

FOLLOWING A TRUSTED LEADER Sunday School- January 29, 2012

Unifying Topic: OUT OF EGYPT

Lesson Text

I. The Song Of Moses (Exo.15:1-3, 19)

II. Bitter Water Made Sweet (Exo.15:22-26)

The Main Thought: 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 land in the midst of the sea. (Exodus 15:19, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People will often follow a trusted leader even into dangerous places. What inspires such trust? Because Moses had faith in God, the Israelites followed him into the Red Sea where God saved them from the Egyptians and from drowning.

Lesson Aim: To review the story of the Israelites' dangerous journey of faith through the Red Sea into the wilderness and their subsequent rejoicing.

Life aim: To understand that faithfulness will not always keep one out of danger but it will ultimately bring one to safety.

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.

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 land in the midst of the sea.

22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

23 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

24 And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

25 And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.

HISTORY:

Chapter 14—¹Israel had just left the land of Egypt, loaded down with cattle and plenty of loot that the Egyptians freely gave them. After all the hardship and the plagues, Pharaoh had finally allowed Israel to go and sacrifice to the LORD in the wilderness.

It had not been easy. Many terrible plagues—the Nile turned to blood, infestations of frogs, gnats, flies, and locusts, a horrendous hailstorm, and complete darkness— did not move Pharaoh. Finally, when the LORD put all the firstborn children of Egypt to death, Pharaoh relented.

But now Israel was pinned next to the sea, and a large force of Egyptian cavalry was approaching quickly. Israel despaired. "*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 bring us forth out of Egypt?*", they asked Moses (Exodus 14:11). It was one thing when Moses and Aaron confronted Pharaoh themselves— now the whole nation was threatened with an army!

Moses was unmoved. He said to the Israelite in Exodus 14:13-14: "*Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.*"

Moses' confidence was not in vain. He lifted up his staff, the LORD divided the waters of the Red Sea, and the Israelites passed through the sea on dry land, with the water as a wall on either side (Exodus 14:15-22). Meanwhile, the Egyptian army attempted to pursue them, but their chariot wheels became stuck in the mud, effectively trapping them in the sea bed (Exodus 14:23-25). The LORD then commanded Moses to again raise up his staff, and the sea returned to its

¹ <http://www.bible.ca/ef/expository-exodus-14.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

normal state, drowning the Egyptians (Exodus 14:26-29). As the bodies of the Egyptian soldiers came ashore, Israel feared the LORD and trusted in Him and in Moses His servant (Exodus 14:30-31).

God gained a powerful victory over Egypt that day and obtained glory over all Egypt so that the power of God was even known in Jericho (cf. Joshua 2:10). He did not do this through the hand of Israel, but by His own hand.

There is much that we can gain from this great story of God's redemption of Israel. God delivered His people from a foe they had no ability to conquer with their own force and led them on toward the Promised Land. Likewise, God has delivered us from our sins, a foe we could not conquer by our own strength (Romans 1-3). What God did through Christ on the cross and in the resurrection was like what He did with Israel: He did it by His strength and power, and we can only "hold our peace."

Israel still had to take the step of faith and pass through the sea bed— being baptized into Moses, as Paul would later describe it (1 Corinthians 10:2). God's victory still requires us to act in faith and live in obedience (Romans 6:3-7, 1 Peter 1:22). Despite God's great deliverance, that generation of Israelites died in the wilderness on account of their unbelief (1 Corinthians 10:5). Let us not be deceived into thinking that God's victory costs us nothing; let us make good on God's victory and serve the LORD today *By Ethan R. Longhenry.*

LESSON:

Exo.15:1-3, 19 The Song Of Moses

15:1 Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD— Songs, like laughter, lifts the spirit of man to heavenly heights. The words of this song would be sung for many generations. After the triumphant escape and victory had been enjoyed, it was natural to sing a hymn of praise to God in thanksgiving. It is sung unto God not to man. Why?...**for he hath triumphed gloriously:** God was the one who did it. He was the one who brought them through the Red Sea. **...the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.** The drowning of Pharaoh's army and their horses at the hand of the Lord is the central event, celebrated by song. The floods covered them and they went down like a stone is thrown into the sea; like the earth would swallow one up.

