

## Exodus 13-15 Chapter Study

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#### **I. Ordinances to Remember the Exodus • 13:1-16**

##### **1. vs. 1-2 • The Firstborn Consecrated**

**<sup>1</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and beast; it is Mine.”**

“Consecrate” means to set something apart for a special purpose.

[*qadash* / kaw-**dash** • “sanctify – hallow (make holy) – dedicate”]

It refers to the practice of turning something over to the *exclusive* use or service of God.

The 10<sup>th</sup> plague, the death of the firstborn in every house in Egypt not marked with the blood of the Passover lamb, was to be memorialized in the nation of Israel by setting apart the firstborn of both man and animal as the sacred possession of God.

You see, this plague, the final blow to strike Egypt, was more than the 10<sup>th</sup> and the last – it was also the most severe and devastating.

It was no light or casual thing – it was a tragedy and tragic consequence to the hardness of Pharaoh and his court.

Their unreasoned rebellion against God cost them that which was most dear to them.

God had warned Moses & Aaron from the start that Pharaoh would not let the children of Israel go until the firstborn were

slain.

And after the 9<sup>th</sup> plague, when Moses had to warn Pharaoh what the final plague would be, and Pharaoh *still* remained unrelenting, he left the king's presence it says in 11:8, "in great anger;" not because of the king not doing what he asked, but because his resistance to God would exact such a heavy, heavy toll on so many innocent people in the death of their precious children.

So God called for His people to *memorialize* the 10<sup>th</sup> Plague and so remember the heavy price that was paid for their freedom, by setting aside their firstborn and devoting them to the Lord. *How* they were devoted to the Lord will be spelled out later.

## 2. vs. 3-10 • The Feast of Unleavened Bread

**3 And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this *place*. No leavened bread shall be eaten. <sup>4</sup> On this day you are going out, in the month Abib.**

God had already given them the ordinance to observe the week long Feast of Unleavened Bread in ch. 12. In vs. 14-20 he told them *how* they were to observe it, saying it was a *memorial*, an annual and perpetual commemoration of their deliverance out of bondage and into a new relationship with Him marked by freedom.

In these verses, God carefully *repeats* the command that they're to observe this feast annually – SO THAT THEY MIGHT REMEMBER what He did for them and what it means to be His people.

I think it's crucial we note how important the observance of these feasts and holidays were in Israel because there's a subtle undercurrent in the Church in the West to gut the celebration and observance of the holidays, the holy-days.

They are supposed to be days that are *holy*, set-apart to commemorate special events in our history as a nation and in the Christian faith of notable events, like the birth and the resurrection of Christ.

There is even one well known religious group., the Jehovah's

Witnesses, who holds the observance of any and all holidays as somehow sinful.

Let it be clearly understood that observing holidays is Biblical!

Now, we're not going to get into the whole issue of when and how we celebrate the holidays, the point is, the observance of them is thoroughly Biblical and was mandated by God for His people.

**5 And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month.**

And here's how they were to observe the Memorial or Feast of Unleavened Bread.

**6 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day *there shall be* a feast to the LORD. <sup>7</sup> Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters.**

When the children of Israel had to hurriedly leave Egypt in the middle of the night, they took their lumps of dough that had been rising in the kneading bowls and strapped them to their backs and walked out their doors.

This resulted in the bread falling and producing flat cakes.

So God told the people to carry on this tradition of unraised bread, of unleavened bread, throughout their generations, to *commemorate* the Exodus.

As we mentioned last week, yeast/leaven stands as a symbol for *sin* in the Bible.

It represents sin because leaven does its job of puffing up with emptiness by corruption and death.

There was a deeper meaning to the flat bread than just that it fell because of their departure.

Bread has been universally held by cultures throughout history as the staff of life.

Unleavened bread was a symbol of life without the presence of sin.

God wanted the people to realize that the Exodus was more than just emancipation from political oppression and bondage – it was *spiritual* deliverance as well.

The Exodus gave birth to a new people, a new nation.

And the life they were instantaneously birthed into was one that was to be marked by freedom from sin, freedom from corruption and death.

This is why the Feast of Unleavened Bread lasted for an entire week.

This wasn't just one meal as the Passover was – it was a week long WAY OF LIVING.

The death of the Passover lamb was a one time event that affected their deliverance out of bondage and into freedom.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread spoke to them of what they had been delivered into – a whole new relationship with God that was marked by holiness.

