

Exod 03-08-24b

We're ready to pick up our study in Exodus chapter 15. What we've been attempting to do here is get beyond just the course of events. To ask ourselves, why is God putting Israel through these events? He could have easily had a very docile, calm, all of the Egyptians before the plagues could have just come down with a sort of a malaise and said, ah, go, leave me alone.

They could have quietly left and taken a nice traipse around the sea, forded the thing and gone up to Canaan. God does all of these dramatic, miraculous, memorable is the key word here, memorable acts of deliverance. He creates a crisis situation and then resolves it in the eyes of the world and in the eyes of Israel.

Does that put it in a memorable enough fashion? God created the crisis. God let the Israelites become slaves in Egypt. Why didn't he stop that? Why didn't he nip that in the bud? The first time the Egyptians decided they were going to give the Israelites a hard time, God came swooping down in his delivering grace and put an end to that noise.

No, they've been in Egypt 215 years and the vast majority of that they have been slaves. And you think about the guy living in year 190 and 191 and 192 and 193 and the year 200 and 205 and 210 and 211 of the slavery. And he looks up at God and he says, where's your deliverance? I hear about Abraham and all this and you promised us the land and every place he set his foot.

I'm down here cracking big ones into little ones or making mud bricks or whatever and I don't see it. I don't see your deliverance. God has a bigger plan.

It is necessary for the nation of Israel to be in bondage for this length of time. It is necessary for God to create this crisis, to confront Egypt, to make this story. Where would we be in our understanding of redemption and in our understanding of atonement and in our understanding of divine deliverance and salvation in Christ if we did not have this Old Testament record? It is the heart of the Old Testament Scriptures is this act of deliverance by God.

It's what illustrates and makes the whole point that God is making. Neither is there salvation in any other. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

So God essentially asks the Israelites, look, I need to put you through some things because I've got a big plan here. There are going to be literally millions upon millions upon millions of people who are going to learn from your experience. He goes to Job and he says, look, Job, you're a righteous man.

You've done everything right. You've dotted all your I's and crossed all your T's, or you've formed all of your yodes and tittles that they had in Hebrew. He says, I'm going to have to put you through some things because you're a man who can take it.

You're a man of faith. I know you can do this. And there's going to be a 40-odd chapter book written about you that is going to serve and is going to teach millions and millions and millions of my people.

But it's going to involve some pain. It's going to involve some time and suffering. It's going to involve some bereavement and some intense personal sadness and loss.

You're going to have ten children and lose them all in one day. Your own wife is going to curse you to your face and tell you you ought to deny me and go away. But God asks Job, look, I need you to do this for me.

And there is great blessing on the other side. God doubled everything that Job had, including his children. But it required something of Job that Eliphaz and Bildad and the other men who were men of faith in that generation did not have.

And that was the faith and the inherent, intrinsic belief in God that would not let him curse God, would not let him fall away. He says, God, I have no earthly idea what you're doing. This doesn't match any of our common wisdom.

I've got three friends and an ad on here telling me that I have sinned, that I'm wrong, it's all my fault. God is punishing me for some reason. Well, it is an act of God that Job goes through these things.

God allows the enemy in. He takes away the wall of protection. And Satan is the agent who comes in and does these things to Job.

And Job says, Lord, I have no idea why this is happening. But there's one thing I do know. You will not leave me.

You will not forsake me. You can kill me. I'm still going to trust you.

I know that my Redeemer lives. And I know I will see Him from my flesh on the last day. And as long as I'm sucking air into my lungs and I'm still alive, you've got a purpose and you've got a plan.

I wish there was a mediator to help me see what it is. There's not. When God comes to Job and says, Where were you? And gives his great concluding speech at the end, Job says, You know, Lord, I should have stuck with my original plan and just kept my mouth shut because you know what you're doing.

It's not my place to question. You have a plan and you have a purpose. And just because I can't see it, just because I can't see the end of that path through the sea, I should have kept in mind more fully that you're God and you know what you're doing and just have confidence in your plan.

