

Sermon outline and notes prepared by:

Dr. Stephen Felker, Pastor

[Swift Creek Baptist Church.com](http://SwiftCreekBaptistChurch.com), 18510 Branders Bridge Rd., Colonial Heights, VA 23834

9/23/07

Exodus 14:5-31 (read vv.5-18) “God Gives a Mighty Victory”

Intro. One of the most significant events in the Old Testament is this record of the final victory of the Lord over the Egyptians. It was one of the most remarkable miracles recorded in the Old Testament. It was this notable event which made such a great impression upon the enemies of the Lord. Rahab of Jericho said in Josh. 2:10, “For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt...” Then, 800 years afterwards the Lord says through Isaiah, “But I am the LORD your God, Who divided the sea whose waves roared—The LORD of hosts is His name” (Isa. 51:15). So we need to recognize the importance of this event, and listen very carefully to its message.

The focus of this message will not be upon the unbelieving and complaining Israelites. It will not be upon the foolish & greedy Egyptians. It will not even be upon Moses, who had become a great man of faith. Rather, the real hero of this story is the Lord our God. So I believe my message today should focus upon Him, and the ways we should respond to Him.

First of all:

I. CONSIDER THE SALVATION OF THE LORD

The people of Israel certainly needed a great Savior. As we see from v.5, Pharaoh changed his mind about letting the Israelite’s go. So he mustered up his army, including 600 of his finest chariots, and pursued the people of Israel. At this point the Israelites had their backs to the sea, and then they saw in the distance the rapid advance of the dreaded force of chariots. Without a Great Savior, they were no match for the Egyptians. You can imagine what that number of chariots could do to a poor, helpless, defenseless people—especially the women, children and cattle. They were not prepared for battle. Thus, they were caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. So as Israel faced what seemed to be an impossible situation, they were gripped in fear, they cried out to the Lord in desperation, but then they complained about the situation they were in. But Moses had become a great man of faith by now, so he calmly said in v.13, “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today.” Let’s obey that command this morning, and see how the LORD saved Israel, and then, by way of application, I will show you the salvation that He has wrought for us.

So notice how God saved them. First:

A. God Saved Israel with His Protection – The pursuers had been coming whirling along at full speed, and would soon have been among the disorderly mass, dealing destruction. Furthermore, it would take some time to get 2 million people to cross over to the other side of the sea. There was no possibility of getting the crossing effected unless the enemy was held at bay. We’ve seen a similar situation many times in the history of warfare. When an army has to ford a river in the face of hostile forces, the hazardous operation is possible only if a strong rearguard is left on the enemy’s side. So God provided protection for His people. We read in vv.19-20, “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. 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.” I believe the Angel of God was none other than a preincarnate manifestation of Jesus, the Son of God. We also read that the pillar moved between the Israelites and the Egyptians, indicating that God had become a wall of protection between His people and their enemies. The pillar gave light to Israel but darkness to the enemy. In other words, the dark cloud side faced the Egyptians, while the fire side faced the Israelites. The Egyptians were literally in the dark, and could no longer advance, while the Israelites could see the path in the sea that was soon to be created.

Friend, there is a lesson here for us. God will either be light or darkness to you. If you are on the Lord’s side, you will be led by His light. But if you are not, you will walk in darkness.

But the main point is the fact that God is more than able to protect His people from harm when it is His purpose to do so. So do not fear. Trust in your Heavenly Father’s protection each and every day.

Not only did God save them by His protection, but furthermore:

B. God Saved Them by Making an Amazing Way of Escape – The fact that Israel was facing the sea was no problem to God. He proceeds to do something that was totally unexpected. In response to the instructions of the Lord, we read in vv.21-22, “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. 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.” (See also v.29).

What a scene it must have been as the awestruck crowds passed through the sea! Hear the bowling wind. See the glow of the pillar of fire glistening on the heaped waters. How the awe and the hope must both have increased with each step deeper in the abyss, and nearer to safety. That path through the sea must have been a broad way to allow some two million frightened people with wives and children to cross in a few hours of one night. But by the time the wee hours of the morning had arrived, they passed through the sea on to the safety of the other shore.

