



EXODUS

GOD'S VICTORY AT SEA

Before Life Group

Read Exodus 13-14

How quickly we seem to forget things.

As the Israelites looked upon the Egyptian army bearing down on them with their backs to the Red Sea, their enslavement or death looked imminent. The situation for the Israelites appeared to be fatal. It had only been one day since they were led by the hand of God out of Egypt. Yet, having been rescued through the sovereign grace of God, the people immediately began to doubt that God had even sent Moses. "They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" [Exodus 14:11-12, NIV](#)

The Egyptians had just undergone one of the most horrific and unexplainable events. In just one night, their first-born children had suddenly and inexplicably died. Incomprehensible for most, but not, however, for Pharaoh. Pharaoh knew the cause of these ten plagues that wrought Egypt—each one a demoralizing victory to the Egyptian gods, but a clear display of the sovereignty of the God of Moses. As judgment rained down from heaven, in some cases literally, Pharaoh knew that this could only be from his ego for refusing to release the people of God. When the Angel of Death had taken the lives of the firstborn, every home in Egypt was impacted, Pharaoh's included, and he relented. But, realizing that the workforce had significantly been depleted, he swiftly sent his military to return the people of Israel to their slavery. How quickly we forget...

The people of Israel had witnessed the sovereignty of God as well. At each step, God had provided for their well-being. There was safety and protection through every step of the plagues that ravaged the Egyptian people. In the final plague, Moses guided the people through to safety and secured their release. They did so, not hobbling away with very little possessions, but as a victorious people with treasures and provision alongside. Even during their flight from Egypt, "By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night." [Exodus 13:21, NIV](#) The miraculous had been the defining nature of God's provision for them. Yet, with their backs pressed against the Red Sea and the Egyptian army, they turned on Moses and lost their faith in God, asking to return voluntarily to Egypt rather than die. How quickly we forget...

Where there seemed to be no way for the people of Israel to escape what appeared to be their fate, they lost track of the obvious. God had brought them to exactly that moment. There was no other way for the people of Israel to be saved except by the hand of God. Their strength was insufficient. The Almighty God would show Himself that day as the God who is not to be challenged, but who fortifies His people with love and grace.

Remember What The Lord Has Done For You

When it seems the world is not going your way, there are a multitude of ways to respond. For some, the idea of coming closer to God during this process is an afterthought, if it is even a thought at all. This is a time for decisive action, not a time for passive contemplation. Your strength must be activated in order to resolve the situation. For others, the temptation is the immediate loss of all hope. The Israelites opted for the second option. With everything that God had done for them and everywhere God had directed them, with a pillar of fire and cloud guiding them day and night, the people of Israel quickly dropped into fear that God could not save them.

As the Israelites departed Egypt, they did so with clear instructions to consecrate the firstborn of every household, and that this was to be a recurring event when they arrived in the Promised Land ([Exodus 13:1-16](#)). Furthermore, Moses ensured that the bones of Joseph would travel with them, based on promises made by Joseph that God would provide the Promised Land for them. "And Joseph made the Israelites swear an oath and said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place." ([Genesis 50:25, NIV](#)). The bones reminded the people that it was God who brought them into Egypt and it was God who was bringing them out.

Hopefully, you and I will never have to stand down a literal army. This, however, does not mean that we are without risk and attack. Pharaoh's army was ruthless and well advanced in military strategy and technique. Yet, when compared to the spiritual forces of darkness, the Egyptian army looked playful. Whenever we make spiritual progress and growth, the enemy is there attempting to snatch us back to where we were. Temporary times of difficulties and setbacks in our relationship with God seem to be enough to prevent us from seeing past our immediate circumstances.

Encountering spiritual difficulties can easily weigh us down. During these times, let us remember what the Lord has done for us in the past. We do not have the same luxury that God has in being omniscient. However, we do know what God has done for us in the past. Remember the times that God provided when you saw no way out. Think back on the words that God has spoken to you. Instead of retreating or returning to past temptations, set your eyes on God and know that you can trust Him. He has provided in the past, He is guiding you now, and He will continue to lead you into a greater connection with Him.

The Lord Will Fight For You

There the Israelites stood, their backs against the Red Sea, staring down the Egyptian army and their chariots. In their lack of faith and complaining, Moses reassured his people: "The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still." ([Exodus 14:14, NIV](#)) The Lord would protect His people that day from any who would chase them. For the Egyptians had incurred the wrath of God and would be summarily dealt with. Furthermore, the display of the power and might of God would astound everyone.

The breath of God parted the Red Sea for the Israelites to safely walk across, with walls of water protecting them on both sides. The Angel that had been accompanying them and going before them moved behind them to protect the people from the oncoming attack. After Israel had arrived on the other side safely and the Egyptians had pursued them, the walls of water fell; and, no matter how advanced the Egyptian army had been, they were no more. What did the Israelites have to do? Nothing. In fact, there was nothing they could do. This was squarely God's victory, not the Israelites'. For all their numbers, for all their planning, any



attempt to fight the Egyptians or ford the river would have been met with their demise. God, however, had different plans. They only had to be still and allow God to fight on their behalf.

This is the core of spiritual warfare. The strength of man will always come short when compared with the strength of an omnipotent God. He is limitless and ceaseless. We can battle through our own temptations, our sins, and our struggles; but unless we give God control of the situation and stand still, we will not find victory. Often, we feel as if we need to be the ones to power through a particular sin or spiritual struggle. We crave the approval of a heavenly Father who will see our work and say that He is proud. But this is pride. Rather than God approving of us, God loves us to our core and protects us as a true father would his infant child. There is protection and salvation for those who stand in the presence of God when challenged.

We contribute very little to the equation. Our role is not to become the superhero that saves the day. In fact, in the story that God is weaving throughout human history, we are the ones who need saving. Our role is to allow God to fight on our behalf. The hand of God may reach through ours, but our first response to any spiritual battle will be to allow God to fight. There is a faith and trust in the stillness that knows that God is able to sustain His people.

Discussion Questions

Read [Exodus 14](#)

1. In the story of Exodus up to this point, what are some of the things that God has told His people to remember? Why do you think God wanted these events remembered?
2. Why did the Israelites turn so quickly on God and Moses? What reason did they give for wanting to return to Egypt?
3. Often times, we try to rely on our own strength to dig ourselves out of whatever situation we face. How does this jeopardize our spiritual health and well-being?
4. What makes standing still and allowing God to fight for us so difficult? What inner fears or doubts fuel our desire to accomplish everything on our own?
5. When have you experienced God's provision, protection, or presence in the past? How do these moments fuel your faith during the times when you see no way out?
6. Why is it so difficult to lose faith and hope in the midst of difficult time? What are the dangers of allowing circumstantial emotion to control our faith?
7. In which area of your life do you struggle the most with seeing how God will provide in a situation or situations you are facing? How can we, as a group of Christians, support one another through the difficult times we face?

About the Author.

Pastor Daniel Burton lives in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. In May 2015, Daniel graduated from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with his Master of Divinity. It was here that he began to explore his passion for Theology and deeper exploration of the word of God. Daniel believes that, at its core, Theology should be fun. Check out more of his work at <http://thegospeloutpost.com>

