

# The Lord Triumphs Gloriously

Exodus: Revelation and Redemption

Exodus 14:1-15:21

Pastor Lucas McGarity

September 22, 2019

There have been many events in history where a group of people faced their imminent death or capture if they remained where they were. There was nothing that they could do to stop it from happening and there was no way that they could save themselves. They had to rely on someone else to save them. Some examples of this are the Apollo 13 mission where there was a malfunction during the cryo-stir which caused an explosion leading to too much of the oxygen being lost. The astronauts needed the help of others for rescue. Another example was the Wild Boars soccer team in Thailand. They had gone to explore a cave after their soccer practice and then it started to rain. This rain made the water levels in the cave rise to the point that they were trapped inside. They could not save themselves and had to trust in the skill and work of many divers and others to save them.

Now these are wonderful stories of rescue but I think one of the greatest rescue operations of all time was Operation Dynamo during WWII. Some of you may know this as the Miracle of Dunkirk and many of you may have seen the movie Dunkirk a couple years ago. As WWII started in 1939 the German army had one speed and that was fast. Their goal was to quickly sweep across the continent and control it before anyone could stop them. And they did it really well. They pushed the Belgium, Dutch, French, and British forces back again and again until it became obvious that they would need to escape back to England.

At the end of May 1940 the German army pushed what remained of the British Expeditionary Force, three French field armies, and the remains of the Belgium army back as far as they could go. The Allied Forces had retreated to Dunkirk along the English Channel. They were stuck between the water and the German army and needed to be rescued. Fortunately for them a rescue operation was already underway. The ships that began to arrive off the coast of France were the ones you would expect to see, such as Navy destroyers. But there was also a host of “little ships”—over 800 of them. These were small private yachts, fishing boats, and merchant shipping boats that heard the call and came to the rescue of the Allied Forces. Over the course of eight days more than 330,000 soldiers were ferried across the English Channel to safety.

This event has been described as a rescue miracle because of how successful it was despite the odds. But in reality it wasn't a miracle because it is easily explained. Today we are going to look at a real miracle. It is the final miracle that God performed to decisively save his people from their enemies and bring them out of Egypt. This morning we will be looking at Exodus 14:1-15:21.

Before we read our passage this morning I want us to look back on what has happened so far in the book. If you were here last week I hope that you remember that the main application point for us was to remember what God has done. To help us do that we are going to review and remember. Our passage today is the culmination of the events that have happened so far.

It all began with a new king coming to power in Egypt that did not know Joseph and he began to oppress Israel and made them slaves. Egypt tried to control the population of Israel so they made a plan to kill the baby boys as they were born. Moses was born at this time and he was saved by God, but the oppression of the people continued and they cried out to God and God heard them. God

remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So God sent a deliverer in the person of Moses back to Egypt with many powerful signs but Pharaoh would not let the people go. Pharaoh did not know God and didn't care about God. Pharaoh was god in his own mind. So the stage was set for a conflict between God and Pharaoh and in our passage today the conflict is resolved.

### **Exodus 14:1-31<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-habiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. <sup>3</sup>For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, ‘They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’ <sup>4</sup>And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.” And they did so.

<sup>5</sup>When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, “What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” <sup>6</sup>So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, <sup>7</sup>and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. <sup>9</sup>The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-habiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

<sup>10</sup>When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. <sup>11</sup>They said 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? <sup>12</sup>Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” <sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

<sup>15</sup>The LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. <sup>16</sup>Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. <sup>17</sup>And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. <sup>18</sup>And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

<sup>19</sup>Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, <sup>20</sup>coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

<sup>21</sup>Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. <sup>22</sup>And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. <sup>23</sup>The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. <sup>24</sup>And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, <sup>25</sup>clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® unless otherwise noted.

<sup>26</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.” <sup>27</sup>So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. <sup>28</sup>The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. <sup>29</sup>But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

<sup>30</sup>Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. <sup>31</sup>Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

This is the Word of the Lord.

