

OUT OF BONDAGE INTO ABUNDANCE

Part 3: Crossing the Red Sea

(No. 1083 – 1/28/15 - - NLC)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. As introduced at the very beginning of this study, there were three important steps or aspects to Israel's deliverance from Egypt that correspond to **three distinct New Testament experiences** in Christ (John 3:3-5):
 - 1. Celebration of the Passover (Ex. 12) = salvation (*born again*)
 - 2. Crossing the Red Sea (Ex. 14) = water baptism (*born of water*)
 - 3. Coming to Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19) = baptism in the Holy Spirit (*born of the Spirit*)
- B. In Part 2, we saw that through the blood of the Passover lamb, God broke Pharaoh's yoke of slavery that had kept the children of Israel in bondage for 400 years.
- C. After Israel left Egypt, they came to the shore of the Red Sea, where they needed a **second** experience of salvation; although Israel had been saved from God's judgment and delivered from Pharaoh's bondage, they were still not completely free.
- D. The chief of Egypt's strength had been smitten, but Pharaoh and his armies were pursuing the Israelites to drag them back into slavery and servitude; Israel's journey had quickly come to a halt, and they were incapable of going any further.
- E. Once again, God's people needed to "*see the salvation of the Lord*" in the waters of the Red Sea – an experience which Paul later referred to as "baptism," corresponding to the New Testament believer's experience of **Water Baptism**:

1 Cor. 10:1-4: ¹*For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ²**They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.** ³*They all ate the same spiritual food* ⁴*and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ..**

II. PHARAOH'S PURSUIT OF ISRAEL & OUR "OLD SELF"

- A. **Ex. 13:17-22:** ¹⁷When Pharaoh let the people go, **God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter.** For God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." ¹⁸**So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea.** The Israelites went up out of Egypt armed for battle. ¹⁹Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the sons of Israel swear an oath. He had said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place." ²⁰After leaving Succoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. ²¹By 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. ²²Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.
- B. **Ex. 14:1-12:** ¹Then the LORD said to Moses, ²"Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. They are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon. ³Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.' ⁴**And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for Myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.**" So the Israelites did this. ⁵When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them and said, "What have we done? We have let the Israelites go and have lost their services!" ⁶So he had his chariot made ready and took his army with him. ⁷He took six hundred of the best chariots, along with all the other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them. ⁸The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly. ⁹**The Egyptians—all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, horsemen and troops—pursued the Israelites and overtook them** as they camped by the sea near Pi Hahiroth, opposite Baal Zephon. ¹⁰As Pharaoh approached, the **Israelites** looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. **They were terrified** and cried out to the LORD. ¹¹They 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? ¹²Didn'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!**"

1. God deliberately engineered the whole situation, leading Israel in such a way that they were trapped at the Red Sea and hardening Pharaoh's heart so that he would come after them!
 2. **Rom. 9:17-18:** ¹⁷For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, **that I might display My power in you and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth.**" ¹⁸Therefore God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, and He hardens whom He wants to harden.
 3. The children of Israel were terrified and wanted to go back to Egypt to be in slavery again!
 4. God's people had been brought out of Egypt, but now Egypt was coming after them!
- C. In a similar way, the believer who has been saved by faith in the blood of Christ soon faces another challenge: his "old self" is still very much alive and rises up to drag him back into his old life of sin, making it impossible for him to go forward in his new Christian life; just as Pharaoh and his armies had to be buried in the waters of the Red Sea, so God designed water baptism to be a burial of the old self (Rom. 6) and an integral part of the believer's salvation (more about this later...)

III. STAND STILL AND SEE THE SALVATION OF THE LORD

- A. **Ex. 14:13-31:** ¹³Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. **Stand firm and you will see the deliverance** ["salvation" – KJV & NAS] **the LORD will bring you today.** The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. ¹⁴**The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.**" ¹⁵Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the Israelites to move on. ¹⁶Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. ¹⁸The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen." ¹⁹Then the

angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them,²⁰ coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night **the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side**; so neither went near the other all night long.²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night **the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind** and turned it into dry land. **The waters were divided,**²² and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.²⁴ During the last watch of the night **the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion.**²⁵ **He made the wheels of their chariots come off** so that they had difficulty driving. And **the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."**²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen."²⁷ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. **The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the LORD swept them into the sea.**²⁸ The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.²⁹ But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.³⁰ That day **the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians,** and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore.³¹ And when the **Israelites saw the great power the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in Him** and in Moses His servant.