The Lord wanted the people to realize that His work was aimed at more than just getting them OUT OF EGYPT – it also was intended to get EGYPT OUT OF THEM.

As we'll see, this was a lesson they were slow in learning-but it's what the Feast of Unleavened Bread was intended to foster.

This is a lesson we'd be wise to heed as well.

Jesus, who is our Passover lamb, as Paul says in 1 Cor. 5:7, was offered once for us.

We commemorate that in Communion when we take a piece of unleavened bread.

Christian communion has the Jewish Passover as its root and background.

But do we realize that that one event of the cross which secures our deliverance from bondage to sin and death ushers us into a LIFE free of it as well?

As we all well know, far too many of those who claim the label Christian, care nothing whatsoever about walking in holiness.

They agree with Passover but they would never think about observing the week long Feast of Unleavened Bread.

God here reminds the children of Israel about the importance of observing the Feast of Unleavened Bread because He wants them to realize that the life He has called them into is a holy life.

**8 And you shall tell your son in that day,**

What day? The day referred to in v. 5, when they entered the Promised Land; when the Exodus was over and they had settled down into their homes.

**8 And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, ‘This is done because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.’<sup>9</sup> It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD’s law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt.<sup>10</sup> You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.**

Commemorating the Exodus by observing the Feast of Unleavened Bread was to be a *major commandment* for them.

Its underlying spiritual lesson of walking in holiness was to be so prevalent, so much a part of their thinking that it would affect the work of their hands, it would shape the way they looked at the world, and it would frame the words of their mouths.

What God says here about being a sign on their hands and a memorial between their eyes was meant to be understood figuratively and spiritually.

Later Jews would apply it literally in the wearing of phylacteries, which you will see to this day in Israel, specially at the Western Wall.

They’re little boxes filled with parchment covered with OT scriptures which they attach to their foreheads and hands with long leather straps.

Jesus condemned the use of such phylacteries because in His day, the self-pious were making them larger and larger so as to gain attention.

And while they had huge phylacteries on their heads and hands, they cared nothing whatsoever about hiding God’s word in their hearts!

That the Lord means this to be understood *spiritually* is made clear by the fact that the Lord’s law is to be *in their mouths* as well as on their hands and between their eyes.

Friends, our faith is not just a church thing – it embraces and covers all of life.

God's word and work ought to affect the work of our hands, the way we look at the world, and how we speak.

Of course, that means we need to be diligent students of God's word, not just to casually read it, but to really study and meditate on it, working it through and contemplating how what we're reading will *affect* our lives.

And that leads me to something that I've been meditating on for a long, long time.

It won't be long till we're deep into the Mosaic Law in our study through the Bible.

And one of the issues we'll have to deal with is why we're studying those portions of scripture that have been superceded by the New Covenant?

We know the moral law of God still applies, but what about the ritual aspects of the law, the sacrifices and the laws or ritual purity? Why study such things since they were meant primarily to foreshadow Christ and no longer find application in the daily practice of the believer?

Great question! And the answer is important for any thoughtful child of God.

The reason we need to read, study and meditate on even the parts of the law which foreshadow and are fulfilled in Christ, is because of the way they help us understand Him better, and appreciate His work all that much more.

Also, the Law is still holy, right, and good – and while we may not be bound to observe the stipulations of the ritual law, it nevertheless holds forth principles that under gird the specific practices, which we *ought* to follow, even today, because they speak to us of the holy character of God.

So, let me simplify the answer to the question of *why* we ought to study & meditate on the Law of Moses.

We ought to because of the principles of justice & righteousness that form the *basis* the specific commands the law gives.

Let's never forget that our God does not change.

The law given to His covenant people centuries ago was & is a reflection of His holiness and will.

Therefore, while it served a specific purpose under the old

covenant, which has been superceded by the New Covenant, that does not mean it is any less a reliable picture of God's holiness and will.

And never forget as well that when Paul wrote that all scripture is inspired and God and profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness, HE was including the entire OT!

### 3. Vs. 11-16 • The Law of the Firstborn

**11** “And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, <sup>12</sup> that you shall set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males *shall be* the LORD's. <sup>13</sup> But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem *it*, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.

In vs. 1-2, the basic command to consecrate the firstborn was given; now we get some of the details on *how* they were to set them apart to the Lord.

