

God Will Make A Way
Exodus 14:1 – 15:21
Series: Book of Exodus [#10]
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Introduction

Today we come to a familiar account in the Bible—Israel crossing through the Red Sea on dry ground. Many of us first heard this story as young children in Sunday School and from Bible story books. It still is popular. One of the popular vacation Bible school programs this year is *Crocodile Dock*. It kicks off with God calling Moses through the burning bush. It wraps up with this account of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea.¹

You may be aware that this miraculous work of God has been subject to much revisionism by people who have problems with miracles. The one true God is eternal and almighty. He works miraculous things such as the events we are looking at today according to His own will for His own glory.

This account is in two parts. The historical narrative of the events is in chapter 14. The poetic praise song of deliverance about it is in chapter 15. Israel had their backs against a wall with no way of escape. But God made a way for them. And that is the main lesson we are looking at today, *God Will Make A Way*. What He did for them then He will do for us now. We begin with Israel and how God made a way for them.

God Made A Way For Israel.

Let's review their impossible situation. If you look at the back page of the bulletin, you will find a map showing the traditional route of the Exodus. Now the shortest route from Egypt to Canaan would have been to go east, then northeast. But God's plan for Israel, knowing them and their enemies, led them "around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea" (13:18). Chapter 14 opens listing some geographical place markers. But we haven't been able to determine where those places were. What we know is that God changed their course. He led them south to camp next to the Red Sea.

God told Moses that when Pharaoh's scouts would report this to him, he would conclude that Israel was confused and lost. As part of the way God would be honored and the Egyptians would realize He is the almighty God, God hardened, yet again, Pharaoh's heart. Pharaoh and his advisors, after adjusting to some extent to the shock of all their firstborn being killed in the last plague, now decided they could not let this valuable labor force escape. So Pharaoh and his best rapid response tactical troops hopped into their chariots and raced to bring Israel back. Soon they reached Israel's camp. Here was Israel with their back to the wall, between an unbeatable army and an uncrossable sea. They were in an impossible situation.

How did they react to this? There's a song that opens,

Must have felt strange to end up stranded between an army and the sea.
They must have felt forsaken wondering why God wasn't all He said He'd be.
When your back's against the wall
It's the hardest place of all.²

Moses recorded their response to their "hardest place of all." Go to chapter 14 verse 10.

"As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD. Then they said to Moses, 'Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, "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'" (10-12).

Their first response: they "became very frightened" (10). They were terrified. We don't know if Moses had told the people that God said the Egyptians would chase after them. In any event, when they saw the clouds of dust on the horizon and then the Egyptian army closing in, they panicked.

Next they cried out to God. If they were calling for His help and deliverance, it was exactly what they should have been doing. Their reaction and words to Moses are clear. "Were there no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?" (11). The sarcasm is not masked at all. Egypt, remember, made a big thing about death, burial and graves. There were countless tombs prepared with great care across the country. "Moses," they said, "You led us out here to die! If we have to die, it would have been better to die in Egypt!"

Then they engaged in some revisionist history. "We didn't want to come in the first place!" Of course, that was not so. When Moses first came back to Egypt, we read in chapter 4 beginning at verse 29,

"Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped." (29-31)

Their revisionist work continued, "We would have been better off to be slaves to the Egyptians than die in this place!" It's not the last time we will hear this kind of complaint. They should have known the Egyptians were not coming to kill them, but to take them back to Egypt.

These are the people who ...

- heard about God's coming deliverance through Moses and saw the miraculous signs to confirm that (4:29-31);
- who had lived through the ten plagues in Egypt, being spared from all but the first three;
- who had walked, marched out of Egypt.

They had seen all this great work of God. But now when they saw the Egyptians, they took their eyes off God and focused on their enemy. Their faith faltered and, at least for a time, melted away there in that hot desert.

God promised to deliver them and His provision for them was more direct and dramatic than they could every have imagined. Going back to that song, it continues,

Somewhere between provisions and impossibility
God will make a way.
When there seems to be no way, forever He is faithful.
He will make a road when you bear a heavy load.
I know, God will make a way.³

Moses told the people,

“Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent.” (14:13-14)

As we look at God's provision, first let's dismiss all the arguments that this was just a natural phenomenon. Those arguments are varied, but every one of them is easily dismissed if we take this account as God's Word and apply even a small amount of logic. Some have suggested that a naturally occurring wind dried up a shallow marshy area so Israel could make their way, but the Egyptian chariots with their narrow wheels could not. Now, if the wind just pushed the waters out, the Egyptians could have easily raced ahead on the firm ground and outflanked Israel.