B. Israel simply had to stand still in faith and observe God's great power at work – **God fought for them** and their victory was entirely wrought by the hand of God:

1. It was *God* who divided the waters
2. It was *God* who confused the Egyptians with darkness while He gave light to the Israelites
3. It was *God* who fought against the Egyptian army, taking the wheels off of their chariots and slowing them down

4. It was *God* who caused the waters to flow back and drown all of the Egyptians in the Red Sea
 5. Most importantly, it was *God* who “saved Israel that day from the hands of the Egyptians”
- C. Just as Pharaoh and his armies had to be buried in the waters of the Red Sea, so God designed water baptism to be a burial of the old self and an integral part of the believer’s salvation
1. **Mark 16:16:** *Whoever believes **and is baptized will be saved**, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*
 2. **1 Pet. 3:20-21:** ²⁰*Who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were **saved through water**, ²¹**and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also**—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*
 3. **Acts 2:37-41:** ³⁷*When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, **what shall we do?**” ³⁸Peter replied, “**Repent and be baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” ⁴⁰With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “**Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.**” ⁴¹**Those who accepted his message were baptized**, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*
 4. **Tit. 3:4-5 (NKJV):** ⁴*But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy **He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.***
 5. **Rom. 6:1-7:** ¹*What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ²By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³Or **don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?** ⁴We were therefore **BURIED with Him through baptism** into death in order*

that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection. ⁶For we know that **our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with**, that we should **NO LONGER BE SLAVES TO SIN**—⁷because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

6. In baptism, the believer dies to the world and the world is crucified to the believer (**Gal. 6:14**): *May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*
- D. Just as Israel saw the mighty power of God at the Red Sea, feared Him and put their trust in Him, so in the waters of baptism, the believer experiences the “**operation of God**” burying his old man of sin and resurrecting him by the power of God to live and walk in a new life of freedom and victory!
 1. **Col. 2:12 (KJV)**: *Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are **risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God**, who hath raised Him from the dead.*
 2. **Col. 2:12 (AMP)**: *[Thus you were circumcised when] you were buried with Him in [your] baptism, in which you were also raised with Him [to a new life] **through [your] faith in the working of God** [as displayed] when He raised Him up from the dead.*
 3. NOTE: This clearly shows that water baptism in **NOT** a mere ceremony, public testimony or “work” that one performs in order to merit salvation; salvation is a free gift of God’s grace, and baptism is an important part of God’s gracious provision for our complete deliverance from sin

IV. MOVE ON! GO FORWARD!

- A. Immediately after telling the children of Israel to “stand still,” God then ordered them to “move on”
 1. **Ex. 14:15**: ¹⁵*Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the Israelites to **move on** [“go forward” – KJV & NAS]...*
 2. **Ex. 14:29**: ²⁹*But the Israelites **went through the sea** on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.*

B. This demonstrates how baptism is both a **step of faith** and a **step of obedience**:

1. **Heb. 11:28-29:** ²⁸*By faith he kept the **Passover** and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.* ²⁹***By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.***
2. Had the Israelites failed to obey God's order to march forward (either through unbelief or rebellion), God's parting of the Red Sea would have been completely in vain – the Egyptians would have carried them right back into bondage again!
3. When Paul wrote to the Romans about baptism (ch.6), he commended them for their obedience to the teaching on baptism (**Rom 6:17**): *But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, **you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted.***
4. **Luke 7:29-30:** ²⁹*(**All the people**, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, **acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John.*** ³⁰***But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)***
5. **Acts 2:37-41:** ³⁷*When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, **what shall we do?**"* ³⁸*Peter replied, "**Repent and be baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins..."* ⁴¹***Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.***

C. The Red Sea marked the commencement of a new walk of faith and victory for the children of Israel

1. Israel received the revelation that "*the Lord is a warrior*" and that the Egyptians were not only *their* enemies – they were God's hated enemies as well! The Israelites found great courage and security knowing "*the Lord will fight for you.*"
2. **Ex. 15:1-12:** ¹*Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: "I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted. The horse and its rider He has hurled into*

the sea. ²The LORD is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise Him, my father's God, and I will exalt Him. ³**The LORD is a warrior**; the LORD is His name. ⁴Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has hurled into the sea. The best of Pharaoh's officers are drowned in the Red Sea. ⁵The deep waters have covered them; they sank to the depths like a stone. ⁶**Your right hand, O LORD, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy.** ⁷In the greatness of Your majesty **You threw down those who opposed You. You unleashed Your burning anger**; it consumed them like stubble. ⁸By the blast of Your nostrils the waters piled up. The surging waters stood firm like a wall; the deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea. ⁹The enemy boasted, 'I will pursue, I will overtake them. I will divide the spoils; I will gorge myself on them. I will draw my sword and my hand will destroy them.' ¹⁰But You blew with Your breath, and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters. ¹¹Who among the gods is like You, O LORD? Who is like You— majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? ¹²You stretched out Your right hand and the earth swallowed them."

