

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Good morning church, turn your bibles to Exodus 14.

Our text this morning is going to cover one of the most amazing events that we have in the scriptures.

That is the crossing of the Red Sea.

I remember going to Universal Studios in Hollywood as a youngster and they had a visual effect of the Parting of the Red Sea where the lake would split and the tram would drive through the middle of the lake.

I read about a nine year old named Joey who after church on Sunday, was asked by his mom what he had learned in Sunday school.

Well, mom, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

And when he got to the Red Sea, he had his engineers build a pontoon bridge over the Red Sea and all the people walked safely across safely.

But then the Egyptian army came after them.

So – then Moses got on his walkie talkie and called into headquarters and asked for reinforcements and they sent two bombers to blow up the bridge while the Egyptians were on it – and the Israelites were saved.

“Now, Joey, is that really what your teacher taught you?” his mother asked.

“Well, no, Mom. But if I told it the way the teacher did, you would never believe it!”

I pray that we don’t have any Joey’s in the audience today.

As amazing as the Red Sea crossing is – I believe that the application for you and me is the reason that the Children of Israel had to cross the Red Sea in the first place.

Let’s pray...

In our study last week, the 10th wonder was unleashed upon Pharaoh, bringing him to his knees.

He calls Moses and Aaron into his palace and orders the Children of Israel out of Egypt.

The exodus out of Egypt begins – At least two million Israelites start making the journey toward the Promise Land.

God led them in a pillar of cloud by day – as He gave them shade from the hot sun and by night in a pillar of fire.

When the pillar of cloud and fire moved, they were supposed to move and when it sat still, they were to sit still.

As long as they kept their eyes on the cloud and fire, they would be reminded of God's presence and power.

[Exo 14:1-31 NKJV] 1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, that they **turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea. 3 "For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They [are] bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.' 4 "Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and **I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I [am] the LORD."** And they did so.**

Up to this point, the Children of Israel were following a well-known trade route out of Egypt – it was most likely the same route that Moses took when he fled Egypt some 40 years earlier.

And because God is serving as their GPS – He commands them to make the next right turn and head into a narrow valley between two mountain ranges.

The name Pi Hahiroth actually means “mouth of the gorges”

And God also commands them to camp by the sea.

So picture two million people being boxed in with nowhere to go – they are sitting ducks – they are trapped.

Question – who led them there?

It was God – usually it is our own decisions that put us into these situations but here we have an example where God led them into the mess.

So the question becomes, why is God leading them into a trap???

I see three reasons here.

1. So the Children of Israel can learn to trust Him.

God is providing the Red Sea moment to develop their faith -

[Jas 1:2-4 NKJV] 2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have [its] perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

In the life of the believer, we cannot learn to trust Him if we never encounter a Red Sea.

A Red Sea can be a loss of a job / marriage problems / health problems / a loss of a loved one / any adversity.

Some of us may be going through a Red Sea moment right now.

Think about this - if we never encounter a Red Sea – if we lived lives without any trials, we would never see God part the Red Seas in our lives.

The second reason that God is leading them into a trap is so that He can condition them for their journey ahead.

As believers, the difficulties in our lives are designed to keep us from falling away.

[Rom 5:3 NKJV] 3 And not only [that], but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

I am pretty sure that we have all known someone that walked away from the Lord because they have been disillusioned by difficulty.

Instead of embracing the suffering and clinging to the Lord and allowing Him to work in them and through them, they blame God – and it becomes the driving force that leads them away.

The third reason that God was leading them into a trap was so that the Egyptians would know who He is.

As believers, many times we go through trials so that nonbelievers can see how we respond to the trial.

[2Co 4:11-12 NKJV] 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you.

Our difficulties are designed to bring others to Christ.

5 Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and 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 So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him.

Since they are no longer being bombarded with plague after plague - the Egyptians begin to realize that their entire workforce is now gone.

And they began to ask themselves why did they allow the Children of Israel to leave in the first place – apparently they forgot 10 reasons why they let them go.

They are all suffering from short memory loss –

They regret letting them go -

This is a picture of a nonbeliever who in the midst of a crisis cries out to God only to go back on their promises to believe and follow Him if He helps them.

7 Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. 8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh

king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness.

The chariot was the most sophisticated weapon of its day.

Pharaoh had six hundred choice chariots – these were the king’s guard – these chariots were equipped with three warriors – one drove and the other two fought.

Pharaoh also sends out his normal chariots that were one or two person chariots.

Remember that the Israelites had no army – they was no way they could have put up a fight against Pharaoh’s chariots.

9 So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses [and] chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon. 10 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.

I had you make a note that the Children of Israel cried out – this was a cry of fear.

They were panicked.

This is the first of many times that they will cry out in the wilderness – it is a cry of complaining -

It comes at a time of crisis and fear – as they are boxed in with two mountain ranges on each side, the Red Sea on one side and the Egyptian army barreling down on them.

What was their problem?

Church, their problem is the same problem that you and I face from time to time.

And that is an “eye” problem.

E-Y-E

It was what they decided to look at.

It was what they decided to see.

It was how they decided to interpret what their eyes saw.

Remember, as long as they kept their eyes on the cloud and on the pillar of fire – they were fine.

They were led, they remembered God was leading them – everything was ok.

But as soon as they took their eyes off of God and they looked back at the Egyptian armies and their chariots, fear and anxiety started to set in and then they started to murmur and then they started complaining and that ultimately led to rebellion against God.