This passage is a wonderful event showing us how God triumphed gloriously over his enemy and saved Israel. This act helped Israel see more of who God is and it caused them to believe and praise.

My sermon in a sentence is this: God triumphs gloriously over his enemies, and in response, his people believe and praise him.

Our passage also divides itself by these two points (triumph and response) and this structure will be how we will spend our time this morning. First, we will see God’s triumph and then the people’s response.

## **GOD TRIUMPHS GLORIOUSLY OVER HIS ENEMIES. (14:1-29)**

---

The last few verses of chapter 13 tell us that God did not lead the Israelites by the quickest way because that would have taken them to the land of the Philistines where there would have been war. With the war there would be a temptation to return to Egypt. Instead, God led them through the wilderness to the Red Sea. They came to the Red Sea and made their camp facing the sea as God commanded them. God brought Israel here for a reason. It wasn’t because he thought it would be a cooler way to leave Egypt, like he wanted to bring Israel out with one last super miracle of awesomeness. Verses 3-4 tell us why: “For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, ‘They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’ And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.”

Throughout these first chapters of Exodus there has been a conflict between Pharaoh and God. This final event brings the conflict to a head. Either Pharaoh would be able to snatch the Israelites out of God’s hand, or God would once and for all break the power of Pharaoh’s hand.<sup>2</sup> But as we have seen so far in this series, this conflict is much more than a conflict between a stubborn man and God. It is a conflict between the evil of this world and the creator God. And in this conflict God is the one who gets the glory and people will know that he is the Lord.

Starting in verse 5 the events begin to play out as God said they would in verses 1-4. Pharaoh changes his mind when it comes to letting Israel go. He regrets the decision that he made in letting Israel go and quickly moves to fix it and get them back. And we can expect that his chariots, horsemen, and army would quickly overtake the people of Israel in the wilderness at the Red Sea.

---

<sup>2</sup> Allen Ross and John N. Oswalt, *Genesis, Exodus: Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*

When Israel sees this army coming they also begin to change their minds. Only a few days before they were brought out of Egypt by God's mighty hand but they seem to totally forget this. Verse 11 says that they fear greatly and cry out to the Lord. They begin to blame Moses for his actions in bringing them out of Egypt just to die in the wilderness. They say it would have been better to live in slavery in Egypt than to die in the wilderness.

We can relate to their fear, after all I would be scared too if there was an angry army encamped across from me. But we can also expect Israel to have actually learned something from the plagues. The missing element for Israel was a trust and belief in God. They don't trust that God is working for their good in this situation.

It is easy to throw the Israelites under the bus in this situation. We think to ourselves, "Come on people. Don't you remember all that God did for you! Do you think that God would go through all of the work to bring you out of Egypt just to let you die here by the Red Sea?" But we ourselves act just like this. We quickly forget the great works that God had done for us when we face adversity. We begin to think that our present day circumstances are how we should view and judge the work of God. But this isn't true. God's character does not change and he is always working for the good of his people. So when our circumstances cause us to doubt and wonder I would urge you to remember who God says that he is. Remind yourself of his mighty actions and his care for his people. Remember who God is and trust him.

Moses quickly puts a stop to Israel's complaining by telling them to shut their mouths and open their eyes. All that they need to do is stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for them. God is going to fight for them and they don't have to do anything but be quiet. And then God gives Moses the rescue plan. Moses is to lift up his staff, and stretch out his hand over the sea and divide it, so the people of Israel can go through on dry ground. But God will harden the hearts of the Egyptians and God will get glory over them and they will know that he is the Lord.

The end of Chapter 13 tells us that God had been leading Israel by a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire at night. This cloud never departed from before them as God led them out of Egypt. But here the cloud and the angel of the Lord moved from before Israel to behind them. God himself stood between the enemy and his people Israel. This scene reminds me of the way Gandolf led the Fellowship of the Ring through the Mines of Moria. As they entered into the mine, Gandolf lit up the way with his staff and as they went through the mine he led them. But when the Balrog came and they fled to the Bridge of Khazad-dûm, Gandolf moved from before the Fellowship to behind the Fellowship. He stood between the Balrog and the people not allowing it to come near. God is the one who stands before us and fights for us. And God would fight for Israel when the morning came.

