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“The Crossing of the Red Sea”

Exodus 13:17-15:21

8.8.21

Short Review:

- **We see that the Israelite people came into Egypt small in number and relied on the good graces of the Egyptian leaders and people. Over time the Israelites fell out of that favor, and in fact were subjected to slavery, forced labor and even genocide in a country not their own. A country they could not, on their own, escape from either.**
- **430 years after they came into Egypt they were released by Pharaoh, and essentially driven out in haste, after God performed mighty miracles, including 10 plagues, with the final most powerful plague depicted as “The Passover”.**

Our story picks up here in Exodus 13 to 15

- **As Paul shared last week, when the first born of all of Egypt, animals, and people, died, Pharaoh and his leaders summoned Moses and Aaron and sent the Israelites away. The Egyptian**

people were so fearful that they gave the Israelites gold, silver and clothing and begged them to depart.

- **The Israelites marched out in an orderly manner. Exodus says they went out by divisions, which would have meant according to their tribes and clans and with their soldiers prepared for battle**

Route of the Exodus:

- **The logical choice for Moses and his people would have been the most direct route, called the Via Maris, “the way of the sea”; this was shorter, much more direct, and was on the main trade route northward and eastward and so there was ample food and water to be obtained from traders along the way.**
- **However, this very common, well-used roadway was heavily fortified with Egyptian military outposts, and Chapter 13 says the people were not ready for war at this point.**
- **So God, in His infinite wisdom, was watching out for His people and directed them in an entirely unanticipated**

direction. God is showing the Israelites that He is in control of His people's destiny, even when they do not understand what is happening or how to "do this thing called freedom".

- **1-Here is a lesson we can take for today; the Lord knows what is out ahead of us, He is faithful to watch out for our future, and He knows how to direct our steps so much better than we do.**

Now, let's remember that God had prepared Moses literally from the womb, arranging his miraculous rescue from death at Pharaoh's hand, through his adoption, his being raised in privilege, with extensive education, including military training, languages, writing and science; Acts 7:22 says that Moses was "educated in all the ways of the Egyptians, and was powerful in speech and actions". So, as the people head out, Moses is very ready at this point to lead God's people. 2-Here is another essential point for us in our journey with God; it takes what it takes for God to get us where He wants us. Moses had all kinds of training in Egypt, then I think he kinda blew

it, what with killing the Egyptian guy and all. So he spends another 40 years out in the hot dry desert. Again, it takes what it takes for God to work on our rough edges. Do note: Moses is humble and honorable. He even remembered the promise their ancestors made to Joseph to ensure his bones were carried out of Egypt and buried in The Promised Land.

So they went to Succoth, then on to Etham, on the edge of the wilderness,

- **having the Glory of God Himself literally leading them and protecting them and comforting them. Think about what an experience this was for people who literally have themselves never known freedom. What an incredibly kind God we serve, as He saw how disruptive and tumultuous a time this was for Israel. Yes, they had massive doubts and fear. And yet God remained faithful.**

At some point Moses had the people, at God's direction, turn back

from their travels, and head south. This was purposed to make Pharaoh think the people were lost and confused. God again hardens Pharaoh's heart and Pharaoh takes his chariots and soldiers and marches out after Israel. **3-This shows how quickly any of us can forget hard lessons; for even though the Egyptians lost many people to the final plague, they refused to heed that seeming final plague warning.**

The beginning of Chapter 14 makes it clear that God is setting an ambush for Pharaoh, with the purpose of glorifying God's Name and showing Egypt that God is the Lord. This is always going to be God's purpose; to glorify Himself, make no mistake about that.

So Pharaoh and this massive, crushing army of the Egyptians find the Israelites camped by the sea near Pi Hahiroth, opposite Baal Zephon.