That's what the whole book of Job is about. Well, to do that is not possible for an infant believer.

God does not put infant believers through that test.

You don't see God having the Amalekites come in to the nation of Israel. This is why He didn't take them by the way of the Philistines. He said the people will see war and fade out.

They're not ready. They don't have the capacity. I'm going to have to teach them, grow them to that point.

So He didn't put them in conflict because if God had let them get sacked, if God had let them be plundered, here He's blessing and delivering them and they can barely remember it. So they're not ready for that kind of test. This is a test for the mature.

This is your advanced course. This is beyond the basics. This is not Christianity for dummies.

This is something we get into after we have grown, after we've developed capacity. Job was the most advanced believer of his generation. We know this from over in Ezekiel where he talks about Job and Daniel.

He says, Though these greatest heroes of the faith were to come to me, I could not forgive this people on their account. But he's listed among the great ones. It's a test for those who know enough to pass it.

And we're going to see why Israel is not ready for that kind of test here. Look at chapter 15 of Exodus. Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord.

Now, all of your praise songs in the Old Testament, whether you go to Judges 5 and look at the song of Deborah and Barak, whether you go to the song of Hannah in 1 Samuel, whether you go to the song of Moses, any of these songs, you go to the song of David, the one he sings at the last, right before he dies, most of the psalms, they're never addressed to El Elyon. They're never addressed to Elohim. They are always addressed to Yahweh.

They are always addressed to the personal name of God. You cannot worship God unless you know Him by His personal name. All of the praise songs of the Old Testament are addressed to Yahweh, to the Lord.

And you'll notice right here at the beginning, I will sing to whom? I will sing to Elohim? I will sing to El Elyon? No, I will sing to Yahweh. And then it says, It says, for He has triumphed gloriously. We don't have the word for triumph and we don't have the word for glory here.

In the New American Standard, it says, I will sing to the Lord for He is highly exalted. And that's closer. Because what we have here is a doubling or a repetition of the word G-A-H.

And this is always an intensive construction in Hebrew. We've seen it before. What did God tell Adam in the garden? The day that thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die.

It is an intensive. Here we have G-A-H. Rising, He has risen.

G-A-H means to go up, to raise up. There is an interesting difference between the Hebrew text here and the Samaritan Pentateuch. Everybody remember what the Samaritan Pentateuch is? You had the Samaritans, who were the people who stayed in the land during the captivity.

Everybody carried off to Babylon. When they came back, these people were seen as collaborators and as sympathizers. And they despised and looked down on them.

They said, you people didn't go through what we went through. You stayed here with your land. And you sympathized and empathized.

And you got by. You compromised. And so they spit and they would shake the dust off.

They wouldn't even go through Samaria. They hated those people for centuries thereafter. They were the people everybody loves to hate.

You've always got to have... When I was a young lad, they used to tell Polack jokes. This is back before political correctness came in. And that in itself was an alternative to other racial and ethnic groups that were always the butt of jokes.

And so they would tell things like, what's black and crisp and hangs from the ceiling? It's a Polish electrician. That sort of thing. They would just pick on the Polacks.

Which is wrong. You don't take a group and just smear everybody with the same brush. But in Israel, the Samaritans were the Polacks.

They were the blacks, if you will. And I will not repeat any of the long-ago things that passed for humor in those days because they are insensitive and they are kind of naively inappropriate. But that's who the Samaritans were.

And the Samaritans got kind of ticked off that they were being treated this way. And they said, well, boo on you. We don't want to have to come down there and be abused and try to worship at Jerusalem.

So we're going to have our own worship up here on Mount Gerizim. And we'll just keep our own copy of the scriptures. And so they did.

So many times you can look at the Samaritan Pentateuch and find readings that have been preserved independently of the whole Masoretic tradition and the copying that went on down south. In the Samaritan Pentateuch here, it says, I will sing to the Lord for a people has risen. The word that you would be familiar with is Goy or Goyim.

