

THE RED SEA; ISRAEL'S TRIUMPH OVER EGYPT

BIBLE TEXT : Exodus 13:17-22; 14:1-31; 15:1-21

LESSON 57 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land" (Hebrews 11:29).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Exodus 13:17-22

¹⁷ And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not *through* the way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt:

¹⁸ But God led the people about, *through* the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.

¹⁹ And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

²⁰ And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.

²¹ And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:

²² He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, *from* before the people.

Exodus 14:1-31

¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

² Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea.

NOTES:

The Exodus Begun

The Children of Israel started their triumphal march to the Land Of Canaan. It was not a great distance, because we remember that the sons of Jacob had gone from Canaan to Egypt to buy corn twice; and when Jacob died, Joseph and a great company of his family and servants returned to Canaan to bury his father. If the Israelites had followed the instructions of Moses and had trusted God implicitly, they would no doubt have come into their inheritance in a short time. But because of unbelief and disobedience, they wandered around in the wilderness for forty years, until all the people, except Caleb and Joshua, who were over twenty years of age when they left Egypt, had died.

God had worked great miracles in order to induce the Egyptians to let His people go, but a greater triumph was still ahead. No sooner had the Egyptians recovered from the shock caused by the death of their first-born than they decided they had done the wrong thing in freeing their slaves. After all, the Jews had done a very great amount of work for their cruel masters, and their absence would be keenly felt.

When Pharaoh saw the direction they had taken (a company of about three million people with all their flocks and herds could not hope to cover their trail), he ordered his army to pursue them with horses and chariots. There was a more direct route which the king probably expected them to take; but because it led through the land of the Philistines who would no doubt declare war against them, God had directed the Children of Israel to take the route toward the Red Sea. God did not feel that His people were prepared to fight so soon after being freed from slavery when they had never had the opportunity to assert their rights nor defend themselves. Pharaoh probably thought they were lost when they pushed their way into this narrow passage between the mountains with the Red Sea in front of them. Perhaps he laughed at them, and considered that it would be easy to go after them and make them return to Egypt.

Divine Guidance

But God was leading His people. During the day a pillar of cloud went before them to lead the way and also as a covering from the hot sun (**Psalm 105:39** ³⁹ He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.). At night it was a pillar of fire, which led them if they marched, and was a light to them. God Himself spoke to the people from the pillar, showing that He was right there with them (**Exodus 16:10, 11** ¹⁰ And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, **Exodus 33:9** ⁹ And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses.). He had brought them into this narrow place that He might once more show His mighty power.

When we get into hard places we should not murmur and say that our God does not take very good care of us. We should trust that He knows best, and be submissive to His will so that He can get glory from our lives.

³ For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel,

They *are* entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.

⁴ And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD. And they did so.

⁵ And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?

⁶ And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him:

⁷ And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.

⁸ And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.

⁹ But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon.

¹⁰ And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.

¹¹ And they said unto Moses, Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?

¹² *Is* not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For *it had been* better for us to serve the Egyptians, than

The Children of Israel should have learned to trust God by this time, after all the wonders they had seen Him perform in Egypt; but as soon as they saw the Egyptians coming after them, they became frightened. They thought they were going to die, and considered slavery in Egypt better than death.

The Lord's Battle

Moses did not condemn them for their cowardice, for he realised they were weak. He encouraged them with those beautiful words: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD... The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. "Would it not be wonderful to stand still and watch God do their fighting for them? We have just that same privilege today. God wants us to stand still and let Him solve all our problems for us. We are not to worry or fret when things go wrong; but if we take our cares to Jesus He will make all things come right.

Surrounded

Try to imagine the position of this great company of people. There were mountains on both sides of them, the Egyptian army behind them, and a great body of water in front of them. Remember that they were on foot, with no weapons of war to fight with. They had nothing with which to make rafts or boats to cross the sea. But they had God! God was their shield and their weapon. All they had to do was stand still and see His power.

The pillar of cloud had led the people this far, but it lifted itself and stood behind the camp of Israel so the Egyptians could not even see them. But to the Israelites it was light. Just so is the Word of God today: to the Christian it is light and a guide to Heaven; but to the sinner who refuses to heed it, it is stern judgment and darkness. All night long the cloud was so thick between the Egyptians and the Children of Israel that they could not see each other.

The Israelites were hemmed in on all sides, and then God told them to go ahead. Was that unreasonable? Maybe we sometimes think the commands of God are unreasonable, but He always makes the way for us to do what He asks us to do. God told Moses to stretch out his rod over the Red Sea, and the waters would separate so the people could walk through on dry land. Wouldn't you be surprised to come to a lake and have the waters suddenly part and pile up on each side of a passageway through the middle? But that is just how powerful God is. This must have been a wide path because all those people and their animals had to get through in one night.