God tells the people through Moses that when they get to the Land of Promise, they were not to forget the rite of consecrating the firstborn.

The firstborn males of both man and beast were to be set apart as the Lord's sole possession, which means they were not to be used by man.

Rather, they were to be dedicated wholly & completely to the Lord, in the form of sacrifice.

But there's a problem with this: there were two kinds of sacrifice God would not accept and didn't want – 1) humans, and 2) ceremonially unclean animals, such as the donkey. (Lev. 11:2-4).

So, in the case of these, they could be “redeemed,” which means “bought back.”

As the law goes on to proscribe, firstborn sons were redeemed with silver, while firstborn unclean animals could be redeemed by offering a clean animal, such as a lamb, in it's

place.

These two kinds of redemption were also symbolic of what the Lord did in the Passover and Exodus.

Israel was God's firstborn son who was redeemed with the silver and gold the Egyptians piled them down with when they made their escape from bondage.

And the substitutionary lambs that took the place of the unclean animals spoke of the substitution the Passover lambs provided in protection of the people of faith.

**14 So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?'**

Meaning, what is this practice of devoting the firstborn . . .

**that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 15 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.' 16 It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt."**

The same terms are used here that were used above in the ordinance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

While that was an *annual* feast, firstborn animals and sons could occur throughout the year, so it would serve as a *continual reminder* of their status as the people of God.

## **II. The Journey to Sinai • Chs. 13:17-40:38**

### **A. The Early Route of the Exodus • 13:17-22**

**17 Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them *by way* of the land of the Philistines, although that *was near*; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt."**

The quickest route to Canaan from Egypt lay along the Coast, the *Via Maris*, as it was called in the ancient world.



It was a well-known and well-traveled highway, but it led through the region of the Philistines, a fierce sea-people who had settled the coastal region.

A large group such as the nation of Israel would provoke the Philistines to attack, and God knew that the children of Israel, though as we saw so clearly last Sunday, were in fact, the army of the Lord, they did not see themselves as warriors yet.

At the first hint of war, being so close to Egypt at this point, they would go running back to Egypt with their tail tucked between their legs and their heads bowed, begging the Egyptians to take them back.

So the Lord led them away from the Philistines, and into a path of self-discovery on who they really were in their new relationship with Him.

**18 So God led the people around *by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea*. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.**

Moses knew that if they were going to get anywhere, then the people would have to be organized into some kind of orderly arrangement so that orders and direction could be given.

Though it isn't spelled out here, we later discover that their camp was arranged according to the people's tribal affiliations.

This would set them in large blocks which were then more finely organized according to clans and families.

Each Jew knew what family, clan and tribe he belonged to so this would have been a relatively easy ordering process.

We read here that God led them into the Wilderness of the Red Sea, which meant the eastern side of the Red Sea.

In 12:37 it says that when the children of Israel first set out, they traveled from the slave camps at *Rameses*, where they had lived for the last 200 some years, to *Succoth*.

It was probably there at Succoth that Moses then gave orders for the people to order themselves into ranks.

The traditional route of the Exodus puts the nation traveling through the Red Sea at the northernmost tip of the Gulf of Suez, and then down into what is called the Sinai peninsula.

In fact, the Sinai peninsula is called that *because* of the mistaken belief that this is the route of the children of Israel and that Mt.

Sinai is located at its southern tip.

We have much better evidence now that where they crossed the Red Sea was at the tip of Sinai Peninsula, going across the Gulf of Aqaba, and that Mt. Sinai was in fact located near the western edge of the Arabian peninsula.

The evidence for this will come a bit deeper in our study.

**19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he [Joseph] had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you.”<sup>20</sup> So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness.**

Note that, they were *already* at the edge of the Wilderness of the Red Sea at this point, and we are no where near the crossing of the Red Sea yet.

**21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.<sup>22</sup> He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night *from before the people.***

This is amazing! God manifested His visible presence in the sight of the people in the pillar of smoke and fire.

Wherever the pillar went is where the people went.

Is God here right now?

What difference would it make, do you think, if there was a swirling column of smoke when the lights were on, and when we dimmed the lights, it was a column of fire?

God is no less here right now than if we could see such a manifestation of His presence.

The reason God gave the children of Israel such a visible manifestation of Himself at that time was because they knew virtually nothing about Him!