3. From the night the children of Israel left Egypt onward, they walked no longer as slaves, but rather as "armies" ready for warfare (**Ex. 12:51 NKJV**): *And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to **their armies**.*
4. Likewise, at baptism, the Christian begins to "live a new life," yielding his members to God as "instruments" [Gk. *hoplon* = lit. "offensive weapons of war"] of righteousness, realizing he is in a great battle against sin and the powers of darkness (**Rom. 6:4, 13**): *⁴We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may **live a new life**...* ¹³*Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as **instruments** of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to Him as **instruments** of righteousness.*

5. After miraculously crossing the Red Sea, “Israel **saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore**” (Ex. 14:30) – they were assured that Egypt would never again enslave them
6. Similarly, looking back to his experience in water baptism, the believer can also “see” his old sinful self dead and buried with Christ, daily reckoning and considering himself to be dead to sin and alive to God, assured that sin and death will have no more dominion over him (**Rom. 6:11, 14**): *In the same way, **count** [“consider” – NAS; “reckon” – KJV] **yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus...*** ¹⁴*For sin shall not be your master.*
7. When the Israelites saw God’s mighty power and the great victory which He had wrought upon their enemies, they “**put their trust** [“believed” – KJV] **in Him**” (Ex. 14:31)
8. They received a new faith and confidence that the same God who had fought for them in the Red Sea would also be with them to fight *all* their battles right through to the end, safely leading them into their promised inheritance
 - a) Right there at the shore of the Red Sea, they were already declaring victory and singing the songs of Canaan! (**Ex. 15:13-18**): ¹³*In Your unfailing love **You will lead the people** You have redeemed. In Your strength **You will guide them to Your holy dwelling.*** ¹⁴***The nations will hear and tremble; anguish will grip the people of Philistia.*** ¹⁵*The chiefs of Edom will be terrified, the leaders of Moab will be seized with trembling, **the people of Canaan will melt away;*** ¹⁶***terror and dread will fall upon them. By the power of Your arm they will be as still as a stone— until Your people pass by, O LORD, until the people You bought pass by.*** ¹⁷***YOU WILL BRING THEM IN AND PLANT THEM ON THE MOUNTAIN OF YOUR INHERITANCE—*** *the place, O LORD, You made for Your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, Your hands established.* ¹⁸*The LORD will reign for ever and ever.*
 - b) God had triumphed with such a glorious victory at the Red Sea that the news spread far and wide, causing all of Israel’s enemies to quake and tremble; 40 years later, when they were about to cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land, Rahab the harlot reported this to the

Hebrew spies (**Josh. 2:9-11**): ⁹[Rahab] said to them, “**I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.**” ¹⁰**We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.** ¹¹**When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.**”

9. In the same way, the baptized believer begins to walk in a new faith and victory that even makes the demons tremble (James 2:19)! He is assured that God is for him, always causing him to triumph and making him more than a conqueror through Christ (2 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:31, 37).

V. READY TO PREPARE A HABITATION FOR GOD

- A. After passing through the Red Sea, Moses and the Israelites declared in their song, “*The LORD is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will **prepare Him an habitation**; my father's God, and I will exalt Him*” (Ex. 15:2 KJV).
 1. NOTE: The word translated “habitation” is the Greek *navah* = “keep at home, prepare an habitation or dwelling place;” unfortunately, it is translated “praise Him” in later translations, which seems to miss the original meaning.
 2. Having been “baptized” in the Red Sea, God’s people announced prophetically their readiness for the next great step in God’s redemptive program – to prepare a dwelling place for their God. They would soon come to Mt. Sinai, where God would reveal in great detail His plan for them to make Him a sanctuary – the Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting.
 3. This shows (in a figure) one of the important purposes of water baptism: to prepare the believer to receive the Holy Spirit by which he becomes “God’s temple” (1 Cor. 3:16), the “habitation” or “dwelling of God” (Eph. 2:22).
- B. In our next study (Part 4), we will examine the third great step in Israel’s journey out of Egypt into the Promised Land – Coming to Mt. Sinai.