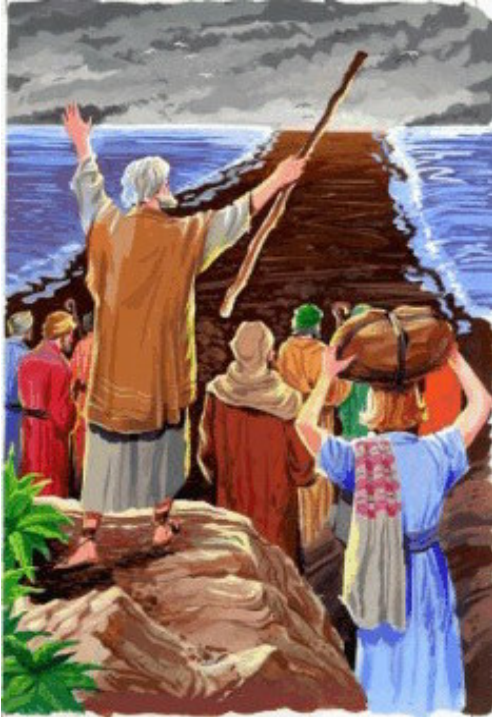


LESSON 8



CROSSING THE RED SEA

Scripture Text: Exodus 14:10-31

When Israel came to the Red Sea, there was no way to cross. Pharaoh pursued them. God opened a path of dry land across the sea. The Israelites went safely across. The water closed on Pharaoh's army, chariots, horses, and horsemen.

Israel had seen many of the Lord's miracles. Yet, when they saw the host of Pharaoh pursuing, they expected an end to their escape and wished they had stayed in Egypt. How nearly like them are we? How can we have more faith? Has God ever been too late to help us? Does He send His help before we really need it? Jesus never fails. Compare this crossing to conversion as to what was saved and what was destroyed.

MEMORY VERSE: *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

—Romans 8:2

Pharaoh's Army Followed

Exodus 14:10-14 **And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel . . . were sore afraid.** Even the severity of the last plague was not enough for Pharaoh, for he changed his mind and pursued the fleeing Israelites. Seeing Pharaoh's army approaching, they were filled with fear and at once began to blame Moses. They accused him of blundering and leading them into a trap. On every side, escape was shut off. This was God's plan. Moses seemed undisturbed by their complaining. He had the Word of God. **Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.** He turned their attention to what they would see that very day. Moses referred not only to their deliverance, but, also, to the destruction of their enemy. **Ye shall hold your peace**—shut up, stop complaining, and see what the Lord will do.

Pillar of Cloud and Fire

Exodus 14:15-20 **The Lord said unto Moses . . . speak . . . that they go forward.** There was a time to pray, and there is a time to act. We should not act without prayer, and we should not continue in prayer when the moment of action has arrived. God had assured Moses that the sea would divide before the Israelites, and they would march to freedom **on dry ground.** To protect Israel from the Egyptian army while the way was being prepared, they were to be given a **pillar of the cloud** by day which would become a **pillar of fire** by night. It was described as the **angel of God.** This could very probably have been Christ. The same angel appeared to Moses in the bush. The cloud would protect them from the heat as they marched. It would stand between them and the enemy so that the pursuers could not follow their movements too closely. At night it would glow with the assurance of God's presence, lest they become discouraged in the dark hours and feel that God had forsaken them. So much can be said about the pillar of cloud and fire as our possession today, but time and space do not permit our doing so. In a variety of ways, God is continually shielding us from the heat that comes upon us from the disagreeable circumstances of life. He furnishes protection

between us and the enemies who would destroy us, the anxieties that threaten our peace of mind, and the temptations that press upon us to ravage our souls. Even in the darkest night, the pillar of fire glows for us as we remember God's past mercies and recall the promises that He has given us in His Word.

The Egyptians Destroyed

Exodus 14:21-22 **Moses stretched out his hand**—with the rod—**over the sea**. God caused an east wind to blow all that night so that the sea became dry land and the waters were divided, and the children of Israel marched through this divinely-created pathway to the possibility of freedom. For God never gives us freedom but only the opportunity to achieve it. Our freedom depends upon our response to the opportunity. Pharaoh represents that sinful will of ours that will not yield to God. The Red Sea represents the deep waters through which we can never pass by our own efforts. Many times the trap into which God appears to have led us is there to test our faith and to reveal to us in all its glory the might of His power and the magnificence of His rescue. God's command to us is that we trust His promises and go forward.

Exodus 14:23-28 The Egyptians saw and thought "if they can, we can"; so, they followed in. But God was not with them. **In the morning watch**—from two a.m. to sunrise—**the Lord looked** at the Egyptians **through the pillar of fire . . .** The same effect upon the Egyptians. The same Bible gives life and light to the obedient and darkness and confusion to the disobedient (Matthew 6:23). God is merciful and strong to help His own, but a consuming fire to rebellious sinners. The Lord **took off their chariot wheels**. Seeing that God was against them, they started to flee. The Lord again told Moses to **stretch out thine hand over the sea**, this time from the other side. **When the morning appeared**—at sunrise—**the sea returned to his strength**. The Egyptians fled but could not escape. **There remained not so much as one of them**.

God Exalted

Exodus 14:29-31 But Israel **walked upon dry land** onto the other shore. First, **Israel saw that great work which the Lord did . . .** Second, **the people feared the Lord**—they were in awe of Him. Third, they **believed the Lord, and his servant Moses**. God's Word had just been proven true **before their eyes**. Their joy broke out into song and praise to the Lord. Miriam, Moses' sister, led the women in singing and dancing for joy.

Following the glorious victory came a time of testing. Israel traveled three days without finding water. When they did find water, it was bitter and undrinkable. God had not forgotten them; He was only proving them. In life, hard things are met as well as easy ones. Can we praise Him in sorrow as well as in joy? Moses prayed, and the Lord showed him how to sweeten the water—another miracle. The trial was over, and God led them to twelve wells of water. If we will obey Him, God will keep us.

JUST A THOUGHT

Satan pursues the repentant one to drag him back to sin.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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