

# Saved Through Water

Exodus 14:15-14:31

God delivered Israel from death so gloriously that people will be talking about it at least until the resurrection of the dead. Aside from Jesus' death and resurrection, the crossing of the Red Sea is the most celebrated event in Scripture, just as God intended (v18). This event marks the turning point and establishment of Israel, and reverberates through history into the lives of God's people, reminding us of what He has done.

## NOTES:

### **Forward!**

Israel will be quiet and see God's salvation, and the time for talking about it is over: "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward" (v15). Prayers have been offered and now it's time to act. Charles Spurgeon titled his sermon on this text *Forward! Forward! Forward!*: "When we have prayed over a matter to a certain degree, it then becomes sinful to tarry any longer; our plain duty is to carry our desires into action, and having asked God's guidance, and having received divine power from on high, to go at once to our duty without any longer deliberation or delay." Egyptian horses and chariots are bearing down. What are they supposed to do, walk into the water? Faith is not something you only exercise in thought life, but in your lived life. Scripture gives us all kinds of examples of people trusting God the best they know how in impossible circumstances: "For by You I can run against a troop, by my God I can leap over a wall" (Ps. 18:29). Like Israel we forget the impossible deliverance of the past while we focus on the impossible problem in the present. When this kind of unbelief takes root, we forget and recast the deliverances of the past, just like Israel did (v12). When you walk by faith your feet might get wet. Having given thanks and asked for God's grace and kindness, go forward. Sometimes we need to stop the "What ifs?" What if I stop questioning God and act by faith?

### **God of Darkness & Light**

The Lord restates His plan, and the Angel of God goes between the Egyptians and Israelites, a darkness to one and light to the other (vv19-20). Moses tells us plainly the same God appears completely differently to the two nations, and the lesson is not that different people see the same God in different ways. The lesson is that idolaters don't see Him at all for the good He is. Egyptians are out for blood because they couldn't effectively enslave Israel, so the God of glory and beauty appears as darkness. Darkness in this context is good, just not good for the personal experience of the Egyptians. God made darkness and light, and darkness is part of the glory cloud just like the beautiful night frames the stars and tees up every sunrise. Egypt knows God's dark displeasure, His holy wrath, and having just been through the ninth plague that led to the tenth, they ought to know what's coming. God exists objectively whether we believe in Him or not, but if we believe in Him our experience is much different, just as a law-abiding citizen has a different appreciation of the justice system than a dedicated felon. If you define God according to your own standards, He will not match up to it. If you require God to deliver you a certain standard of living or quality

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of relationship or anything else that you hold above or against Him, you will be disappointed and surrounded by darkness. But if you look to Him as He is, revealed in blazing clarity in His Word, in His people, in His world, you'll find protection, providence, and everything you need, more than you can ask or think. God works through His normal natural and personal laws all the time, and sometimes He intervenes to do something we call a miracle. This is a miracle, waters divided by the east wind all night when Moses stretches out his hand, and walls of water on either side as they pass through on dry ground (vv21-22). Whether God uses natural or supernatural means to accomplish His purposes makes it no less personal or intentional on His part.

## **Their Own Devices**

The Egyptians, truly hell-bent, pursue Israel into the Red Sea. At sunrise when they would hope and pray to Ra the sun god to avenge and rescue them, the Lord goes to the specific trouble of dismantling their chariot wheels. The means of violence and bloody conquest leave them stranded and realizing Yahweh fights for Israel even here (vv24-25). The same water that stands for Israel rushes down upon the chariots and horsemen and all the Egyptian army, washing them dead upon the seashore (vv26-30). Witness the R-rated victory of the Prince of the Peace. Verses 10 and 31 contrast two sights: "And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord"; "Thus Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done in Egypt; so the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses." Israel goes from seeing the army, fearing them and complaining, to seeing God's work, fearing Him and trusting. He saves them through no merit or contribution of their own, but His sheer mercy and kindness. The only way you can be troubled by God's judgment in this story is if you favor genocidal armies. The answer is not more negotiations. He already gave them two generations and ten slow plagues. The gospel is not that while we were a little dense, somewhat ignorant, in need of a little love, God came down to be our pal. To accept the gospel is not to say the sinner's prayer, ask Jesus in your heart, and be a good person. While we were still enemies, Christ died for the ungodly, for those who would rather stay in Egypt, or even rule in Egypt (Rom. 5:8, 10). It's not the bodies of Egyptians we see, but by faith the crucified and risen Christ. He talked to Elijah and Moses about his *exodus*, His passing through the waters of death, and all Peter, James, and John could do was keep quiet as they saw and heard God in the cloud (Lk. 9:30-36). We have seen the whole life of Jesus lived for us, and His life given to pay for our sins on the cross. We go forward, walking in the light, knowing God will give us all things because He has already given us His Son.

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