They had no Bible – Moses is the one who would begin penning it in the weeks, months, and years to come.

Their ideas about God had been badly tweaked by the worship of the false gods of Egypt.

So they needed to be confronted with the reality of the power and

eternal presence of God.

While you and I would probably dearly love to have such an experience, we don't need it, because we know God is all-powerful and always present.

But the problem we face is identical to the problem the children of Israel faced in that, knowing the facts about God, does not automatically translate into living in light of those facts.

They could look up and SEE the manifestation of God at any time they wanted to. Yet they whined and moaned and complained the entire time of their journey!

Proof of God's reality and ability does not automatically result in belief!

People don't need more proof to belief in God, they need to choose to believe the evidence that is already there.

Let me say to anyone here tonight who struggles with unbelief and thinks, "If I could just have more proof of God's love and power, then I would believe," - No you wouldn't!

You have all the evidence of God you need. It's staring you in the face and shouting the truth to you.

You don't believe because you *will* NOT TO; you chose to refuse for reasons other than a lack of evidence.

You have the pillar of creation to p[rove God's existence and power, and you have the cross to prove the greatness of His love for you. If you will not believe these things, then you simply WILL *not* to believe.

## Chapter 14

### B. The Red Sea Incident • 14:1-15:21

#### 1. Ch 14 • Into & Through The Sea

**<sup>1</sup> Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>2</sup> "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. <sup>3</sup> For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.'**

The way God describes where they are to travel to and camp fits

perfectly with the eastern side of the southernmost tip of the Sinai peninsula.

Because the Egyptians had small forts all throughout this region, messengers would carry back reports to Pharaoh of the passage of the children of Israel and Pharaoh would think they had become trapped, hemmed in by the sea, and so would be easy *pickens*'.

**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.**

Meaning, they traveled to the place he told them between Migdol and the Sea.

While the 10<sup>th</sup> plague broke Pharaoh, with the passage a few days, his heart once more became hard and he decided to mobilize the fearsome Egyptian army and chase after the Hebrew slaves.

In all the plagues Egypt had endured, none of them had been directed specifically against the army, which was the pride of Egypt.

The army was considered the arm of Pharaoh, who was esteemed as the visible manifestation of the gods of Egypt, specifically of Ra, the supreme deity of the Egyptian pantheon.

Just as each of the deities, including Pharaoh, had been humbled by the plagues, the Egyptian army needed to be humbled as well.

So God arranged it so that they would be drawn out for judgment.

There was another important reason why God determined to bring the army of Egypt down!

He wanted the children of Israel to witness the supremacy of His power over the might of Egypt so that they would realize their role as His army, and that as they maintained faith in Him, they would know victory over every earthly power.

No one could stand in their way, as they looked to God.

The only way they would learn this was by seeing God's power manifested in the defeat of the mighty army of Egypt.

And Egypt would learn not to mess with their new neighbors to the Northeast!

**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?”**

Ah, I can think of 10 really good reasons why!

See how rebellion against God makes even smart men stupid?

**6 So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. <sup>7</sup> Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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.**

Traveling via horseback and chariot, it was easy for the army of Egypt to easily overtake the nation of Israel and caught up to them at the place God had set as the ambush against them.

Chariots were the most sophisticated piece of military technology at that time.

They were equivalent to an M1A1 Abrams tank.

Among the thousands of chariots Egypt mustered in this attack were 600 *heavy* chariots, which had 3 men in them; 1 to drive and 2 to shoot arrows and thrust spears. [\[1\]](#)

Just the *appearance* of these chariots of Egypt at this time was enough to cause people they were attacking to surrender.

Pharaoh is a type or picture of the devil.

Don't think that the devil will roll over and play dead after you give your life to Christ.

Satan always contends the conversion of his ex-slaves and he will do no less with you.

He'll muster all the strength of hell to come after you and try to re-acquire you.

What should you do? Let's read on . . .

**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. <sup>11</sup> 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? <sup>12</sup> *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.*”**

The narrative of the Exodus here in Chapter 14 tells us of the extremely fickle nature of the children of Israel at this point.

Because they do not know how to live by faith yet, they are living out of their emotions, which are determined by their circumstances.

Look at the last phrase of v. 8 –

**. . . and the children of Israel went out with boldness.**

When they first departed from Egypt, when the Egyptians were a broken and mourning people and were compelling them to leave, the Hebrews were bold!

