

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

VOLUME 2

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ISSUE 1

“TELL THE SONS OF ISRAEL TO GO FORWARD” (EXODUS 14:15)

By Andrew Dow

Many Christians struggle to understand the need for in-depth Old Testament study. After all, some argue, the Old Testament was “**nailed it to the cross**” (Col. 2:14, NASB). In reality, the Old Testament “**has become our tutor to lead us to Christ**” (Gal. 3:24), and “**these things happened as examples for us**” (1 Cor. 10:6). Therefore, we would be foolish to ignore the lessons contained therein. I invite you to examine with me the Old Testament example of Israel’s salvation from Egypt. In this story we find some lessons that all men today need to understand. Let’s begin by examining...

THE ACCOUNT OF ISRAEL’S SALVATION FROM EGYPT

Scripture tells us that after the ten plagues, “**The Egyptians urged the people, to send them out of that land in haste, for they said, ‘We will all be dead’**” (Exo. 12:33). Unfortunately this is not the end of the story. Immediately thereafter the Egyptians changed their minds, Pharaoh and his army chased the newly freed slaves, and Israel cried out to Moses, “**Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?**” (Exo. 14:11). As they stood between a great army and an impassable sea, Israel faced certain death.

Moses calmed the people, **“Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent”** (Exo. 14:13-14). Israel was trapped. The only hope they had was in the God whose power brought them to this point.

Finally, the Lord spoke to Moses. First, the Lord said, **“Tell the sons of Israel to go forward”** (Exo. 14:15). Think about Israel’s situation: going forward meant walking directly into the Red Sea. And yet, that was the only hope they had! Second, the Lord said to Moses, **“As for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it”** (Exo. 14:16). Can you imagine hearing this as Moses? What good would it do to wave a stick over the water? Still, God demands that Moses act! Finally, God said, **“As for Me, behold... I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army... Then they will know that I am the Lord...”** (Exo. 14:17-18). Israel was required to act, Moses was required to act, but God is the one who would be recognized for providing Israel’s salvation!

Exodus 14:19-29 records the events that take place after God spoke to Moses. Moses obeyed the Lord precisely as he had been instructed (Exo. 14:21). **“The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land”** (Exo. 14:22). Just as the Lord commanded, Israel went forward! Through all of this the Egyptians acknowledged, **“the Lord is fighting for them”** (Exo. 14:25). Yes, Moses and Israel obeyed, but **“the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians”** (Exo. 14:30). With this story fresh in our mind, let’s think about...

HOW ISRAEL'S SITUATION MIRRORS OUR OWN

The situation Israel found herself in is the same situation we were once in, and it is the same situation that many lost souls are in today. Sinners are described in Scripture as being **“slaves of sin”** (Rom. 6:20; cf. John 8:34). Our slavery to sin mirrors the Israelites' Egyptian bondage. Additionally, just as Israel faced certain death, **“The wages of sin is death”** (Rom. 6:23). In both circumstances, God is the only hope of life.

Our situation mirrors Israel's again in that we have received the promise of salvation. Moses calmed the children of Israel with the promise that God would save them, and God confirmed that promise by putting a plan into action. Paul tells us, **“sin shall not be master over you”** (Rom. 6:12, 14; cf. John 8:32). Like Israel we have been offered freedom from sin and death.

Consider one more similarity: God could have chosen any number of miraculous ways to save Israel from Egypt. He could have instantaneously killed the entire Egyptian army, constructed an enormous steel wall between the two peoples, or zapped them over the Red Sea. God didn't do any of those things, and neither will He do such today. Nowhere in God's revelation does He promise to instantaneously destroy our temptations, construct a wall to stand between us and sin, or zap us where we need to go. To the contrary God demands obedient action.

WHAT ARE WE TO LEARN FROM THIS COMPARISON?

Understanding this story and noticing comparisons will do little good without considering what Christians are to learn from such a comparison. Let me suggest two things:

First, we are saved by the grace of God. “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:4-9). Do you understand what Paul is saying here? There is nothing that you could ever do to get yourself out of the situation you are in. No amount of good works can keep the Egyptians away or divide the Red Sea! We are entirely indebted to God and His love for the salvation He has provided.

Second, we’ve got to “go forward”. What would have happened to Israel if God divided the Red Sea and Israel didn’t “**go forward**” as they were commanded? Obedience to God’s will did not earn the Israelites’ salvation, but without it they could not have been saved! Sometimes it’s hard for us to understand why God requires certain things. We don’t always have to understand why God commands us to do certain things, we simply have to trust Him. When He says go, will you go?

NOTES: _____

AM LESSON:

Why Do We Have
Announcements?

PM LESSON:

Making a Difference:
Esther

“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”
(MATTHEW 28:19-20)