When you are caught in a difficult situation, look to God to provide a way out. This is even true regarding temptation. Paul said in 1 Cor. 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” Satan is your great enemy, but he is not so clever & powerful that he can force you to sin. God will make a way out.

Finally:

C. God Saved Them by Fighting Against their Enemies – Though Egypt was wounded through the plagues, they were still a mighty fighting force. Israel would not feel safe until their military might was broken. So God took several steps to break the proud might of the enemy of His people.

1. He Hardened Pharaoh’s Heart to Pursue Them – God had led His people to move south toward the Red Sea instead of northeast toward Canaan, and so Pharaoh had the impression that the people were lost in the wilderness. That was the first move in setting the trap for Pharaoh’s army. Then in v.4 God says, “Then I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, so that he will pursue them...” Likewise, v.8 says, “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.” God was accomplishing the first move in His plan to destroy the Egyptian army. But His work of hardening their hearts was not complete. For we have seen that God opened a wide pathway through the sea, even to the point of creating a wall of water on both sides of the pathway. Not put yourself in the shoes of the Egyptians. After all they had witnessed the God of Israel do, would you go into the Sea to chase after the Israelites? Would you pass between two walls of water? I don’t think so! So God needed to push them along. We read in v.17, “And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them.” Well, just as the Lord predicted, we read in v.23, “And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.” What a foolish gamble they were taking!

2. He Troubled the Egyptians in the Sea Bed – Moses had said back in v.14, “The LORD will fight for you....” Sure enough, we read in v.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....” That phrase, “looked down ...through the pillar” can send chills up your spine. Then v.24-v.25 goes on to say that they Lord “troubled the army of the Egyptians. And He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty....” That word “troubled” (*hamam*) means “to confuse, discomfit.” What happened that caused the army to panic? Psalm 77:16-20 indicates that a severe rainstorm with lightning later accompanied the high winds, and after Israel had crossed, the rain turned the dry pathway into a muddy road. When the Egyptian soldiers tried to follow, the mud disabled their chariots and impeded their progress. The Hebrew word translated “took off” can also mean “to cause to turn aside.” Either the chariot wheels were removed from their axles, or they simply had trouble steering their chariots in the right direction. Either way, the Egyptians, who placed so much confidence in their chariots, discovered that they were really useless against the Lord. So it finally dawned on them that they were, literally, in over their heads. In what is an almost comic confession in light of the preceding fourteen chapters, their wooden brains finally draw the obvious conclusion stated in v.25, “Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians.” Imagine the panic they felt as they tried to retreat.

Friend, you don’t want to fight against God. The fact is, you can’t. If you think that you can rebel against God and live in sin without ending up in a big mess, you are dead wrong.

Now imagine that Israel has just arrived safely on the other side. In the light of the sun peering over the horizon, they see the Egyptians struggling and retreating in fear. Then we see God sealing His victory over the army of Pharaoh:

3. He Drowned the Egyptians in the Sea – Before the Egyptians could flee the scene, God instructed Moses to stretch out his hand over the waters, and God would cause the waters to overwhelm the Egyptians (v.26). Now notice what happened in v.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.” Have you ever heard of such a thing in human warfare? Not one person in the army was left standing. The waves came crashing in on the Egyptian army, and they didn’t have a chance. In just a few moments the struggle was over, and as the sun continued to rise, its beams shone upon waters that increasingly returned to normal. The Egyptians prove no match for the God of Israel.

When it was all over, we read in v.30, “So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.” It didn’t take long for the bodies of the Egyptians to wash up on the seashore. The Lord’s people clearly saw the

salvation of the Lord. What a mighty victory! What a great Savior! They had clear proof that their escape was now complete.