Imagine this sight for a moment:

- **tens of thousands of men, women and children, as well as livestock, are moving, moving, moving toward the water's edge; they are looking back through the opening in the surrounding mountains. There from where they have come are hundreds of charioteers, riding side by side, each chariot containing a highly skilled driver as well as a trained archer using a composite bow able to shoot arrows up to 1,000 feet, followed by spearmen carrying bronze-tipped spears and shields, and foot soldiers with battle axes, armor piercing javelins and long handled knives. The Egyptian army of the time was the best equipped army in the world. And their weapons were brutal.**
- **The Israelite's fear is palpable, with mothers screaming to find their children, weaker ones tripping and being stepped on, chaos erupting like lightening striking an outdoor event. Mothers are sobbing, children wailing, fathers cursing. And likely the criticism of Moses is but a quick sampling of what was said. It was for sure ugly and heated and nightmarish.**

- And for Moses, oh man! Yes, He knows the power of God, and he has heard God tell him that God will be glorified through this whole situation. But, honestly, Moses has to be shaken to his core!

Can you imagine the clamor, the thunderous roar of the mighty army bearing down on them?

Do you think that maybe Pharaoh thought God had run out of options? **4-I think this is the time for wise people to pay attention.**

For just as God will be utterly faithful to those who turn toward Him, He will one day be finished with people's insolence and pride. There is indeed a point of no return.

5-This stubbornness on Pharaoh's part also can be used to remind us to pay attention to our enemy today; Satan. We sometimes think the devil will just give up on us once we have joined "God's Camp". Like Satan is going to say, "Oh well, another one has gone over to Jesus". But he doesn't give up like that. Like Pharaoh, the devil and his minions will chase after us, try to drive us by using fear tactics

and harassing us like we are lost sheep. And the people of Israel, not all, but many, cried out in doubt. Looking at the dust filled skies and the literal onslaught of darkness descending on them, with no visible means of escape, they believed they were doomed to die a hellish death in the place between a very hard rock and a hard place (mountains on one side, sea on the other).

6-Again, the response of the Israelites is not unlike those of us who decline to take refuge under God's wings today. We too often insist that we must make our own way, see it our way, and figure it all out ourselves. That never, let me repeat, never works. Not really.

So God has led His people to a place where either He provided a way of escape, or they literally would die or be rounded up and headed back to Egypt in chains. 7-Truth be told; This is exactly where our Lord Jesus wants to take us today!...to that place of total dependence on Him.

So, within what appears to be about a week's time the Israelites have already so distorted their minds as to think going back to Egypt was a better life, when it was in fact a life of terrible abuse, even murderous treatment of God's Chosen People. In Exodus 14:10-12 we see 7 times the Israelites use the words Egyptians, Egypt, and Pharaoh. Here we see them completely overwhelmed and focused on their one-time owners and enslavers, rather than on the Almighty God and His unlimited power. 8-This is another point for us to grab hold of; focus on Jesus Christ and His faithfulness to us, not on the enemies around us, the troubles that beset us. Amen!

9-And it is here that Moses gives us the key to understanding the Exodus Story, and the crux of what God is doing in the world.

Let's look at Exodus 14:13-14 "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the Salvation of the Lord today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you. You need only be still."

10-I believe that what Moses is saying here is not simply a statement or proclamation or even prophecy about what the Israelite God is about to do for His people then and there. It is that. It is also Moses speaking the most profound truth in all of human history; Moses is foretelling God's ultimate salvation through Christ, and Him alone. It is a salvation that we cannot gain on our own. This salvation is open to each and every human being on the planet. But it only comes one way; by being still and letting God be God, while we trust in His power, might, faithfulness and wisdom. The words Moses is using, "See the Salvation of the Lord" is actually a word picture/definition of salvation from the Torah itself. This definition, according to historical Judaism, is fourfold; it works this way;

- **Your enemy is about to annihilate you**
- **You are powerless to help or defend yourself**
- **The Holy One delivers you from the hand of your enemy**
- **The Holy One destroys your enemy**

Here is the continuation of this thread; the Hebrew word for salvation is yeshuat

- **We get our word Yeshua, Jesus's Hebrew name, from the Hebrew word for salvation.**

Here is a very important point; The Israelites are in the throes of deep fear, doubt, and confusion. You see, they knew a taste of God's magnificent power, but they were also not convinced of His care for them.