The world is used most often in the Bible to refer to an arrogant rebelliousness.

Well, here they are now several days later when the Egyptians are no longer mourning but *menacing*, and instead of being bold, they’re simpering weaklings; “very afraid” v. 10 says.

And they begin with the silly complaints against Moses.

Oh they had been so happy when he first came from Midian with news he’d been sent by God to bring deliverance.

Now that they face a challenge, they start accusing Him of conspiring with Pharaoh to commit wholesale genocide against them!

Then they make this absolutely ridiculous remark – it would be better to live like slaves in Egypt than to die as a free men & women in the wilderness.

That is a complete reversal of all the noble and heroic stances that countless men & women have taken throughout the history of the world and affected such wonderful social changes.

Their position and motto has been, better to *die* a *freeman* than to

*live a slave's life.*

But to say that, one must have *vision* and a sense of faith that one's example will inspire others to pursue freedom too.

The children of Israel *have no faith* at this point.

So they live by their *emotions*, which are fearful at this point because they see the dust from the chariot wheels of Pharaoh's army.

This figure larger in their minds than the pillar of smoke swirling at the edge of their camp!

**Question:** Is your life governed by fear or faith?

Do *circumstances* or the *promises of God* determine your attitude?

**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. <sup>14</sup> The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.”**

God had told Moses all that would happen so when the time came, Moses comforted the people and told them they need fear nothing – God was at work.

Moses speaks great words of faith to the people, then he turns to the Lord and begins to pray. But this was not the time for prayer – it was the time for action . . .

**15 And the LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward.**

Prayer is never wrong, but it can never be substituted for action when it's time for it.

After speaking to the people, it seems Moses and turned to the Lord and begun earnest supplication for his rescue from the Egyptians.

After a short time, the Lord spoke to Moses, “Moses, why are you crying out to me in such desperation? Didn't I tell you what I would do? You spoke with such courage and faith to the people, why are you all freaked out now? Go forward! It's time to get up off your knees and move ahead!”

**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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> Then the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.” <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.**

Their journey through the Red Sea began when Moses held aloft that rod which was the symbol of his calling by God to lead the people. His leadership was being put to the test, and God was going to affirm it in a dramatic way.

A strong wind began to blow which divided the sea, and dried out the ocean bottom.

The pillar of the Lord’s presence, which had led them up to this point, went to stand behind them and so provide the rear-guard to the nation as they followed Moses into the sea and up onto the other side.

The Egyptians followed, but at a discreet distance for fear of the pillar.

Their progress was hampered by the fact that the pillar, which illuminated the path of the people of God, brought darkness and confusion to the enemies of God.

**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. <sup>25</sup> 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.”**

As the Egyptians rode hard on the heels of the children of Israel, God slowed them by fiddling with their chariots and causing the wheels to fall off.

There was such a sudden epidemic of this the Egyptians realized it was nothing less than the finger and judgment of God.

Now, I find this hilarious – where are they? What’s to the left and right? What’s under their feet? What’s in front of them?

If it’s true that *God’s own people* can sometimes be pretty foolish, then how much more idiotic are the *enemies* of God.

It’s one thing to *doubt* God, but an altogether different thing to outright oppose Him, as the Egyptians thought they could do here.

They suddenly wake up, look around and say, “Uh-oh!”

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Divers who’ve searched the route being projected today as the actual Red Sea crossing site have found chariot wheels and the remains of what looks like an ancient scrapyard.

Largely covered with coral, many smooth metal artifacts, to which coral has a hard time attaching, remain visible to this day.

One wheel, brought up in the 1970’s by Ron Wyatt was confirmed by Nassif Mohammed Hassan, director of Antiquities in

Cairo, as an 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty Egyptian chariot wheel - a perfect fit for the time of the Exodus.

These artifacts are located on the land bridge that spans the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba, in the precise location purported to be the route of the Red Sea crossing.

**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.” <sup>27</sup> 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.**

The army had come over half way in it's pursuit of Israel. Then when they turned to flee, they ended up actually moving back *into* the seabed.

**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. 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.**

And that was the point of this whole thing – to prove to the people God's power, intent, and promise to deliver them, not just from the presence of Egypt, but from the power of Egypt.