Let's look at the text which makes it clear this was God directly controlling nature He created to make a way of escape for Israel. In 14:16 God told Moses that the sea would be “divided” (not simply pushed back from the shore), and that Israel could then walk “through the *midst* of the sea on dry land.” Then God used the pillar of cloud and fire to be a barrier between Israel and Egypt that night until Israel moved out (14:19).

Next, God brought a strong wind to divide the sea and make a path for His people. The word “sea” used here is never used for shallows, but for only for large bodies of water. And the path, judging from the approximately two million people and their livestock, was very wide, perhaps even a mile or even several miles wide. Then Israel walked through to the

other side with waters like a “wall” on their left and right. The word “wall” was always used for city and other large walls.

When Israel crossed and the Egyptians decided to follow them, they couldn’t control their chariots and recognized that God was fighting against them (14:25). And then God brought the sea back to its normal state, drowning all the Egyptian soldiers (14:27-28).

The song of deliverance in chapter 15 tells us that it was God who sent the winds (15:8), that it was God who hurled the horse and rider into the sea (15:1, 4-5, 10, 12, 19, 21). Psalm 77 suggests that God sent a storm to cause the Egyptians trouble before He closed the path through the sea (see 15-20).

Yes, for Israel it was true, “Somewhere between provisions and impossibility God will make a way. When there seems to be no way, forever He is faithful.”⁴

Israel’s response to God’s provision is summarized in 14:31,

“When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses.”

Then chapter 15 is a praise song which Moses wrote and led the people in singing. Verses 20-21 tell us his sister Miriam joined him in leading the singing. It may have been in antiphonal fashion, the men singing first, then the women repeating or answering. The song is not only about the events of deliverance, but even more it is about God and His greatness. They sang:

- He is highly exalted (1).
- He is my strength, song and salvation (2).
- He is a warrior (3).
- His power is majestic (6).
- He is far above all the man-made gods, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises (11).
- His lovingkindness has led and His strength has guided us (13).

They *knew* God had made the way of deliverance for them through the Red Sea. Let’s move from them to ourselves.

God Will Make A Way For You.

Like Israel, you and I at times find ourselves in impossible situations. We know what it means to have our backs up against a wall, of being between a rock and a hard place. To face situations where it is not just that there is no good, best, easy or pleasant way out, but it seems that there is no way out. Some may be situations of our own making while others come chasing after us or crashing into us without us doing anything to bring them on. Some may be matters of life and death, and those that aren’t seem to be matters of life and death.

They cover the whole spectrum of our lives,

- relationships, career, finances;
- our personal identity, values, dreams and goals;
- faith;
- health.

For some of us today it is not looking back to our last or the most impossible situations of the past, but it is what you are looking at right now. Your back *is* against the wall. There seems to be no way to make it go away or to make it any better. There is little, if anything, that is pleasant in your life right now.

So, how do we, how do you, how do I react to these situations? Going back to that song again, it speaks of the times “when a wall of circumstances leaves you crying in the night, and you struggle til your strength is almost gone.”⁵ Yes, we feel frightened, frustrated and angry. We cry. We cry out to God. We want to run away. We want to give up.

Sometimes we run to God, our strong tower, laying the situation and ourselves at His feet, asking Him to work His will, and then rest in Him. But at other times we, like Israel, loose sight of God, we don’t sense His love and presence. We can’t see how He can be leading us, caring for us, providing for and protecting us. We have taken our eyes and hearts off God and focused on the *enemy*, on the situation. Our faith falters, at least for a time, melted away in the heat of the problem.

But, God *will* make a way. “God will gently hold you in the shelter of His heart, and carve a road for you to carry on ... somewhere between provisions and impossibility God *will* make a way.”⁶

As I’ve thought about God’s provision for those times, I came back again to the basic yet profound reality that God’s ways are not our ways. Our natural way of thinking doesn’t line up with His. Consider some common thoughts when, let’s say, a person faces a health problem that is not and will not, the doctors say, get better but only worse. I can say, “If God would heal me, what a testimony that would be for Him! And think of how much more I could do for him with better health and a longer life!” Or, I may think that I had to have sinned to end up with this and that if I identify the sin and confess it, I will be healed. These thoughts are not God’s thoughts.

