rocky landscape day after day wore on them.

“When are we going to stop and rest for more than one night? My hooves are killing me,” Oscar whined. “We’ve been at this for weeks.”

Otto joined in, saying, “We march all day in the dust, over rocks, up and down hills, then sleep for the night. Then in the morning, we get up to do it all over again. This walking business is starting to feel as tedious as our days in Egypt.”

“Come on, you two,” said Scappy. “I thought you said you would never complain again. Remember, you’ve got to look on the bright side.”

“That is exactly what I am doing,” Oscar said. “I’d say the noonday sun is about as bright as it gets. Isn’t it, brother?”

“So bright it will make you blind if you don’t squint your eyes,” Otto answered. “And here is another thought from the bright side. I heard Josiah say we are out of water again. What is so bright about that, my canine friend?”

“Sometimes part of looking at the bright side today is remembering our blessings from yesterday,” Scappy answered. “The last time we ran out of water Moses made the bad water of Marah good to drink. We filled our skins with plenty to drink—until now. And the Lord gives us bread from heaven. Each morning the manna falls and we have plenty.”

“It’s true,” said Daniel from his perch on the wagon rail. “The people of Israel need but ask, and the Lord will provide.”

After a day of traveling in the hot sun, the caravan slowed, and Josiah brought the wagon to a stop.

“Make camp,” a voice shouted from ahead, and all Israel filed into columns.

As the people prepared for the evening meal, one person asked, “Does anyone have water to spare? I’m all out.” Soon, that question echoed throughout the entire camp, as each family realized that they too were nearly out of water. So they did what made the most sense: they complained to Moses.

“We need water!” they shouted.

“Is the Lord among us or not?” they questioned.

“Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” Josiah complained along with the rest.

“What is he doing?” Scrapy asked as Moses turned his gaze heavenward.

“He calls to the Lord,” Daniel explained. “That is what the people should do rather than complain. The Lord could judge all of Israel for their lack of faith, but you’ll see what he does instead. Keep watching.”

Otto gave his play-by-play description of events for Scrapy’s benefit, for the dog could not see above the crowd. “Moses raises his staff before the people. He is calling for the elders. The elders are gathering. They are walking over to a large rock that rises out of the sand at the center of camp.”

“That’s it,” said Scrapy. “I want to *see* what’s happening, not hear about it!” Then he jumped into Josiah’s wagon in one bound and stood atop a large sack. With all Israel, he fixed his eyes on Moses.

Moses stood with the elders before the great rock and raised his staff.

“Instead of smiting the people who grumble against the Lord, Moses will smite the rock. It’s a picture of the Son of God to come,” said Daniel.

As Daniel predicted, Moses swung down his staff and struck the rock.

“Judgment has fallen upon the Lord,” said Daniel.

As Moses’s staff struck the boulder, water gushed forth and flowed down through the camp. The people cheered and scrambled to fill their skins and lead their livestock to the water.

“What did you mean when you said, ‘Judgment has fallen upon the Lord?’” Scrappy asked the dove.

Daniel explained, “One day, it shall be said, ‘all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.’”

“The Lord is the Rock, the Son of the promise; the one who takes the judgment of God for the sins of the people. The sinless Son of God will become sin and take the punishment Abraham’s children deserve. On that day, the Father will turn his face away and strike the Son so that all God’s children might once again drink the waters of life and know the joy of forgiveness.”

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“How do you know all this?” Scrapy asked. But Daniel was gone.

“Where did he go?” Oscar asked.

“I don’t know,” Scrapy answered. “But I’m guessing he’ll show up again when we need him.”

The people of Israel traveled on, lead and cared for by the Lord. After three months, they arrived in the wilderness of Sinai at the imposing mountain of God.

Story from Exodus 12:37; 14:2, 11–18, 26–27;  
15:1–2; 17:2–4, 6–7; Matthew 27:46; Romans 3:23–26;  
1 Corinthians 10:1–4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Revelation 21:5–6.