

EXODUS 14 - TRUSTING THE LORD WHEN YOUR BACK IS AGAINST THE WALL

We come now to one of the most famous accounts in all of the Bible. This is the crossing of the Red Sea. We stand back and see the salvation of the Lord as the scripture says. Again, we observe the power and sovereign grace and wrath of God. His plan, as always, is perfect in every way, even when we don't understand what He is doing. In this case, the Israelites seemed to be trapped and in an impossible situation. The thing that they didn't know was that God was using this situation to actually trap and destroy the Egyptians, even though it looked like they were in danger. This is where trusting in the Lord is so vital. Difficulties may arise and may make situations look hopeless, but we need to remember that God is the one who puts us in those situations and it goes far beyond what we see. He always has something in mind that extends further than what our finite minds can comprehend. What a great God we have who takes care of His own children as His sovereign plan comes together. The Israelites were in the process of learning to trust the Lord as they followed Him. We too are tested often as God is making us learn to trust Him.

1. THE WORD OF THE LORD—INSTRUCTIONS (1-4)

Here, again, at the start of another chapter, is the Lord speaking. The Word of the Lord is what we always want to heed to. Moses gets instruction from God on how this is going to go down. The Jews were told what God wanted them to do, but Moses was told why God was doing it. God made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. Psalm 103:7

A. SENT TO A DEAD END

Last week we left off with the Israelites being led by God into what we would say was a dead end street. There was nowhere else to go. Why would God box them in and hold them in that tight place? Just to the north stood the fortresses of massive stone structures of the Egyptians. To the west was Raamses and Goshen, which is where they came from. To the west lay the Red Sea. There were fortresses, or the desert, Egypt, or the Red Sea. Pick your poison. They were boxed in with no back door. They were very vulnerable. This is what God told them to do.

B. GOD'S DESIGN IN THESE STRANGE ORDERS

1. The Trap Is For The Enemy

This is all in God's hands, although it looks like He errored.

God already had this arranged that He would get the enemy in the tightest of all spots. He was an ingenious strategist. God wanted the Israelites to know that God is the one who fights the battles. He wanted them to wait, trust, and watch..

2. The Hardening Of Pharaoh's Heart

To make sure that His strategy worked, God does what He had done already in the plagues, harden Pharaoh's heart.

Exodus 4:21, 7:3, 9:12, 10:1, 20, 27, 11:9

God is like a master chess player, inducing Pharaoh to move his king into checkmate, and he doesn't even know it.

Pharaoh was tempted to think he could get back his loss.

God didn't make him do what he didn't want to do or what was contrary to his normal behavior. This was still what he was inclined to do naturally.

3. The Glory Of God

What seemed like an easy victory for Egypt would turn out to be a terrible defeat and the Lord would get all the glory.

In the last destruction of Pharaoh's power, the world would see just how significant the God of Israel was.

2. THE PURSUIT OF THE ENEMY

(5-9)

A. HARDENED HEARTS LOSE SENSITIVITY

Why does the Pharaoh need to be told why the Israelites have left? He had given the orders to go. Maybe because he had expected the Israelites to go on a three day journey is why he has to be told this. After three days the Israelites hadn't started coming back. They kept on going. Maybe it seemed to the Egyptians that the Israelites were just wandering around aimlessly.

What have we done? It was their own lust for power and dominance and comfort that made them regret their earlier decision. It made them mad that Israel had their liberty. This thought, that they were not coming back was too much for Pharaoh, so he chases them.

B. WORLDLY POWER

He mustered up all his power, calling in the special forces, the best of the best. The whole army pursued them. After all the plagues, it is hard to believe that they would go after them. This is a perfect example of a hard human heart. They will all get what is coming to them. Did he actually think he could take God on ? Worldly power cannot defeat God.

C. THE HARDENING OF THE HEART

God gave him up to all these passions of his own heart, and so hardened it. After all that happened he thought that this time he could beat Yahweh.

D. THE CONFIDENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

They left Egypt with a lot of courage and bravery triumphing over

their release.

E. THE OVERTAKING OF THE ENEMY

They arrived near the place where the Israelites were taking the same route.