We now come to the climactic event where chapter 14, and indeed the book of Exodus so far, have been leading. Moses obeys the word of God and stretches out his hand over the sea and the LORD drives back the sea by a strong east wind all night. This divided the sea and the people of Israel were able to go into the sea on dry ground with a wall of water on their left and a wall of water on their right.

There have been attempts to discount the miraculous nature of the events in Exodus, saying that the plagues were more natural events rather than God's mighty and powerful hand against Egypt. But here in Kansas we know a thing or two about wind. When people first move here they notice the wind and its constancy. We don't really have calm days and when we do it actually feels odd.

When I was in elementary school we would play a game of battling the wind as it blew the sand across the playground. We worked to get from one side of the playground to the other as we sheltered behind the slides and merry-go-round. We know that a strong east wind won't divide shallow water let alone the Red Sea. This event was a supernatural event where God showed he controlled the water of the earth and could form it to do his will. In Ancient Near Eastern culture the sea was seen as a symbol of chaos that could not be controlled. A person had to accept what it did and live with it. But God shows himself as more powerful than the sea and uses it to show his glory and make himself known.

The Egyptians see the people of Israel going through the sea and they go in after them. But as they go they begin to see that God is fighting for Israel and against them. They try to turn and flee but they could not escape. God commands Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea so the waters would return to their normal course. As this happens, God throws the Egyptians into the sea and the entire army, including Pharaoh are killed. God fought for his people and triumphed gloriously over his enemies.

The book of Exodus helps us to know God, and often the way that we know God or learn about him is through his actions. God revealed more about who he was as he redeemed Israel. This narrative, and especially this event, shows us that God is a warrior who redeems his people. God continues to be seen as a physical warrior for Israel throughout the Old Testament as he fights for them in the book of Joshua. We then see that God physically fights against Israel when they are unfaithful to the covenant with God, which results in them being exiled from the land. But God is also a spiritual warrior for his people and he triumphs in this as well.

The book of Colossians in the New Testament is written to a church that needs to know that Jesus is over all things. Jesus is over all human rulers and all spiritual powers. There is no evil that can stand up against him and Col. 2:15 shows him as a divine warrior. This verse says, "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."

The imagery used in this verse is of a military victory where the conqueror strips the defeated of everything that they have and then parades them through the streets to show everyone who won. Jesus thoroughly defeats Satan. It was through Jesus' death and resurrection that he completely defeated Satan and all the spiritual powers of evil. They no longer have power to accuse Christians of sin before God because Jesus paid the price for the people's sin. They have been completely defeated. Jesus is the divine warrior that triumphed over Satan.

But there is also a "not yet" aspect to this defeat. Satan is still here and there are still the forces of evil, sin, and death. But God has promised to one day finish off all of these when Jesus returns again. Revelation 19:11 says, "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war."

When Jesus comes again he will come as a warrior that brings judgment on the sin and evil of the earth. God will put an end to all of it, and in its place he will make all things new with a new heaven and new earth. And in this new place all people will know that the Lord is God.

Seeing and knowing that the Lord is God is all through our passage this morning. Chapter 14 verse 4 shows us that God will get glory over Pharaoh and the Egyptians shall know that he is the Lord. In verse 10 Israel sees the army marching against them and they fear greatly. Then in verse 13 Moses tells the people to fear not, trust God, and see the salvation of the Lord and they will never see the

Egyptians that they see today. In verse 25 the Egyptians begin to see that the Lord is fighting for Israel. And finally in verses 30-31 Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore and they saw the great power the Lord used.