15:2 The LORD is my strength and song, — When we let God be our strength, He will also be our song. We will sing because of the victory won by the great strength of the Lord. His strength will not let us down. **...and he is become my salvation: he is my God** — God's great work becomes our salvation. It recognizes that we cannot save ourselves. **...and I will prepare him an habitation;** This habitation, we prepare for God, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is the body of the Christian. **...my father's God,** These words as Moses spoke refers to the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. **...and I will exalt him.**

15:3 The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. This is showing that the Lord will fight for us and one of His names is "*Jehovah-Saboth*", which means Lord of hosts, Lord of armies, a title used 285 times in the Old Testament. Martin Luther wrote in his Reformation hymn "*A Might Fortress Is Our God.*" "*The Lord must march out like a mighty man; like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies*" *Is.42:13 NIV.*

15:19 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 land in the midst of the sea. The events that led to this great ode of praise to God are recorded again, in this verse. The enemy's horse, chariot, and horsemen went down into the sea and the waters covered them up. But God allowed His children to walk on dry land even in the midst of the sea that was raging. How awesome was that? You can't help but go to verses 20- 21 and see that Miriam the Prophetess and all the women were expressing praise by their singing and dancing that repeats from the first verse of the song in this chapter.

Exo.15:22-26 Bitter Water Made Sweet

15:22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. Often after a great victory of faith, the Lord permits a trial to come to test us. When Abraham arrived in the Promised Land, he discovered a famine (Gen.12:10). After the glorious occasion of His baptism, our Lord was tempted by Satan in the wilderness (Matt.3:13-4:11). Elijah won a great victory on Mount Carmel, but after that faced a trial of faith (1 Kgs.18-19). Here we see Moses after the Red Sea and now in the wilderness of Shur. "*Shur*" means wall fortification. A single day in the wilderness without water would be tolerable, two days would be difficult, but three days would be impossible especially for children and animals. **Test time**—God was testing His people, not because He didn't know their hearts, but because they didn't know their own

hearts which is always to show that we are to respond by giving over our heart by trusting the Almighty God.

15:23 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. Ooooooh bitter water! They were truly disappointed when they came upon this. They named it "*Marah*" which means "*bitter*"; the same as when Naomi said "*call me Mara: for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.*"

15:24 And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? What you think? They just came through water and can't find water to drink. How funny! The people of Israel were experts at murmuring. The attitude that we take toward our difficulties determines which direction life will go, for what life does to us depends on what life finds in us. It wasn't the time to murmur but instead it was the time of just trusting God's leader. They did not yet trust that the Lord's presence was with them and their leader. He had thus far lead, protected and provided for them. Complaining doesn't solve problems it hinders them.

15:25 And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, —Moses took the right approach, the way of faith, going to the Lord and crying unto Him. Moses follows God's orders— a tree the Lord will show, is to be cast into the waters without wondering if this will work. The Lord causes the bitter waters to become sweet. He showed Moses what to do. God was not only interested in getting the children of Israel out of Egypt, but He also wanted to get Egypt out of the children of Israel - both physically and spiritually. He made a statute (rule) and an ordinance (regulation) to test their commitment. The statue calls Israel to give heed to all that He has commanded, which further requires implicitly that the people follow Moses as the one through whom they will listen to the voice of the Lord.

15:26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee. In this statute and ordinance they were to diligently listen to the voice of the Lord their God; do what's right in His sight by giving ear to His commandments; keeping all the Lord's statutes. As a result of their commitment to the Lord, none of the diseases brought upon Egypt, would be placed upon the Israelites. He is the LORD that healeth thee—"*Jehovah Rapha!*"—"the Lord who heals." God promised Israel abundant physical blessings if they would obey Him; but physical afflictions if they disobeyed.

SUMMARY:

With their enemies drowned in the Red Sea and their freedom secure, the people of Israel burst into song and praise to the Lord. This is called the "*Song of Moses*"; it really is an inspired prophecy - given by God Himself. It tells the story of salvation; of how Israel would behave in the coming centuries and how Jehovah would save His chosen people because of His great love and mercy. It is - and ever will be - the greatest folk song ever written. This ²song is sung by Moses and the people, which praise God for saving them from the Egyptians. Another song was sung by Miriam and all of the women, unto the LORD. When you sing do you think about the words you are singing and whether they are exalting men or God? Are they words that bring change to freely connect to true worship, adoration, and glorification of God? Do they clearly advance God? ³Just after God's special provision of escape and victory, the Israelites were tested. It might have seemed nice to linger at the seaside and praise the Lord but they needed to follow His leading. They marched for three days in the wilderness before finding water, but it was bitter and the people murmured against Moses. Moses had learned to go to God with every problem, so he prayed and asked God what to do. God told him to throw a certain tree into the water and when he did, it became sweet and good to drink. The Lord gave the people a law to live by and then He tested their loyalty. He told them if they obey His commandments He will not bring any of the diseases on them that he brought upon the Egyptians.

APPLICATION:

We must accept the bitter with the sweet, knowing that God knows what is best for us. He knows our needs because He planned the way. The emphasis is on trusting God and obeying Him, knowing that the will of God will never lead us where the grace of God can't keep us. When we experience trials, our complaining is evidence of unbelief, but our obedience is evidence of faith.

² <http://sernabibleblog.blogspot.com/2006/10/exodus-15.html>

³ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/exodus-1522/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>