Nothing could have taught them this lesson better than to stand on the farther shore and see the dead bodies of the Egyptians washing up on the beach.

What they learned that day, is something the Lord wants us to learn as well.

Our deliverance from bondage to sin means freedom from sin's power.

There are three tenses to salvation.

We *have been saved* from the *penalty* of sin.

Jesus paid our debt at the cross.

One day, we *will be saved* from the very *presence* of sin.

When Jesus comes again and we are raptured to glory.

In the meantime, right now, we *are being saved* from the *power* of sin.

Just as the children of Israel progressively grew in their knowledge of God in the years of their Journey from Egypt to Canaan, and so became ever more *experientially* what they really were, so we grow and are conformed to the image of Christ, as we live by faith and walk in the Spirit.

It had to be a moment of dramatic revelation for the children of Israel as they looked back over the now normal Red Sea, and saw the bodies of the Egyptians rolling up with the waves unto the shore. Each of those soldiers had previously been the cause of terror to the one-time slaves.

But a dead soldier holds no terror!

Stripped of their weapons and probably most of their armor, they were seen to be just men, and now, lifeless corpses.

Colossians 2:15 says – that Jesus has “disarmed [demonic] principalities and powers,” and that “He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in” the cross. [\[2\]](#)

Just as God made a spectacle of the broken power of Egypt by casting up their dead bodies on the shore so the people could see them, so God wants us to see by faith that Satan and all his co-workers the demons have been disarmed; their power has been broken in the cross.

The only thing they can do is lie, and the only power they possess is our power, the power we give them by believing their lies.

## Chapter 15

### 2. 15:1-21 • The Victory Song of Moses

**<sup>1</sup> Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: “I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! <sup>2</sup> The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father’s God, and I will exalt Him. <sup>3</sup> The LORD is a man of war; The LORD is His name. <sup>4</sup> Pharaoh’s chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. <sup>5</sup> The depths have covered them; They sank to the bottom like a stone. <sup>6</sup> “Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces. <sup>7</sup> And in the greatness of Your excellence You have overthrown those who rose against You; You sent forth Your wrath;**

It consumed them like stubble. <sup>8</sup> And with the blast of Your nostrils The waters were gathered together; The floods stood upright like a heap; The depths congealed in the heart of the sea. <sup>9</sup> The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; My desire shall be satisfied on them. I will draw my sword, My hand shall destroy them.' <sup>10</sup> You blew with Your wind, The sea covered them; They sank like lead in the mighty waters. <sup>11</sup> "Who *is* like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who *is* like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders? <sup>12</sup> You stretched out Your right hand; The earth swallowed them. <sup>13</sup> You in Your mercy have led forth The people whom You have redeemed; You have guided *them* in Your strength To Your holy habitation. <sup>14</sup> "The people will hear *and* be afraid; Sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia. <sup>15</sup> Then the chiefs of Edom will be dismayed; The mighty men of Moab, Trembling will take hold of them; All the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away. <sup>16</sup> Fear and dread will fall on them; By the greatness of Your arm They will be as still as a stone, Till Your people pass over, O LORD, Till the people pass over Whom You have purchased. <sup>17</sup> You will bring them in and plant them In the mountain of Your inheritance, *In* the place, O LORD, *which* You have made For Your own dwelling, The sanctuary, O LORD, *which* Your hands have established. <sup>18</sup> "The LORD shall reign forever and ever." <sup>19</sup> For the horses of Pharaoh went with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them. But the children of Israel went on dry *land* in the midst of the sea.

It was a common practice in the ancient world that musicians would compose a tune to commemorate the military victory of the king. Moses does that now for this victory of Yahweh over the might of Egypt.

He knows news of this great event will spread rapidly throughout

the entire region.

**20 Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. <sup>21</sup> And Miriam answered them: “Sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!”**

Miriam, Moses’ sister quickly picked up Moses’ composition and turned it into the popular hit by adding a little instrumental accompaniment and dance.

### **C. From the Red Sea to Elim • 15:22-27**

**22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. <sup>23</sup> Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called [bitter] Marah.**

**Question:** How did they know where to go? The pillar led them. That means the pillar led them here to Marah.

Actually it was back then, not “tomorra”, but it was to Marah. Why would God let them go without water supplies for 3 days and then bring them to wells that had water too bitter, probably too alkaline to drink?