3. THE FEAR THAT GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE (10-14)

A. EYES TAKEN OFF THE LORD, LOOKED TO ENEMY

Ex 13:21-22 As long as the Israelites kept their eyes on the fiery Pillar and followed the Lord, they were alright. But when they Took their eyes off the Lord and looked back and saw the enemy coming they became frightened.. As things were going well they usually obeyed the Lord. That is the way it went throughout the history of Israel. But when things look difficult they began to complain. This scenario strikes right at home. How often do we become frustrated with the Lord's will when we are disappointed with the way things are going on in our own lives? When we forget God's promises we start to imagine the worst. The Jews just knew that they would perish as soon as the army caught up with them. Unbelief has a way of making us forget the promises God has given to us and the power He has put on display.

B. CRYING OUT TO GOD

They first took their concern to God, which is what we are always to do. They were scared out of their minds. They were at the end of their rope.

C. COMPLAINING TO MOSES

Immediately after crying out to God they looked for someone to blame. If relief doesn't come quickly after praying, we sometimes want to put the blame on someone. They say, we told you so. At the first sight of trouble, they are willing to march back to Egypt, ignoring everything God had done. Circumstances are not the way to measure the work of God.

We would rather be slaves than to be free and in danger. They were no longer looking up but looking at their problem. If one stays in that position long enough, one will begin to question the very roots of his faith.

D. ENCOURAGEMENT BY MOSES

Fear not, despite what you see. We live by faith and not by sight. Fear is the opposite of faith.

Moses knew what God had promised, so he was at ease.

Faith calls us to live through uncertainty and fear with no assurance of a good outcome apart from the Word of God and His presence.

The Lord will fight for you, so you need to be still. Be still and know that I am God. Ps 46:10

Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD God didn't need their assistance. At the end of the verse are two Hebrew words, which mean, You be quiet ! or, Shut up! This is not necessarily a comfort

statement but showing their paper thin faith.
The LORD fights for His people and delivers them.
The human response is we are afraid, we run, we fight, and we tell everybody. God's counsel is the opposite.

4. DIRECTION GIVEN BY THE LORD (15-20)

A. GO FORWARD

Go directly to the sea-side. Obey and leave it up to God. Trust Him.

B. DIRECTIONS FOR THE RED SEA CROSSING

Moses was to raise his staff so that the waters would be divided and then the Israelites could walk through on dry land.

God would get the glory is the reason for all this.

C. CLOUD IS MOVED

The cloud stood between them and the enemy. This was the Angel of God which we should always be reminded that God's presence is with us. He doesn't leave His people without protection and care.

The cloud gave light to the Israelites and darkness to the Egyptians.

This would be a reminder of the 9th plague.

5. THE MIGHTY POWER OF GOD DISPLAYED (21-31)

This all is a revelation of the greatness and power of God.

The Psalmists would praise the Lord for His mighty works at the Red Sea. Ps 66, 78, 80-81, 105-106, 136

The prophets used the Exodus to encourage the exiles

A. HE OPENED A PATH THROUGH THE SEA

God used natural means, the wind to open a path. This took place through the night. The east wind dried out the bed so they would be able to walk through. This was still a supernatural event.

God brought confusion to the Egyptians as they pursued. It was a terrifying confusion in the form of wheel trouble, because of the mud, probably.

B. GOD'S FAVOR ON HIS PEOPLE

Psalm 77:11, 16, 19

God, delivers the people through the dry land in the sea, His grace

Is seen as He put favor on them, even though they did not deserve it.

Not a single Hebrew was hurt.

This was a great picture of redemption and resurrection.

C. GOD'S RIGHTEOUS WRATH ON THE ENEMY

Prov 1:17, 7:23

God brought payback for drowning the baby boys in the Nile.

Within moments the sea, at Moses command, comes crashing down.

As the Egyptians were entering the water, the water went back to its place. The entire army was killed. Egypt paid the ultimate price.

D. GOD'S PEOPLE SEE GOD'S GREAT WORK

1. The enemy defeated

The Israelites see them washed up on the shore. Their escape is now complete.

2. God's people feared and believed in the Lord

God's promise was true. God did it all. They could take no credit.

Their fear was a right fear, the healthy fear of God.

How could they not believe God. They gave God glory.

They were now identified with Moses as they were baptized into Moses

Historians say that the Red Sea remained an unfriendly place for a long time. It was 17 years later that they came back. They held it in awe.

It takes tight places to break old habits

When closed in on all sides, the only place to look is to God.

The battle belongs to the Lord, and He gets the glory.

Red Seas open and close at the command of the Lord.

Coming to the Red Sea is just as much a part of God's plan as crossing it. A predicament in God's hands is only a highway to the Promised Land. Chuck Swindoll