

What's the Message – Lesson 25

Today's study deals with Exodus chapter 14, and the lessons of the crossing of the Red Sea.

Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Savior. Once again we ask our Lord to bless you through this study, and give you the wisdom to see that although we may face obstacles in our lives that are different than those faced by the Israelites, the solution is always the same – that we trust in our Lord's protection and guidance and obey His will. Amen.

So far we have studied the birth and training of Moses, his calling by God to be the Lord's instrument of salvation, the plagues of Egypt, which led up to the Passover event and the freeing of the Israelites. Now we pick up their trail as they follow the Lord out of the country.

The last two verses of chapter 13 set the scene for us. *And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and night; the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.*

Then the Lord told Moses to set up a camp by the edge of the sea and Pharaoh would think that the Israelites were trapped, and the Egyptians could go out and bring them back to slavery. This would be a trap, as we know how it turned out, but one for the Egyptians and not the Israelites. For God said to Moses, *“I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.”*

So Pharaoh sent out his chariots. Remember, these were the awesome battle-tanks of their day. And it wasn't just a few. It was 600 picked chariots, his elite corps, plus his army. It was enough to put fear in the hearts of any who faced them, and the former slaves knew they certainly could not stand up to such a force of strength.

So when they saw that army coming upon them, they cried out to Moses: *Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians?' For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.*"

So now, let's step back and look at the over-view of what Moses is faced with. On the one hand is the most powerful army of its day bearing down on him. On the other hand he has a group who are totally untrained in any military skills . . . afraid of what might happen to them . . . and telling Moses that he was a bad leader who should have just left them alone as slaves.

What can he say to the people now? Verse 13 of chapter 14 gives us the answer: *And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be still."*

Since this is such a familiar story to most of us, we all know what happened next. God told Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea and the waters parted, allowing the Israelites to cross over. But when the Egyptian chariots attempted to follow, their chariot wheels were clogged and they drove heavily and slowly. When the entire army was between the walls of water Moses stretched out his hand again and the waters went back into their normal course, drowning all the Egyptians.

And there, Teacher, is a summary of the events of chapter 14 of the book of Exodus. It is a dramatic story, but also one that has been the source of sarcastic jokes and doubt by those who dismiss it as a mere myth. So, what is the message for our lives today? Could it still be pertinent for us?

Let's look at the big picture. What are the elements we see here? First, there is a goal. In this case it was to escape the land of slavery and cross a body of water to what was perceived as a land of freedom. Second, there are difficulties . . . obstacles . . . that make

this goal seem un-achievable. When we look at our own abilities to deal with these obstacles, everything looks completely hopeless. Are these elements present in our lives today? Of course. We would only be deceiving ourselves to deny this fact. So the ancient story is relevant, even in our day and age.

But what is the solution? How do we deal with challenging events in our lives? Do we trust in our own strength, or do we turn to God for His guidance? Remember, God said to Moses, *The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.*

The Israelites needed to learn to trust God, so God used this event to teach them that lesson. Do we still need to learn to trust completely in our Heavenly Father? Do we need to learn the hard way, with tests such as this? Or can we learn from this example in Exodus? Note well these final words from the 14th chapter: *And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did against the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord; and they believed in the Lord . . .*

Our next lesson will explore the early lessons Israel had to learn in the desert.

This series has been developed and written by our director of teacher training, Mr. D. A. Senter, and is copyrighted by Lamb of God Lutheran Church in Flower Mound, Texas. Your narrator is Dale Gaus.

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