11-This is so like us today; many of us would rather live in known bondage to sin than trust in a loving God because we are afraid to trust Him.

You see, our lives today are really no different than our sisters and brothers in the Desert of Sin. We, like them, are the product of

broken humanity. It all really did start in the Garden of Eden.

Humanity was in the perfect place. But our forebears rebelled. They were tempted. And they failed. And this broke covenant with our Creator God.

And so from the earliest days God has been about His plan; that plan is creating a people for His Own Possession. Genesis Chapter 3 lays it out very clearly; God Himself speaks to the serpent, the devil, the dark one; and God curses the devil, and speaks out that there will be enmity between “the woman and her offspring” and Satan, even stating that one day this offspring, Jesus Christ, will crush the devil’s head, meaning destroy him.

What is happening here in the desert is another chapter in the long trail from the fall to New Creation. What we are seeing in The Desert of Sin and beyond into Midian (present day Saudi Arabia) is God’s purposes being fulfilled in His timing. You see, sometimes I

think we think that life is capricious, haphazard, willy-nilly, disorganized, and chaotic. Not so with the Triune God.

When we look at what is happening in the desert, with the Egyptians changing their minds and doing a full-on assault of the Children of Israel, we shake our heads. But God Himself set up the advance and then retreat of the Israelites, bringing them back down the west side of what is today the Gulf of Aquaba. They find themselves in a place of no return. They are hemmed in by water, mountains, and an attacking force. Moses had developed a powerful, humble relationship with God and knew what God was doing. Most of the people were still looking back, still had one foot in the stranglehold of slavery, still felt that bondage was better.

**12-So, let us ask together where we are in our individual journeys?
Are we standing firm? Are we looking for the deliverance of God?
Are we letting the Triune God fight our battles for us? Are we
standing still in His rest? You see, all through the Hebrew Bible and**

the New Testament it is God who is reaching out to people. It is God who sent His only Son to humanity, to walk amongst us, to live the sinless life, to stand in our place, and ultimately to become sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ.

Where do you see yourself in the struggles of life? We know that the four foundational pieces of Salvation outlined in the Torah are true today as they were when written thousands of years ago.

- **We have an enemy who prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8)**
- **You and I are powerless to help ourselves or defend ourselves in this whole Salvation process (John 15:5b, apart from Me you can do nothing)**
- **The Holy One delivers you from the hand of your enemy (Romans 8: the Spirit has set you free from sin and death**

- **The Holy One destroys your enemy (He has disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to shame, Col. 2:15)**

Chapter 15:1-21 Is sometimes called “The Song of the Sea”

There is incredible joy and celebration for the Israelites as they have witnessed deliverance from their captors and enemies

God here is beginning, at least for some, to become “their personal God”

The Creator of the Universe is also the very close by, loving God of His people

This relationship is unique and distinctive to Biblical religion

In wrapping this up, let us recall that Exodus is really all about God, not the Children of Israel, or Moses, or the enemies of the Hebrews.

For what we see in this passage is:

The God who cares

The God who is faithful

The God who knows all

The God who can be trusted

The God who welcomes us with open arms

The God who responds to the cries of His people

**The God who is God of the divine, God of humanity, and God of and
over nature**

**What I would ask us all to do, closing our eyes, bowing our heads, is
to reach out in your heart to our Triune God, Father, Son and Holy
Spirit;**

Quietly name your fear

And then factor God into the equation of your fear;

- **is it fear of the unknown? He is already ahead of you.**
- **Is it fear of failure? Not having enough? Being alone?**

- **God was with the Israelites in the midst of their worst nightmare.**
- **Give your fears and concerns to our Lord Jesus, and allow Him to turn your fear into trust in Him**
- **Take 1 John 4:18 with you today; His perfect love casts out fear**

Closing Prayer