And instead of Ga-ah, it's Goy. Goy, even today in Yiddish, you talk to Jewish people and they say, oh, you know, the Goy or the Goyim, these are the non-Israelites, the nations, the Gentiles. And I don't honestly know which way it is.

I suspect the Samaritan Pentateuch has this right because of the next phrase. It says, I will sing

to the Lord for a people has risen, but the horse and its rider, he has hurled into the sea. These people rose up, got on their high horse, so to speak, got thrown into the sea, got cast down.

And so you have this up and down motion. And you do not have this Ga-oh, Ga-ah elsewhere in scripture. If it was a phrase that occurred other places where it said the Lord is highly exalted, but this is kind of an unusual thing.

Anyway, either way, God, of course, is exalted in the course of doing this. But what is going on? Who are the horse and rider? Well, they are the Goy. They are the people that have risen against the people of God.

And that's the occasion for rejoicing. The Lord is my strength and song. This is another saying or phrase that does occur other places in scripture, such as Psalm 18, where he says, I love you, O Lord, my strength.

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. Now, let me ask you something. All of these titles for God in terms of refuge and deliverance, if you are in uninterrupted prosperity, why do you need a refuge? If you are on top of everything, why would you need a deliverance? When he says the Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, the rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, who needs a shield unless the fiery darts are winging your way, unless somebody is attacking? Shield is a defensive weapon against attack.

He says the Lord is my shield. This tells us that we can expect attack. We can expect adversity.

We can expect that from which we need to be delivered. He is the horn of my salvation, the horn of my deliverance. Same thing Hannah calls him.

He is my stronghold and my salvation. Same thing in Isaiah 12, verse 2. Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid.

For the Lord God is my strength and my song. And he has become my salvation. The interesting thing about this is, in fact, some textual scholars wanted to amend the word that is translated song and say this just does not follow.

He is talking about attack and deliverance and shield and refuge. Why is the word song in there? It just seems out of place. So they try to throw in a yod and make it be some other deliverance word.

And they say, song seems out of place there. It must not be right. What did the apostles do in prison after they had been beaten and chained up? They sang.

What kind of song did they sing? They didn't sing 99 bottles of beer on the wall waiting for the jailer to come let them out. These songs are a remembrance of the mighty works of God. What did we see in Psalm 77? What time I am afraid I will trust in thee.

How do we get that trust going? How do we prime that pump and get that stability and that contentment that Paul talks about? The psalmist Asaph in Psalm 77 said, I will remember the works of the Lord. What's a great way to remember that? It's the hymns. It's the songs of the faith.

Trust and obey. There is no other way to be happy in Jesus. We've got to trust.

We've got to obey. Be not dismayed. What e'er be tried, God will take care of you.

His eye is on the sparrow. We have many, many wonderful songs. And when he says, the Lord is my strength and the Lord is my song, He has become my salvation.

We sing to remind ourselves of the God who is with us. Emmanuel. God with us.

He is not a God who is far away. He is a God who is near. We want to believe that He has left.

We want to believe that He has departed the area when things get into the Job phase. But it is not true. God has a reason.

God has a purpose. Little children think, Why are you inflicting this pain on me? Well, sweetheart, I've got to pull this splinter out or it's going to get infected. But you're hurting me.

Well, I'm sorry I have to hurt you, but there is a greater good that you don't understand, and I do, and I've got to do this. One of the hardest things I've ever done in my life was pull that inch and a half piece of toothpick out of Elizabeth's foot. And it hurt her severely.

And I admired her because during the time that her sister was sitting on her to hold her still, she was saying her verses out loud as fast as she could think of them to try to keep herself centered until that pain went by. If I had not pulled out the toothpick, she would not be here. It would have gotten infected.

She would have gotten cellulitis or something in her foot, and it would have swelled and gone, and she would not be here. It was necessary, but not easy. And what we sometimes forget is it's not necessarily easy for God the Father to look down and see His Son in the Garden of Gethsemane or to see us in our time of the Valley of the Shadow, but He knows what's best for us.