Even so, I want you to see the salvation of our God on your behalf. We all have a big problem, and it's called sin, which condemns us to a devil's hell. And you can't save yourself, just like the Israelites could save themselves. Knowing this, Christ came to earth to be our Savior. And we read in Luke 9 that on one occasion the hidden glory of the divine nature of Christ was manifested on the Mount of Transfiguration. Then Moses and Elijah appeared with Him. It is interesting that in v.31 of that chapter, they literally discussed His *exodus* that He was about to fulfill in Jerusalem. They were talking about His death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. Christ is a new Moses, leading the way for God's people to be saved from their sin by His death on the cross. Then, our Lord faced death, our greatest enemy. His lifeless body was placed in a borrowed tomb. But on the third day Christ rose again and won the victory. There is now hope for each soul who takes Christ as Savior. He will break the chains of sin from off our wrists, and bring us at last to the eternal shore, where we may stand victoriously as the ransomed people of God.

I've got more good news for you. The power of the Lord is yet to be revealed. Right now it seems that our enemy, the devil, is winning the war. Evil seems to prevail. And the Bible predicts that the nations will unite some day under the leadership of the antichrist, but Jesus will come again, and rescue His people, and through overwhelming force, utterly defeat the armies that will gather at the battle of Armageddon. Then Jesus will indeed be recognized as King of kings, and Lord of lords, and God's people will reign with Him!

So consider the salvation of the Lord. If you haven't done so, receive His salvation today. But there are more lessons from our text. The next thing I want you to do is:

II. CONSIDER THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE LORD

The acts of God are intended to reveal Himself & His attributes. God said in v.4, "I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD." And what God did that day certainly revealed:

A. His Power – V.31 says, "Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt..." The word translated "work" is literally "hand," which was a common symbolic expression for strength or power. Notice that the same word is used in v.30, "So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians..." (Cf. 15:9). Again, the Egyptian army was probably the greatest, most powerful army of that day, but they were no match for the power of the Lord.

We also see the great power of the Lord in the miracle He performed here. I do not believe it was the wind that held the water back to perform a wall on each side of the Hebrews. The wind helped dry the sea bed, but it took a miracle to form a wall of water. This was no natural phenomenon. No wind that ever blew would blow water in two opposite directions at once. This was a miracle of the Lord, and since I believe in the Lord, I have no problem believing that He can do miracles.

Because God is all-powerful, let us not live in fear of any enemy. And let us trust in the Lord to give us the strength to overcome the challenges of life. Paul said in Phil. 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Another attribute of God that we see here is:

B. His Faithfulness – God worked a mighty miracle on behalf of Israel, not because they deserved it. They were unbelieving, and cringing in fear. Instead, he worked that mighty miracle because He was keeping His promise that He would deliver Israel and take them as His people. God said way back in Genesis 15:14 that He would deliver Israel from their captors by judging them. Then in Gen. 50:24 Joseph said to his brethren, “I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” You may remember back in 3:8 that God said, “I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians....” God was simply being faithful to His promise.

Even so, you can count on God to do what He says He will do. He is faithful to His Word. Believe His promises. Claim them as your own. God is faithful, and we should be faithful to keep our promises as well.

Finally, God manifested:

C. His Justice Through Judgment – What God did to the Egyptians not only saved Israel, but His mighty act also manifested His judgment of sin. The Egyptians were idolaters. Pharaoh had repeatedly disobeyed the direct command of God to let His people go. The Egyptians had drowned many Hebrew baby boys. So it was a just judgment that they Egyptians were drowned. As the Bible says, “You reap what you sow.”

God’s judgment produced fear in the hearts of Israel, as we see from v.31. God is the holy judge of the ungodly, and we should fear His judgment. Don’t think that you can live in sin & get by with it. Sin must be punished. Thankfully, Jesus bore our punishment on the cross. There is hope for the sinner who repents & believes.

Furthermore, because God is holy & just, and because our text demonstrates that He judges the ungodly, there is hope for the world that its oppressors shall not always tyrannize. When this world order, with its oppression against God’s people, is brought to an end, it will be the final act of judgment against God’s enemies who dare harm his servants. In the end, the godless world will, like Pharaoh and his army before them, meet a violent end.

There is something else this text teaches us to do:

III. GLORIFY THE LORD

One purpose God had in His plan to deliver Israel from the power of Egypt is found in the middle of v.4. There God said, “I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army....” Furthermore, as God was revealing His plan, He said in vv.17-18, “So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

Of course, giving honor and glory to the Lord is what chapter 15 is all about. There they sang a song of praise to the Lord that began with these words, “I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously!” Then in v.11 they sang these words, “Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?”

