

The Great Escape

As a result of the final plague, the death of the firstborn – which Pharaoh could have prevented, he let God's people go, and in a very real sense they plundered the Egyptians – and many other people – Exodus 12:38 (believing Egyptians, slaves from other sources – we don't know) also joined the Exodus.

Part 1 Exodus 13:17-22

God in his wisdom did not lead the people of Israel the direct route to the Promised Land, for although they were now armed for war they were a useless rabble of ex-slaves.

God led them, they couldn't get lost. He demonstrated that he was always with them. It was the clear manifestation of his presence. Is God that real to you? [How does God lead you today? Bible, others, Holy Spirit, circumstances, fleece.]

Part 2 At the Red Sea

What a dilemma. What a predicament, a situation from which there was no escape. Despair brought on by a lack of options and resources.

Two million people at the Red Sea. Why? To the North were mountains and Egyptian fortresses. A barren desert to the south and the Red Sea ahead of them and behind them was the army of Egypt, chariots and all. Pharaoh had changed his mind again. But he was to be too late this time.

Geographically in a cul-de-sac, militarily vulnerable.

As they headed to the sea they heard the sound of thunder – it was the Egyptians. Panic mode. Fear squelched their faith.

Exodus 14:10-12

They had wanted to be delivered from bondage and blessed with freedom.

But then came, as it so often does with God, the unexpected.

Their security was threatened, and the familiar life of a slave seemed to begin to have its advantages.

The irony in the cry, “were there no graves in Egypt” – so many had died building them, those great pyramids.

They had seen and been spared most of the 10 plagues of Egypt, and yet in many there was a failure to believe and trust that God knew what he was doing.

How many times do we find that God gets us out of one difficulty only to find ourselves in another? And our faith seems to evaporate faster than steam leaving a kettle.

Moses – God’s man in the situation has God’s plan, a simple plan. Do nothing! “Stand firm and you will see the deliverance of the lord ... you only need to be still.” Well that’s an unusual military tactic – not even surrender.

Exodus 14:15

God says, stop praying man and get on with it Moses, move on. Move on where, how?

Answer **Exodus 14:16**

Walking over on dry ground – what a powerful demonstration. Just to keep the peace and prevent panic and paralysing fear God prevented the Egyptians and the Israelites from seeing each other.

Exodus 14:19-22

Wow!

And you ain’t seen anything yet – watch this –

Exodus 14:23-31

Isn’t it just amazing what God can do without our help.

Be warned. God is just and God is thorough.

Pharaoh and the Egyptian army had shown yet again their amazing obstinate capacity for unbelief. The Hebrews had been told to leave, but underneath there was still not even a hint of acknowledging the supremacy of Jehovah God. They still had not learned obedience was the only way to salvation.

How sad that so many attempt to bring God down to their understanding, and deny the full manhood and the full divinity of Jesus just because they cannot understand it with their finite small minds. All of even the best efforts of man to deliver an alternative gospel are doomed to eternal failure.

Like the Hebrews we must come through the way of salvation which He has opened for us so that we can escape the power of Satan, the horrible consequences of sin and the punishment of hell.

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to [God] the Father except through me....I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." (John 14:6; 5:24)

The Israelites response in awe (14:31) was to praise God and recognise God's chosen leader. One minute they want to lynch him, the next he is a hero. And in five minutes time – we will see next week.

Why was this passage written?

Not just amazing history. "But for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." 2 Tim 3:16

We need to heed the warning of history. The miraculous exodus from Egypt should have solidified the Hebrews trust in God - but how soon their faith and enthusiasm waned.

In NT too. The first generation church that Paul had established had by the time John written the book of Revelation “forsaken their first love” Rev 2:4

Like us the Israelites wanted everything familiar and safe. God however usually wants to take us by the hand into situations where security is threatened and the outcome seems unsure.

We may want to complain or retreat like the Israelites but if we rely on His ability, and obediently follow God’s lead, without doubting, we will have peace and certainty even in seemingly hopeless and frightening situations.

God’s leading frequently does not follow our expectations, but He always has our best interests in mind. We can then handle life’s little surprises with less fear and greater trust.

The only way is up.

The Hebrews had to face up to their situation. God led them into a cul-de-sac to make them dependant on him. Hemmed in on all sides the only way to look is up. Intense pressure makes His people lean more on Him.

Adrenaline says Fight or Flee in panic situations. God often says, Wait, stay out of my way in this battle and let me work.

Dependence not opting out.

If the Lord is to get the glory, then He will do the fighting. Maybe we have the tendency to try and fight our own battles.

When we wait, He fights.

When He fights He wins.

When He wins I learn!

As God said to King Jehoshaphat 2 Chron 20:15 (13-30)
“Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s”

God is not limited in what He can do. God was able to deliver his people through the Red Sea – nothing is too difficult for him.

Faced with the choice of facing an uncertain tomorrow, or returning to a secure yesterday. Most people want to go back to the familiar and be safe. Return even if it's boring or painful rather than step out and trust God.

God manifested himself in many miracles to the Israelites and met all their needs.

Yet they were increasingly discontent and seemingly determined to return to secure yet oppressive lifestyle of Egypt

What stopped the Israelites returning to Egypt?

- 1 Clear direction from God – pillar of fire and cloud.
- 2 Incredible deliverance from danger at the Red Sea. He may wait to the last moment to deliver us from danger, then when He chooses to act, need to be ready to move out in faith.
- 3 Extreme discipline from God – persistent rejection was to leave but two dead in the wilderness as they roamed for 40 years. God is serious about His desire for us to move ahead and risk change. Go His way. Believers dare not resist any longer!

Conclusion

Could the people of Israel save themselves?

Could they cause the sea to dry up?

Or level the mountains?

Or perhaps battle the troops of Pharaoh? No, they could not!

Who then could save them?

God alone! Only the Lord God could deliver them. That is why Moses said to them, *"Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see **the deliverance the Lord will bring you today!**"* Only God could save them!

And He did save them. That is why, after they had arrived on the other side of the sea, they sang, *"The Lord is my strength and my song; **He has become my salvation.**"*

God Himself had become **their salvation**. There was nothing that the Israelites could do to save themselves from Pharaoh's troops--nothing, except to follow the path which God had opened for them in the midst of the sea, and then thank Him and worship Him for delivering them from certain death!

Do we have confidence in God's power over the affairs of our lives?

Do we know the one who is Himself the way, the truth and the life?

Can we say like the Israelites that God has become our salvation?

If the Son shall make you free you shall be free indeed.

- from sin and its tyranny
- from fear of change
- from fear of the future
- from fear of the Holy Spirit
- Free to love, serve and witness.

It was no disgrace to die fighting or even surrender, but to commit mass suicide by drowning – that was senseless. “But the foolishness of God is wiser than mans wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than mans strength.” (1 Cor 1:25)

Being creatures of habit, most of us would rather have the security of yesterday than the uncertainty of tomorrow. Consequently we often resist change even when it’s in our best interest.