He knows all about suffering. The Lord Jesus Christ learned obedience through suffering. And we do not have someone who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, the Scripture says.

He has been in all points tested like as we are. But it has a purpose, and we must have and maintain an unshakable faith in our God. The Lord is my strength, and the Lord is my song.

I will sing a song of deliverance. I will sing a song that reminds me of what God has done. This is one of those songs.

They wrote this song on this occasion. They said, hey, we've got a new song. This is the first national song in Israel.

This is the first national song that Israel has. I will sing to the Lord. The horse and rider have been hurled into the sea.

Why is that important? Why is that at the beginning of the song? Because that was a threat. That was a life and death thing. That is what instilled fear in the hearts of the people.

That is the problem that God eliminated. I will sing to the Lord. He is highly exalted.

This enemy that rose up against us has been hurled into the sea. The horse is the symbol of strength. Sus is the word in Hebrew.

The horse and its rider, the strength of the enemy, have been drowned. I see their corpses floating in the shoreline here. This is my God, the God who takes the best that the enemy can throw at me and drowns it.

I will praise Him. This is my Father's God, they sing. And I will extol Him.

The Lord is a warrior. The Lord is His name. This is one of the first times that they have known the name to be able to sing to it.

Because it was just revealed a few months earlier at the beginning of the place. Who sent you, Moses? I am. Yahweh has sent me.

I will sing to Yahweh. Yahweh is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has cast into the sea.

And the choicest of his officers are drowned in the Yam Suf. The deeps cover them. They went down into the depths like a stone.

And there is a poetry about this because the stormy deep, the chaotic uncontrollable forces represented by the waters of the sea are a metaphor. They symbolize evil throughout the Old Testament. We've talked about this before.

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. The world is they that dwell therein. It talks about God establishing His throne upon the sea.

And Isaiah says, The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked. So, Pharaoh and his army, the power of Egypt, is subdued in the chaotic waters that represent evil.

It is as though God has used evil to destroy evil. He's fighting fire with fire, so to speak. And the evil of the waters has become the undoing of the evil army in that sense.

God can't constrain and hold back the chaotic waters to allow His people to pass through

without even a drop getting on them. They're holy and sanctified. Not a drop of that water touches them.

They go across on dry ground and the water becomes a wall. God's restraint of evil can become a wall on either side of us. We can see it.

It's around us. We are in it, but not of it as it tells us about the world. The deeps cover them.

They went down to the depths like a stone. Look at verse 6. Your right hand, O Lord, is majestic in power. Your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy.

And in the greatness of Your excellence, You overthrow those who rise up against You. This is another reason why I think the song begins with the rising up of the Goyim. The Goyim have risen up, but in the greatness of God's excellence, He has overthrown those who rise up against Him.

You send forth Your burning anger and it consumes them like chaff. At the blast of Your nostrils, the waters were piled up. The flowing waters stood up like a heap.

So much for the waiting across the swamp idea. The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue.

I will overtake. I will divide the spoil. My desire shall be gratified against them.

I will draw out my sword. My hand will destroy them. So you have the picture here of the hand of the Egyptians versus the right hand of God.

Who's going to win that mano a mano contest? You blew with Your wind. The sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

You get the idea there's a little bit of gloating going on here now. Who is like You among the gods, O Lord? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders? You stretched out Your right hand. The earth swallowed them.

Who is it that actually stretched out a hand in this story? It was Moses, wasn't it? God said, Moses, you stretch forth your hand. But in the picture of Moses stretching out his hand, the Israelites are to see the Lord God stretching out His hand. And we look at the symbol and at the visible to see the invisible.

That's what God asks us to do when we study these chapters and these episodes in the history of Israel is look at the visible and see the invisible. He's the same God with the same strong right hand. No human ingenuity, no human power, no human plan, no human idea for deliverance can compare to the right hand of the Lord who is majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders.

You stretched out Your right hand. The earth swallowed them. In Your lovingkindness, You

have led the people whom You have redeemed.