Let’s read on . . .

**24 And the people complained against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” <sup>25</sup> So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast *it* into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, <sup>26</sup> and said, “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I *am* the LORD who heals you.”**

God brought the people to Marah to *test* them.

They had just seen His great deliverance from the military might of Egypt.

Would they now trust Him in the lesser matter of providing water?

Why, He even brought them to the *presence* of water – it's just that it was unfit to drink.

How hard would it be for the God who'd just performed the 10 Plagues, had manifested Himself in the pillar and had parted the Red Sea to sweeten the water of Marah?

This was a test. It was only a test. For the next 60 minutes we will conduct a test of the emergency faith channel.

Would Israel turn to God and obedient trust, and simply ask Him to make the waters potable, or would they carry on in their slave-mentality and start whining?

They failed this test – and began complaining, against Moses!

So Moses called out to the Lord for help.

God's answer to Moses was to show him a tree which when thrown into the bitter waters made them sweet.

In scripture, water is emblematic for the Word of God.

In John 15:3, Jesus said that the disciples were clean because of the Word he had spoken to them.

In Ephesians 5:26, Paul says that Jesus washes us with the water of the Word.

These are just a couple of the many Biblical allusions to the Word of God being like clean, good water.

At Marah, the people were confronted with bitter water, but they were made sweet when the tree was put into them.

There are times when the Word of God challenges and provokes us; it seems bitter, hard to understand, and though we know it's inspired and profitable, we can see no profit in the text in front of us.

Sometimes what we're reading is just plain "hard to swallow."

What do we do with such passages? We put the tree in them!

We put the cross in the midst of it. We stick the person and the work of Jesus there and suddenly, we see what's bitter turned sweet.

On the Road to Emmaus as the two disciples were walking home from Jerusalem, Jesus met up with them and began to show them how everything that had happened to Him had been foretold and

foreshadowed in the OT scriptures.

When He appeared to the 11 after His resurrection He took them on an extended Bible study, showing how everything in the law and prophets had pointed to Him.

Jesus even rebuked the religious experts and men who had committed the entire OT to memory because though they had such a familiar knowledge of it, they missed the central theme of it all – Him!

In John 5:39 we read, “You search the scriptures, for in them you think you have life; and these are they which testify of me.”

I don’t know how many times I’ve been reading the OT and thought, “Why is this here?” And then the Holy Spirit has reminded me to put the tree of Calvary into it, and suddenly what had been bitter became sweet!

One premier example is the story of God telling Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice on Mt. Moriah.

That is just a bitter story; it’s hard to swallow because of what God tells Abraham to do.

Then, when we put the cross into it, we realize that it is a powerful portrait of what the Heavenly father did in offering His very own Son in that very same location some 2000 years later.

This little story of Marah, while bitter, gives us a wonderful key to studying the Bible, and especially the OT; Put the cross in it, and enjoy the sweetness.

Following the test at Marah, God said to the people . . .

**26 . . . “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I *am* the LORD who heals you.”**

By diseases, God is referring to the calamities which had recently been visited on the Egyptians in the plagues.

The people might be prone to fear that if God would do that to the Egyptians, He would do it to them too.

So God tells them that if they are careful to take heed to His word, then none of these calamities will rest on them.

Dr. S.I. McMillen, in the book *None of These Diseases* gives an excellent study of how the commands God gave the nation of

Israel resulted in huge health benefits.

Their routines of diet and hygiene were conducive to far better health than the other cultures of the ancient world.

We'll be seeing some of these as we continue our study through the law.

**27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.**

After Marah, they moved to the abundant wells and water of Elim where there was an oasis.

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[1] Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. 1997. *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA - A difference is made between "the chosen chariots" and "the chariots of Egypt." The first evidently composed the king's guard, amounting to six hundred, and they are called "chosen," literally, "third men"; three men being allotted to each chariot, the charioteer and two warriors. As to "the chariots of Egypt," the common cars contained only two persons, one for driving and the other for fighting; sometimes only one person was in the chariot, the driver lashed the reins round his body and fought; infantry being totally unsuitable for a rapid pursuit, and the Egyptians having had no cavalry, the word "riders" is in the grammatical connection applied to war chariots employed, and these were of light construction, open behind, and hung on small wheels.

[2] *The New King James Version*. 1996, c1982. Thomas Nelson: Nashville