Church, we need to praise the Lord. We need to give honor to the Lord. We need to glorify the Lord. Praise Him that He is just a great Savior. Praise Him for His power. Praise Him for His faithfulness. And yes, we should even Praise Him for His judgment of sin. [Give other contemporary reasons].

Some day Jesus is going to come again and gain a mighty victory over evil. In anticipation of that victory, we read in Rev. 15:3 that the saints in heaven will “sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: ‘Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty!’” But let’s not wait until we get to heaven to praise the Lord. We should praise Him now!

Once you realize the kind of God our God really is, you should not only glorify the Lord, but you should do one more thing:

IV. TRUST IN THE LORD

Based on what I have said so far, the Lord is certainly worthy of our trust. However, Israel certainly didn’t start out trusting in the Lord. As soon as they saw Pharaoh’s army approach, they were gripped with fear (v.10). That’s a sign of a lack of faith. When you lack faith you only see the worst possible options. In fact, their blindness to God’s might leads them to think of only two options: slavery in Egypt or death in the desert. Notice what they said in vv. 11-12, “Because there were no graves in Egypt,¹ have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? 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.” What a lack of faith! God had worked so many wonders in Egypt on their behalf, and now, they lack the faith to believe that God can save them in this situation. Unbelief has a way of erasing from our memory all the demonstrations we’ve seen of God’s great power and all the instances we know of God’s faithfulness to His Word.

Even though they lacked faith at first, it didn’t take very long for the Lord to instill confidence in His power. Notice how this chapter ends in v.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.” Now, at least for a while, they were living by faith in such a great & mighty Savior.

Let me show you something else. In vv.11-12 we see that they had lost faith in Moses, their leader. But now in v.31 we see that they believed not only the Lord, but also His servant Moses. Their deliverance was certainly the act of God, but it was accomplished through the obedient leadership of Moses. The employment of Moses and his rod was to attest his commission to act as God’s mouthpiece. When God calls someone to lead His people, you need to be very cautious about not believing God’s man.

Are you trusting in the Lord for salvation? Are you trusting in the Lord to give you the strength you need? Are you trusting in the Lord to help you with the problems of life? Most of you would say, “Yes.” But how do you know that you really believe in the Lord? First, true faith leads to action. God told Moses in v.16 to “lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it.” If Moses lacked faith, he would not have even bothered. “What good would that do?” he would have said. But Moses has learned to trust in the power of the Lord. He knew that nothing is impossible with God. He can even part the sea. So we see in v.21 that he did exactly what God commanded, and sure enough, the sea parted! Then in v.22 Israel acted in faith. They passed through the sea, trusting in God to hold back the waters. In fact, Heb. 11:29 says, “By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land...” Truly we can feel that it must have taken some trust in God’s protecting hand to venture on such a road, where, at any moment,

¹ Mummies were all over the place in Egypt; it was a great burying ground.

the walls might collapse and drown them all. Our faith, too, is often called upon to venture upon perilous paths. True faith obeys. True faith obeys. Do you have that kind of faith? Are you living in obedience to the Lord?

Furthermore, true faith casts out fear. In v.10 they were afraid of the Egyptians. But by the time it was all over, we read in v.31 that they feared the Lord!

Conclusion: In 1 Cor. 10, Paul compared baptism to our own personal Exodus through the Sea. Through baptism we confess that we have turned our backs on the world, and we have been saved by Christ. We also confess our conviction that just as Christ was raised from the dead, even so we will share in His victory over death. Have you trusted in Christ for salvation? Have you followed the Lord in baptism? If not, why not present yourself for baptism today!

Sources: Peter Enns, *The NIV Application Commentary: Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000); Stephen Felker, [*Devotional & Explanatory Notes on the Entire Bible*](#) (Col. Hghts, VA: Published by Author), 2007; C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978 reprint); Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977 reprint); J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible*, Vol. 1 (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Radio, 1981); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [CD-ROM] (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996); Warren Wiersbe, *Be Delivered: Exodus* (Colorado Spring: Chariot Victor Books Publishing, 1998). Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).