

Lesson 21 BAPTISED INTO MOSES – THE RED SEA CROSSING**READING:** Exodus 13:17-22, 14, 15:1-21; I Corinthians 10:1-5.**AIM:** This lesson concerns Israel's separation from Egypt, their miraculous escape and God's final blow upon the Egyptians.**1. BACKGROUND**

After the slaying of their firstborn, the Egyptians implored Israel to depart lest any further calamity should overtake them. Moses instructed Israel to take unleavened bread in their kneading troughs, assemble flocks and cattle, and "demand" gold, silver and raiment from the Egyptians.

Thus Israel left Egypt a wealthy nation, numbering 600,000 men besides women and children and strangers who joined themselves to Israel. God chose the route and directed their march: "**God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near**"; but through "**the way of the wilderness**". Study a map and you will see that the direct route was along the coastal road to Canaan. This would have brought them in contact with Egyptian border fortresses.

As a nation of slaves, Israel was not ready to engage in conflict nor subdue the people of Canaan. They were untrained in warfare. In a state of bondage they had not developed strength or morale for facing difficulties. They had to be properly educated and trained for what God desired. The hardness of the desert life and the education He would give them (in the Law) were first necessary.

2. THE PILLAR OF CLOUD - Exodus 13:21-22

God through His angel, directed their march in a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. This was a sign of His loving care; a token that He was present as their Leader and Guide. At all times the pillar of cloud was between Israel and the pursuing Egyptians.

God brought them through a way where they would not encounter warfare (Exodus 13:17-18). They came first to **Succoth** (Exodus 12:37-39; 13:20) where they made unleavened bread. Succoth means "Tabernacles" and this joyous occasion was afterwards celebrated in the Feast of Tabernacles when boughs of trees were cut down for shelter and all rejoiced together in the knowledge of deliverance (Lev. 23:39-43).

Next they came to **Etham** (meaning edge" Exodus 13:29) for it was on the edge of the wilderness, and on the borders of Egypt. They saw, for the first time, the terrible nature of the wilderness which they would have to traverse. It was as though God, having first revealed unto them the joy of the truth, now showed to them some of its difficulties.

3. AT THE RED SEA - Exodus 14:1-14

After journeying through Succoth and Etham, Israel halted at Pihahiroth, their first encampment on the shores of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:2). It was not long before Pharaoh and the Egyptians regretted the loss of the nation who had served them. Pharaoh still failed to recognise the power and greatness of Israel's God and plunged ahead to destruction.

The Israelites were afraid when they saw the Egyptian army and were bitter against Moses (Exodus 14:10-12). Try to picture Israel's plight, halted as they were by the waters of the **Red Sea**. Only a miracle could save them.

Moses, their leader, strong in faith and confidence said, "**Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord**" (Exodus 14:13). Moses assured them that they would see the Egyptians no more because God was fighting for Israel.

4. THE ESCAPE - Exodus 14:15-31

- (1) God commanded Moses to lift his rod, stretch it over the sea and divide it.
- (2) God caused a strong east wind to blow all that night and bank up the waters and form a dry path across the bed of the sea.
- (3) The pillar of cloud went between Israel and Egypt. It was light to Israel but darkness to the pursuing Egyptians.
- (4) Israel passed safely through on dry ground with walls of water to right and to left.
- (5) The Egyptians followed but God caused their chariots to become bogged.
- (6) Moses lifted his rod – the waters returned and drowned the host of Pharaoh.

The passage through the sea was a miracle performed for the salvation of Israel. Read what the Psalmist said in Psalms 78:13 and 106:8-11. God describes Israel as His child and son whom He called out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1). This description was applied also to Christ in Matthew 2:15. Israel was redeemed by God's mighty power from the oppressors of Egypt. The people feared and believed the Lord.

5. THANKSGIVING AND NEWNESS OF LIFE - Exodus 15

With the Red Sea between Israel and the land of bondage they joined Moses in a song of thanksgiving. They praised and thanked God, their strength and salvation. Moses' sister, Miriam, with the women of Israel, played musical instruments. They danced and took up the refrain:

“Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and rider hath He thrown into the sea”.

It is a Song that is echoed and re-echoed throughout the Scriptures because it is a continuing story of the Lord's power and the development of His purpose through His servants.

Deliverance from Egypt is typical of the deliverance of the saints who shall sing the Song of Moses and of the Lamb in Mount Zion (Rev. 15:3):

The Lord is my strength
 The Lord is my song
 The Lord is my salvation
 The Lord is a man of war (Exod. 15:2-3).

Frequently, when the prophets speak of the future redemption of God's people they do so in terms which call to mind the deliverance from Egypt. (Jeremiah 16:14-15).

With Israel's exodus from Egypt, they became a free people in a new life. The old taskmasters, the idolatries, the old life were all behind them. They entered upon a new life with God as their King. Separated from Egypt they were now to be prepared in the wilderness as God's holy and peculiar people (Exodus 15:13).

Paul teaches a very important lesson from Israel's passing through the Red Sea and their wilderness experiences (1 Cor. 10:1-13). He said that Israel **“were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea”**. They were buried or hidden from view by cloud and sea. They rose to a new life on the opposite shore.

A new phase of Israel's history was about to commence – the beginning of their wilderness life. What a contrast with fertile Goshen – this stony, waterless, unknown desert in which they camped! After densely populated Egypt where they had dwelt in houses. Israel now became tent dwellers in lonely wastes.

Nevertheless, God was still working for His people. God's purpose was to develop them into a nation that could play its proper part in the Promised Land. For that reason He tested them by subjecting them to hardships. They needed disciplining so that they might learn to obey and become His holy nation (Deut. 8:2-3).

6. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Paul said that these things were our examples II Corinthians 10:6). This incident was a type of baptism into Christ. In passing through the **waters of baptism**, a believer leaves behind the old life, the habits, the appealing vain things, because they belong to the idolatry of the world. Baptised into Christ, his leader, a believer rises to begin a **new life**. This new life means obedience and service to God and separation from worldly ways and habits. The world is the wilderness in which all in Christ "travel as they journey to the "promised land".

Israel came to know that they were in danger of death. They had to acknowledge the saving power of the Passover Lamb. They were then baptised (I Cor 10:1-2). On both occasions, the urgency of the need was demonstrated. They realised the need of the means of salvation, and so they followed what God commanded. They had to do so, or be destroyed. God commands, and it is imperative for us to obey. Having come to a knowledge of His will, we must act in accordance with it (Luke 12:47; James 4:17; John 12:48; John 9:14, 15:22).

REFERENCE LIBRARY

"The Visible Hand of God", chapter 14

"Elpis Israel", part 2, chapter 4,

"Moses My Servant", chapter 3.

"Theophany", chapter 4.

"Witness for Christ", part 3, chapter 12.

"Eureka", chapter 15, sections 4 and 5.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Describe how Israel was led from Egypt and the route they took.
- 2 Describe the crossing of the Red Sea and the fate of the Egyptians.
- 3 Why was the crossing of the Red Sea some important to Israel".
- 4 How did God deliver Israel from the pursuing Egyptians?
- 5 Comment on Israel's thanksgiving and new life after crossing the Red Sea.
- 6 What parallel can be drawn from Israel's crossing of the Red Sea to a believer's new life in Christ?