

## **The Exodus:** *A Christ-Centered View*

**Scripture:** *Exodus 14:5-31.*

**Exegetical Big Idea:** The Exodus story shows us the nature of our *redemption*. It presents us with a profile of our *redeemer*. It *reminds* us of both our present and our future eternal heritage in Christ.

### **Introduction**

This morning we are taking a Christ-centered view of the Exodus narrative of the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea in **Exodus 14:5-31**. This is a defining passage in the book of Exodus that narrates God's redemption of the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt and how He accompanied them on their pilgrimage through the wilderness to become His set-apart people in the Promised Land.

For Christians this story is a picture of our own Christian lives in three ways. First, it shows us the nature of our *redemption*. Second, it presents to us a profile of our *redeemer*. Third, it *reminds* us of both our present and our future eternal heritage in Christ.

It is my prayer that our reflections on these **3R's** this morning will bring us to a new appreciation of our salvation and the centrality of Christ in our Christian lives, and the real hope we have in Him as we continue with our Christian pilgrimage in this world.

Read Passage.

### **I. Redemption (Verses 5-14)**

- 1) Let me begin by giving you a bit of background to our passage. **Exodus 1** to **3** recounts the story of the children of Israel in harsh slavery in Egypt. These three chapters also describe how God called and sent Moses to be His agent for delivering the Israelites out of their servitude. **Exodus 4** to **12** recounts the difficulties that Moses experienced in trying to get the reluctant Egyptian Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to leave Egypt. God had to convince the Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave Egypt by inflicting upon Egypt ten national plagues, with the final plague being the death of all the first-born humans and animals in Egypt.
- 2) At the beginning of **Exodus 14** the Israelites have left Egypt. At the beginning of our passage, in **verse 5**, however, we read this: *When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them and said, "What have we done? We have let the Israelites go and have lost their services!"* Evidently the dire effects that the loss of the cheap Israelite slave labor force was going to have on the Egyptian economy had begun to dawn on Pharaoh and his government.

- 3) **Verses 6 to 9** tell us that Pharaoh therefore decided to marshal the whole military might of Egypt to pursue the Israelites. **Verse 10** tells us that as Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. Terrified, the Israelites began to blame Moses bitterly for bringing them into this hopeless-looking situation. In **verses 13-14** Moses answered the people by saying this to them: *“Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”* In effect, Moses was saying to the Israelites: *Stand still. God is going to do the fighting for you. You can't contribute to it; You can't do a thing. God is going to do the whole thing. Relax.* These words of Moses are a beautiful illustration of the nature of our own redemption.
- 4) I say that because, here, Moses sounds exactly like the Apostle Paul in a number of places in his epistles where he writes about our redemption. For example, in **Rom. 4:5** Paul wrote this: *However, to the one who does not work (stands still) but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.* In this verse Paul was saying: Don't look at your works – your good deeds, your religious deeds, your praying, your church-going, etc. as the means by which you receive God's salvation. Instead, receive God's complete redemption based not on your works but solely on your faith in Christ's work for you on the cross. Again, in **Eph. 2:8-9**, Paul wrote this: *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.*
- 5) In these two passages Paul is saying that our salvation is entirely by the grace of God; His unmerited favor. By the free grace of God, the Israelites crossed over from Pharaoh's bondage to freedom and redemption. They had to do nothing but come to the end of themselves and stand still in their faith in God. Same with us; by the grace of God, by His unmerited favour, when we repent of our sin, and place our faith in what Christ did for us on the cross, we cross over from spiritual bondage and death into the eternal new life of God's redemption.
- 6) The fear that the Israelites expressed in **verses 10 to 12** as Pharaoh and his army approached them was because they had been in painful bondage in Egypt for more than 400 years. Objectively, the Israelites were now out of bondage but, subjectively, inside their hearts, they were not free from bondage. God had taken them out of slavery in Egypt but the slavery of Egypt had not been taken out of them. In our case, after our redemption from our Egypt of sin and spiritual death, we still face within us our three deadly enemies of the world, the flesh, and the devil, that constantly tempt us to sin and disobey God. In **Rom. 6:14-15**, Paul declares that as Christians sin shall no longer be our master. After our redemption, in other words, we daily gain victory over sin in our Christian lives in the power of the Holy Spirit through the grace of God that we daily experience in Christ.
- 7) So, this is the nature of our redemption; it begins, and it continues, entirely by the free unmerited grace of God. This is our **first R** from this passage.