In Your strength, You have guided them to Your holy habitation. Now notice the path to the holy habitation lies through the evil sea. Remember that path that we talked about in Psalm 77? The peoples have heard.

They tremble. Anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia. Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed.

The leaders of Moab. Trembling grips them. All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.

Terror and dread fall upon them. By the greatness of Your arm, they are as motionless as stone. Until Your people pass over, O Lord, until the people pass over whom You have purchased, You will bring them and You will plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance.

The place, O Lord, which You have made for Your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established, the Lord shall reign forever and ever. What this song exemplifies and communicates is that God has a purpose that goes beyond the well-being of the Israelites in this deliverance. He has many other purposes that He is accomplishing.

There are onlookers. There are the Philistines. There are the Moabites and the Ammonites and those who would do damage to Israel.

And a battle is being won without wielding a sword, without throwing a spear, without slinging a rock, because the intimidation factor and the reputation of God is going to be known in those lands. You remember in our 1 Samuel study, we saw that when the Ark of the Covenant was captured and the Philistines got it, and they started having the rats and tumors problem, and they said, we need to send this thing back. Do you not remember what God did to the Egyptians? This is 400 years after the fact.

The memory of that is still fresh in the minds of the Philistines. And Moses and the people know it right here. The Philistines are quaking in their boots.

And it is going to establish a reputation for the God of Israel for centuries to come. For the horses of Pharaoh, with his chariots and his horsemen, went into the sea, and the Lord brought back the waters of the sea on them. But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea.

There is no new information in verse 19, is there? Why is it there? Why is it repeated? Why does anybody repeat something? It's considered to be important. It is considered to be important. The horses went into the sea.

The Lord covered them. The sons of Israel walked on dry land. There is a difference between those who do not belong to God and those who do.

You and I belong to God. There ought to be a difference. The waters that overwhelm and

destroy others should not destroy us.

We have a God who will wall up those waters, take us through the waters without being touched by them, without being damaged by them. Indeed, God will turn cursing to blessing and will use the very presence of the waters as a means of deliverance. If this had happened out in the desert and the Egyptians had come upon the Israelites, there would have had to be some completely different kind of deliverance.

But here, God takes what appears to be a threat, passes the Israelites through it, and then uses that threat to destroy their enemies. What they thought was going to destroy them instead does the opposite. It delivers them.

What seems to be a curse turns out to be a blessing. What seems to be death turns out to be life. It is the mighty hand of God that does it, and it is wondrous in our eyes.

That's why you have verse 19 repeating what goes on. Well, next time, we're going to see that Moses' sister writes a song. She takes a timbrel in her hand and gets some women, and they're going to do a dance and sing a song.

And we're going to study the content of that song next time. We serve the same God. He is no different.

The arm of the Lord is not shortened. Our problems, I suspect, are not nearly as substantial as hundreds of Egyptian chariots and the deep waters of the sea between which God's people were squeezed. If He can solve that problem, He can solve ours.

The thing that is required of us is to recognize that this situation is from God. He has either caused it or allowed it, and He has a purpose. There is an expectation that we will not waver, we will not falter, we will not curse God and die.

We will trust Him. We will watch for His deliverance. And when the order comes to forward march, we're not going to say, Well, I don't really like that path.

Can you show me another? Here's the path of deliverance. We take it. We stay on it.

And on the other side, we will sing the song of the redeemed. We will sing the song of the delivered. We will exalt the Lord who has exalted us.

Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the clarity with which You reveal it to us.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress it on our hearts. We recognize that it is one thing to know a truth, and it is another thing to live in the light of it. But You have not only revealed truth to us, but You have given us the strength to walk the path that it illuminates through the presence of Your Spirit.

We pray that His ministry will be intense and felt in our lives in the days ahead so that we will see clearly the footsteps in which we should walk. We know that as a result, we will enjoy blessing. We will have the purpose of our lives fulfilled, and Your glory will be reflected both now and in the ages to come.

We ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.