Let this be a warning church, if we are the type of believer that is prone to murmur

If we are the type of believer that is prone to complaining –

The next natural step is rebellion –

The Children of Israel lifted up their eyes to see the Egyptians, there problem was that they didn't lift their eyes high enough to see their Protector.

11 Then they said to Moses, "Because [there were] no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? 12 "[Is] this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For [it would have been] better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

It had only been a few days since they had left Egypt.

From elation and boldness they sunk into despair and fear.

Even after everything they had witnessed God do, both in Egypt and here in the wilderness, their faith was gone.

They thought they were about to die.

In their eyes, slavery looked pretty good compared to certain death.

13 And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. 14 "The

LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." 15 And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward.

Moses had been praying.

However, God told Moses the time for praying was over; it was a time for doing.

As believers, we should have times we set aside for prayer.

We should often pray with, and for, one another.

And we should be praying at all times - communing and having fellowship with God in our hearts.

However, there are times when praying becomes a stall tactic.

It becomes a form of spiritual procrastination –

We need to pray but then we also need to act.

Moses was to lead by example – he was supposed to act.

16 "But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry [ground] through the midst of the sea.

This would not have been my first choice.

Why couldn't He simply rain massive hail on the approaching army or had them devoured by wild beasts or some other way in which I was simply a spectator, not a participant.

You see, it's never about defeating the enemy.

That's easy for God.

It's about us growing in faith.

We are His great workmanship, and He takes every opportunity to create us more and more in the image of Jesus Christ.

17 "And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen.

Once again, Pharaoh's heart was already hardened – God is simply using Pharaoh's own wrath against His people to His honor.

18 "Then the Egyptians shall know that I [am] the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

Back at the beginning of all of this in chapter 5 – when Moses and Aaron first come before Pharaoh and they give him the message from the Lord to Let My people go!

Pharaoh responded with "Who is the Lord?"

After sending Pharaoh 10 plagues, God was not done answering Pharaoh's question.

He will use this miracle to speak to Pharaoh and Egypt as much as He used it to speak to the Children of Israel.

19 And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them.

I asked you to make a note of the Angel of the Lord –

Once again, we see a Christophany or Theophany in scripture.

This was the manifestation of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

Jesus Christ was the pillar of cloud leading them –

But the thing I want to draw your attention to is that He doesn't simply lead us – He also watches our back.

And that is what He is doing here to the Children of Israel.

20 So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness [to the one], and it gave light by night [to the other], so that the one did not come near the other all that night.

There was a clear separation between the two groups.

One was a kingdom enshrouded in darkness.

The other, a kingdom of light.

The same cloud that was darkness to the Egyptians was light for God's children.

The same is true for God's word.

To those who choose to walk in darkness because they love darkness rather than light, the bible is confusing –

But to those who seek to walk in the light, it is a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path.

21 Then 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 into dry [land], and the waters were divided. 22 So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the **dry [ground], and the waters [were] a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.**

It's been estimated the crossing would have taken nine hours if the Israelites numbered 2million.

We think there is good evidence they numbered more like 5 or 6 million.

This was no dash across; it took considerable time - during which walls of swirling water were on either side.

There was only one way to go, and that was forward on the path the Lord had chosen for them.

I remember watching a show on the History channel a few years ago where they had scientists that tried to explain the Red Sea crossing.

And their conclusion was that the Red Sea crossing was not a miracle – they argued that if tide conditions and wind conditions were just right – that there could have existed areas in the Red Sea where the water level might have gone down to about 6”

But the scriptures tell us that the Children of Israel crossed on dry land – not 6” of water.

I would counter their argument and say that their conclusion makes the Red Sea crossing an even bigger miracle because according to their conclusion the Egyptians drowned in 6” of water.

23 And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24 Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He **troubled the army of the Egyptians.**

Turn with me to Psalm 77 –

[Psa 77:16-20 NKJV] 16 The waters saw You, O God; The waters saw You, they were afraid; The depths also trembled. 17 The clouds poured out water; The

skies sent out a sound; Your arrows also flashed about. 18 The voice of Your thunder [was] in the whirlwind; The lightnings lit up the world; The earth trembled and shook. 19 Your way [was] in the sea, Your path in the great waters, And Your footsteps were not known. 20 You led Your people like a flock By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

The Psalmist writes that God unleashed a spectacular display of thunder, lightning, rain, and earthquake.

The noises would have been deafening as well.

It was sufficient that Egypt's charioteers were struck with terror.

But wait, there more -

25 And He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

God disables the wheels of their chariots in the middle of the Red Sea –

And it is then – that they begin to realize that they are in trouble.

But it would prove to be too late.

26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their

horsemen." 27 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, [and] all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.

Once again, we see God using a human instrument to do His work.

He could've returned the Red Sea back to the way it was Himself but He chose to use Moses.

It wasn't coincidence – as soon as all the Children of Israel had passed that the water of the Red Sea returned to normal.

29 But the children of Israel had walked on dry [land] in the midst of the sea, and the waters [were] a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. 30 So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 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.

Not only did God lead the Children of Israel into the difficulty – He delivered them out of the difficulty –

The Children of Israel saw the physical evidence of their deliverance as the Egyptians washed up on the shore –

And as a result – they believed.

If our God is so powerful that He can divide the Red Sea to deliver His people, we must place our trust in Him that He will do the same for us.

Amen!

Let's pray...