Listen carefully: God’s way for us, all of God’s ways are according to *His* purposes, path, time, destination and for His glory.

We know God has already made the way, the provision for our greatest need. We were born with a sinful nature and separated from God. This is the ultimate impossible situation:

- created to know God, but separated from Him by sin;
- under the sentence of everlasting death and judgment;

- and there is absolutely nothing we can ever do on our own to get out of that position.

But, the Bible tells us, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). And again, “as many as received Him [Jesus Christ], to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe on His name” (John 1:12).

Yes, *God has made a way!* Colossians 1:13-14 says of all who have placed their faith in Christ, “[God] rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” *God has made a way.*

What God did for Israel when they were trapped between that unbeatable army and the uncrossable sea, what He did for you and me when we were dead in our sins without hope, He will do in every one of our impossible situations.

- We, again, need to start with shifting our focus away from our own way of thinking to God’s way of thinking.
- We, again, need to remember that, as with Israel at the Red Sea, there are times when God leads us into impossible situations to demonstrate His love, power and faithfulness as well as to test and build our faith.
- We, again, need to remember that God’s way for us, all of God’s ways are according to His purposes, path, time, destination and for His glory.
- We, again, need to remember when it comes to the spiritual battles we face every day to “take up the full armor of God, so that [we] will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm” (Ephesians 6:13).

Let’s consider one area of life all of us know very well— temptation and sin. This is one area where many Christians feel they are between a rock and a hard place, that there really is no way out. Turn to 1 Corinthians 10. [That’s page 135 in the New Testament section of the pew Bibles]. Paul writes,

“For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play.’ Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed

by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.” (1-13)

Paul starts with the illustration of Israel: the entire nation experienced God’s deliverance of walking through the Red Sea on dry ground. All of them received the same instruction, provision and guidance from God. But “with most of them God was not well-pleased.” As we will see later in Exodus, only two who were adults when the two million or so left Egypt lived to set foot in the promised land. *This is the illustration.*

Then he gets to the point in verses 6-11: Don’t be like that! Don’t play around with, don’t tolerate sin in your life!

“Yes,” we say, “but how? We have tried and tried!” Go to verse 13 again.

“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

We all face the same kind of temptations. We all have the same resource in God who in His faithfulness will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able. *Make sure you get this!*

God will never allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to go through, to endure with Him without sin.

How does that work? Paul tells us that with every temptation God provides *the* way of escape. The first thing to note that it is God’s way, not mine. Mine might be trying harder and harder, or asking God to remove it, or to let me go around it. Paul makes it clear that God’s way when it comes to temptations is for me to go *through* it, to walk through the Red Sea, not over, under or around it. God’s way is for me to *endure it*, relying on Him, suited up in my full spiritual armor, standing firm.

God will make a way—*His way*. As we take His way not only will we go through it without sin, but it also will develop our character and develop us as victors not victims. As Paul wrote in Romans 5, “...tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint” (3-5).

How should we respond when, by God’s grace and strength we follow the way God has made for us and find His deliverance in His time? Israel’s song of praise for their deliverance is a good example. “I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted” (15:1). The people

preserved this song and have sung it down through the generations. It is another reminder of how good it is to keep on praising God for His provisions in the past, for all the ways He has made for us, for all He has done for us.

Psalm 33 opens, “Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; praise is becoming to the upright” (1). Yes, praise is, always is becoming to God’s people, especially when we have found and followed the way of deliverance God has made for us.

Conclusion.

As you go to God now, thank Him that He has, and always will make a way, His perfect way for you in all, in each of your impossible situations. Ask God to forgive you for the times when you have not sought, waited for and followed His way. Tell God you know that all of His ways for you are according to His purposes, according to His path, in His time, leading to His destination, and for His glory. Affirm or reaffirm the truth that “[God’s] grace is sufficient for you, for [His] power is perfected in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Commit yourself to seek, to wait for, and then to walk in God’s ways for you.

Let’s go to Him now.

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² Paschal, Janet. *God Will Make A Way*. © 1997 Maplesong Music (Admin. by Gaither Copyright Management).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

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