Broken Chariots

When God saw the Egyptians following the Children of Israel into the Red Sea, He made the wheels come off their chariots so they could not catch up. Imagine all the confusion on the sea bed: some chariots stalled because their wheels were off; the horses excited and prancing around with impatience because they could not go forward; other chariots not able to pass those in trouble; and everyone shouting at everyone else to do something.

As soon as the Israelites had made the crossing, the waters returned, pouring right over their pursuers, and drowning them all. Not one escaped. When daylight came, God's people could see the dead bodies of the Egyptians being washed to shore. "Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians."

The Song of Moses

How happy were the children of God! They had been delivered from the bondage of Egypt, and their oppressors had been destroyed. Moses led the people in a beautiful song of praise, one of the grandest poems ever written. It was their song

that we should die in the wilderness.

¹³ And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

¹⁴ The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

¹⁵ And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:

¹⁶ But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea.

¹⁷ And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

¹⁸ And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

¹⁹ And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:

²⁰ And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness *to them*, but it gave light by night *to these*: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

²¹ And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry *land*, and the waters were divided.

of deliverance through the mercy of God. We have an account in the book of Revelation of another group who sang this song, which is called the Song of Moses, and they added, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest" (Revelation 15:3, 4). The power of the wicked one has been broken; the judgments of God have been shown to all people. As Israel was brought out of Egyptian bondage, so we are brought out of the bondage of the devil when we are saved; and so we will be taken out of this world of sin into Heaven when Jesus comes. The passing through the Red Sea is a type of our water baptism (**I Corinthians 10:1, 2** ¹ Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ² And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;).

QUESTIONS

1. Did Pharaoh let the people go in peace after they started?
2. Whom did he send in pursuit?
3. What did the Israelites do when they saw their pursuers?
Is that what they should have done?
4. How were the Children of Israel led by day? By night?
5. What happened to the cloud when the Egyptians came close?
6. What did God tell the Israelites to do?
7. What happened when Moses stretched out his rod?
8. How did the Israelites go through the Red Sea?
9. Did the Egyptians go through? Why not?
10. What was the song that Moses sang?

²² And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry *ground*: and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

²³ And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, *even* all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

²⁴ And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians,

²⁵ And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

²⁶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.

²⁷ And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

²⁸ And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, *and* all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

²⁹ But the children of Israel walked upon dry *land* in the midst of the sea; and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.

³¹ And Israel saw that great work

which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

Exodus 15:1-21

¹ Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

² The LORD *is* my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he *is* my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

³ The LORD *is* a man of war: the LORD *is* his name.

⁴ Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.

⁵ The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.

⁶ Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.

⁷ And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, *which* consumed them as stubble.

⁸ And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, *and* the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

⁹ The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

¹⁰ Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

¹¹ Who *is* like unto thee, O LORD,

among the gods? who *is* like thee,
glorious in holiness, fearful *in*
praises, doing wonders?

¹² Thou stretchedst out thy right
hand, the earth swallowed them.

¹³ Thou in thy mercy hast led forth
the people *which* thou hast
redeemed: thou hast guided *them*
in thy strength unto thy holy
habitation.

¹⁴ The people shall hear, *and* be
afraid: sorrow shall take hold on
the inhabitants of Palestina.

¹⁵ Then the dukes of Edom shall
be amazed; the mighty men of
Moab, trembling shall take hold
upon them; all the inhabitants of
Canaan shall melt away.

¹⁶ Fear and dread shall fall upon
them; by the greatness of thine
arm they shall be *as* still as a
stone; till thy people pass over, O
LORD, till the people pass
over, *which* thou hast purchased.

¹⁷ Thou shalt bring them in, and
plant them in the mountain of
thine inheritance, *in* the place, O
LORD, *which* thou hast made for
thee to dwell in, *in* the Sanctuary,
O Lord, *which* thy hands have
established.

¹⁸ The LORD shall reign for ever
and ever.

¹⁹ For the horse of Pharaoh went
in with his chariots and with his
horsemen into the sea, and the
LORD brought again the waters of
the sea upon them; but the
children of Israel went on
dry *and* in the midst of the sea.

²⁰ And Miriam the prophetess, the
sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in
her hand; and all the women went
out after her with timbrels and
with dances.

²¹ And Miriam answered them,
Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath
triumphed gloriously; the horse
and his rider hath he thrown into
the sea.