## II. Redeemer (Verses 15-29)

- 1) In this story the Israelites crossed over but when the Egyptian soldiers attempted to do so, they drowned in the Red Sea. The reason for this, you see, is that the Israelites had a redeemer and the Egyptians did not.
- 2) The Israelites had a redeemer in Moses because Moses was the man God had appointed to represent Him to the Israelites and to represent the Israelites to Him. In fact Moses was so identified by God with the Israelites that, in **verse 15**, God rebuked him for the sinful fear of the Israelites, and at the same time, Moses was so identified with God that he was a vehicle for God's saving power to be revealed in that frightening situation. Moses was God's man in the middle.
- 3) In **verses 19** and **20** we read that as Moses followed the Lord's instructions to play his role as God's man in the middle, the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them and the pillar of cloud moved from in front and stood behind them, coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. For this reason, throughout that unforgettable night, the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long. In **verses 21** and **22** as Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land so that the waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the Red Sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. In **verse 27** we read that at the Lord's command, Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. As the Egyptians were trying to flee, the Lord swept them all into the sea.
- 4) For you and I, God's man in the middle for us is Jesus Christ, who is far better than Moses. This is how **Heb. 3:5-6** puts it: *Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, bearing witness to what would be spoken by God. But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house.* In Jesus Christ we do not merely have a mediator who is a man close to God, like Moses. In Jesus Christ we have one who is fully man and fully God. In Jesus Christ, we don't have a mediator whom God could rebuke for any sin, like Moses, but we have one who was without sin, as **Heb. 4:15** reminds us.
- 5) After their redemption through the Red Sea, Moses, their leader began to contend with the sins of the Israelites. Listen to what Moses said to God in **Exodus 32:32**: *Please forgive their sin, but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.* Yet we know that God did not blot Moses out because in **Matt. 17:1-4**, Moses appears in the NT on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus Christ. But with our Mediator, Jesus Christ, we know that God did blot Him out because, on the cross, as He bore your sin and my sin, He cried out in **Matt. 27:46**, *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* God was blotting Him out for us so that we could cross over from spiritual death to God's eternal life.

- 6) In **1 Cor. 10:2-3** Paul writes that the Israelites passed through the sea having been baptized into Moses in the same way that Christians are baptized into Christ. In **Rom. 6:3-4** Paul explains that everyone who places their faith in Christ is baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.
- 7) This is the profile, and the work of our redeemer, Jesus Christ, God's man in the middle for us, who begins us on our Christian pilgrimage when we place our faith in what He did for us on the cross. This is **our second R** from the passage.

### III. Reminder (Verses 10-12 & 30-31)

- 1) The Lord's reason for delivering the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt was to settle them in the Promised Land to become His free set apart people. This reminds us of both our present and our future eternal heritage in Christ.
- 2) We read in **Jude verse 6** that the Lord delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. In some Bibles, however, like the **ESV**, for example, this verse specifically states that the Lord who delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt was Jesus Christ. This means that, in this Exodus passage, the pillar of cloud and fire that escorted the Israelites through the Red Sea, and would later escort them through their wilderness journey, was a form of Christ Himself. When Paul writes in **1 Cor. 10:4** that in the wilderness the Israelites drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ, he is confirming that having delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, Christ accompanied them through their wilderness journey as well. This means that during the forty years of their wilderness journey into the Promised Land, the manna the Israelites ate in **Exodus 16**, and the water the Israelites drank that miraculously came from rocks in **Exodus 17** and **Numbers 20**, were all types and shadows of Christ.
- 3) A shadow implies a likeness to the person who casts the shadow, isn't it? Well, this is why, during His earthly ministry, in **John 6**, Jesus compared Himself to the manna the Israelites ate, and the water they drank in the wilderness. In **John 6:35** He said this: *I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.* In **John 19:34** when Jesus was crucified, we read that blood and water poured from His side. The water that flowed with the blood of the crucified Christ represents the living water of eternal life that becomes our spiritual legacy when we place our faith in what He did for us on the cross.
- 4) In **Matthew 28:20**, after His death and resurrection, on the eve of His ascension, Christ left His followers with this promise: *And surely I am with you always, even to the very end of the age.* This assures us that, having delivered us by His death and resurrection from bondage to sin and spiritual death, Christ indeed faithfully accompanies us by His Holy Spirit to provide for all our material and spiritual needs throughout our pilgrimage in this world in the same way that He did this for the Israelites when He delivered them from bondage in Egypt, and accompanied them throughout their wilderness journey. This is our present heritage in Christ.

- 5) In **Gen. 15:13-14**, 430 years before the Red Sea crossing, when God entered into covenant with Abraham, He promised Abraham that one day after his descendants, the Israelites, had been slaves in Egypt for 400 years, He would deliver them from their Egyptian slave masters. In our Exodus passage of reflection this morning, we have seen how God faithfully fulfilled this promise regardless of the obstacles involved. For you and I, this reminds us that in the same way that, against all odds, God faithfully redeemed and settled the children of Israel in the Promised Land of Canaan, one day God will surely settle us too in the Promised Land of His eternal Kingdom where there will be no more sin, no more pain, no more sorrow, and no more death. We do well to remember this as we go through all the challenges and hardships we face in this world.
  
- 6) When we fast-forward the Bible story to its conclusion in the book of Revelations we read this in **Rev. 21:1-4**: *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.* However you choose to interpret and understand these verses they at least show us that just as God redeemed His OT people from Egypt and faithfully settled them in the Promised Land, He will surely one day settle us, His NT people, in the Promised Land of His eternal kingdom in a restored world. This is our future eternal heritage in Christ.
  
- 7) This is how this passage reminds us of both our present and our future eternal heritage in Christ. This is our **third R** from this passage.

### Conclusion

This Exodus story of the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea, as you can see, mirrors our own Christian lives. First, it is a paradigm of the grace nature of our *redemption*. Second, it presents to us a profile of our inestimable *redeemer*. Third, it *reminds* us of both our present and our future eternal heritage in Christ.

Do you see the centrality of Christ in these **3R's**? Narrate MGH story. As I have meditated on these **3R's** from this Exodus passage it has seemed to me that this experience at the MGH could very well have been the Lord's way of *reminding* Esther and I, who are two very ordinary Christians, that having *redeemed* His people by grace, as our *redeemer*, Christ indeed accompanies us by His Holy Spirit on our pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world to provide for all our spiritual and material needs, until He one day faithfully settles us in His eternal Promised Land.

Let us pray!

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*Tigoni, 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2019.*