



we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ.... For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 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. Think back to our story: Israel was helpless to save herself, and she certainly didn't deserve salvation. What would have happened, though, if God divided the Red Sea and Israel didn't **“go forward”** as they were commanded? Would the grace of God force them to walk? Obedience to God's will did not earn the Israelites' salvation, and obedience to God's will does not earn ours today. The Bible says, **“Although [Christ] was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation”** (Hebrews 5:8-9). Sometimes it's hard for us to understand why certain acts of obedience are required. I imagine there were more than a few puzzled Israelites when God said, **“Tell the sons of Israel to go forward.”** They would have walked right into the Red Sea and then had an entirely different set of problems. But that's what God commanded, and that's exactly what they did. 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?



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ISSUE

16.35

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

August 31,
2014



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Eddie Cook
Steve Dixon
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Andrew Dow

“Tell the Sons of Israel to Go Forward” Exodus 14:15 *By Andrew Dow*

Many Christians have struggled to understand the need for in depth Old Testament study. After all, the New Testament teaches that Christ **“nailed it to the cross”** (Colossians 2:14, NASB). Some have even suggested that there is no need to study the Old Testament at all. We must understand that the Old Testament **“has become our tutor to lead us to Christ”** (Galatians 3:24), and that **“these things happened as examples for us”** (1 Corinthians 10:6). The Holy Spirit revealed the Old Testament to us so that we might be led to Christ, and so that we might learn from its positive and negative examples. Therefore, we would be foolish to ignore the lessons its pages contain. 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

When we mention Israel's salvation from Egypt, many people will probably recall the ten plagues. After these plagues we read, **“The Egyptians urged the people, to send them out of that land in haste, for they said, ‘We will all be dead’”** (Exodus 12:33). The Egyptians were so overwhelmed by God's power that they ran the Israelites out of the land. Unfortunately this is not the end of the

story. What we read next is that 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?”** (Exodus 14:11). The Israelites understood their own predicament. As they stood between a great army and an impassable sea, they faced certain death.

In this troubling situation Moses boldly says, **“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**



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will never see them again forever. The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent” (Exodus 14:13-14). Moses calmed the people with this assurance: God will fight your battle. Israel was trapped. The only hope they had was in the God whose power brought them to this point.

After Moses calmed the people Jehovah spoke to Moses. First, the Lord said, **“Tell the sons of Israel to go forward”** (Exodus 14:15). Think about Israel’s situation with the Red Sea before them: going forward meant walking directly into the water. The only hope they had was to trust God and go forward! Second, the Lord said to Moses, **“As for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it”** (Exodus 14:16). Here is another command that may seem unusual. 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...”** (Exodus 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. We read, **“Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided”** (Exodus 14:21). Moses obeyed the Lord precisely as he had been instructed! The account continues, **“The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land”** (Exodus 14:22). Just as the Lord commanded, Israel went forward! Even though Moses raised his staff and Israel walked into the sea, notice what the Egyptians recognized: **“So the Egyptians said, ‘Let us flee from Israel, for the Lord is fighting for them against the Egyptians’”** (Exodus 14:25). Yes, Moses

and Israel obeyed, but **“the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians”** (Exodus 14:30). With this story fresh in our mind, let’s think about...

How Israel’s Situation Mirrors Our Own

Understand that 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. Sin is described throughout Scripture as bondage and slavery. Paul wrote the Romans reminding them that they were once **“slaves of sin”** (Romans 6:20). Our slavery to sin mirrors the Israelites Egyptian bondage. In both situations God is the only way out. Paul goes on to write, **“The outcome of those things is death.... For the wages of sin is death”** (Romans 6:21, 23). Again, just as Israel was facing certain death at the hand of the Egyptians, we are facing certain death at the hand of sin. In both circumstances, God is the only hope of life.

Our situations mirror one another again because we have received a similar promise from God: salvation. Recall that Moses calmed the people with the promise that God would save them, and God confirmed that promise by putting a plan into action. Paul wrote, **“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body.... For sin shall not be master over you...”** (Romans 6:12, 14). Jesus asserted, **“You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free”** (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 action.

What Are We To Learn From This Comparison?

We have gone to great lengths to remind ourselves of Israel’s salvation from Egypt and how our lives compare to that situation. While it may make for an interesting academic exercise, this discussion would do little good without finally considering what Christians are to learn from such a comparison. I’d like to suggest two things that we see taught in both the exodus and the New Testament.

First, we are saved by the grace of God. Consider the words of Paul, **“God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when**