It is through this seeing that all people know who God is. There are two ways that God is known: through judgment or through salvation. All people will know the Lord in one of these two ways. The Egyptians did come to know that God was the Lord, and that was through God's judgment on them. And the same will be true for people today who do not repent of their sins and believe in the gospel. The gospel is the great message of salvation for all people. It is the wonderful way that sinful people can be made righteous before God who is holy and sinless. Israel however saw the great power and miracle of God's salvation and they changed from fearing the Egyptians in verse 10 to now fearing the Lord in verse 31. When we read of these miraculous events as God's people throughout history have done, it should cause us to respond with fear and belief in the Lord. Do you believe that God has gloriously triumphed over sin and death through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? If you don't I would encourage you to ask why you don't and talk with someone here about it.

I want to be clear about the fear that is spoken of here. This fear is not one of cowering but one of respect, awe, and submission. In our preaching team meeting Pastor Daniel once again came through with some valuable insight. Let me tell you the man is absolutely fantastic! If you haven't been able to talk with him and know him, make it happen. Daniel was saying that when we fear something we give that thing power over us. For example if we fear losing our job we will do anything to keep it and soon our lives begin to revolve around that. Or if we fear being left out we will constantly be looking for friends and people to help us feel valuable and full of worth. But if our main fear in life is our fear of the Lord our lives will be focused around that and not our ever-changing circumstances. We may lose our jobs or be left out of things, but our lives will not fall apart because we know that God is still reigning forever and ever. So what do you fear more than the Lord? Who or what are you seeing in your life that causes you to fear instead of trusting in the Lord?

Israel feared the Lord and this caused them to believe in the Lord and in Moses. Their response to seeing God's glorious triumph over Pharaoh and his host was belief and praise.

### **PEOPLE SHOULD RESPOND WITH BELIEF AND PRAISE. (14:30-15:21)**

---

Verse 31 says that Israel believed in the Lord and in Moses. This makes us ask the question, "Did they not believe before or did they not have faith in the Lord before this?" I think the answer to this is no. I believe they did act in faith when they painted the blood of the lamb on their doorposts during the Passover. I believe they did act in faith as they stepped between the walls of water to walk on the dry ground through the Red Sea. But after seeing God decisively show himself as the almighty God over Pharaoh their belief and faith grew. It was through seeing another aspect of God that they grew in their belief. Israel is coming to know God more and more.

The same is true for us today. As we learn more about God our belief in him grows. When we are new Christians our faith and understanding of God is weak. We don't fully know who God is. We know that God has saved us through Jesus' death and resurrection but there is often still a long way to go for us. But as we continue to live the Christian life and the gospel grows deep within us our belief and faith grow too. But this doesn't happen as individuals in isolation from each other. In Exodus we see that Israel sees as a group, they believe as a group, and they praise as a group.

Christianity is about community and others. And one of the ways the gospel grows in us is through others nurturing us in our faith. Growth happens as we take classes together on Sunday mornings, as we are in community groups with others, and as we live honest lives with others. Other believers help us to see the redemption that we have in Christ. We really do need each other. If you need this in your life, a way to begin is by signing up for “Try-A-Group.” Pastor Jordan gave an announcement about this at the beginning of the service. It is an easy way to begin having others walk with you in your faith and for you to do the same for them. The sign-up for this ends today and you can sign up on the website, so please do that if you are interested.

Now that Israel has believed in the Lord they respond with praise. Their song of praise in chapter 15 is all about praising God for the destruction of his enemies. This song is entirely focused on God and what he has done. It repeatedly has the phrases, “The Lord is [fill in the blank]” or “you did [fill in the blank].” The first half of the song is looking backward on the enemies of the past and what God had done to them when they tried to stop God’s purpose and plan. Then the second half of the song starting in verse 13 is focused on the enemies of the future and their inability to stop God’s purpose and plan. The song sings of the greatness of the Lord and how he will reign forever and ever. There is no one like him in all the earth. There is no one like God in his majestic holiness. There is no one like God in his glorious deeds and wonders. There is no past, present, or future enemy of the world that can stand before God. God has saved and redeemed his people and he will continue to do so. God will continue to guide his people into the place that he has made and established. The Lord will reign forever and ever.