



VICTORY

God will ultimately be victorious over His enemies and the enemies of His people.

EXODUS 14:13-28

Many Christians do not like to admit doubt. We see doubt as antithetical to the victorious Christian life. But let's face it—there are times of doubt in the Christian life. This is particularly true when we face seemingly insurmountable odds. Yet God has revealed His faithfulness throughout history and in our lives. His faithfulness should encourage us when we face uncertainty. Thankfully, salvation comes from the object of our faith and not the strength of our faith!

How does overcoming a difficulty or challenge help us face other difficulties or challenges? How does God use difficulties to build our faith in Him?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

EXODUS 13:17–15:21

Throughout the Bible we are reminded that God will ultimately be victorious over His enemies and the enemies of His people. This is why we are called to “fear not” and “stand firm.” Our salvation, just like the salvation of Israel, is completely dependent on God’s work on our behalf. The narrative recalled in this session’s Scripture passage would prove significant in the memory of the Israelites as they looked back on God’s mighty acts of salvation (Pss. 77:19-20; 78:13; 136:13-16). The same is true for us today. We must remember that, through Jesus, God has overcome our greatest enemies—sin, Satan, and death. The act of remembrance is key to our moving forward in faith despite our circumstances.

As the Israelites left Egypt, God led them along a southeasterly route through the Sinai Peninsula rather than the seacoast route that would force them to confront the Philistines. They carried with them the bones of Joseph as he had asked (see Gen. 50:25). God manifested His guiding presence by a pillar of smoke during the day and a pillar of fire by night. The Lord also hardened Pharaoh’s heart so that he and his army would pursue the Israelites. God planned to utterly defeat Pharaoh and his army (Ex. 13:17–14:4).

Pharaoh gathered his troops and caught up with the Israelites as they camped beside the Red Sea. The Israelites cried out for help, complaining that they would have been better off remaining as slaves in Egypt. Moses encouraged the people to trust God. God’s angel and the pillar of cloud moved between the Egyptians and the Israelites, thus preventing the Egyptians from attacking. Moses stretched his hand over the sea, God divided the waters, and the Israelites crossed on dry ground. When the Egyptians pursued the Israelites into the dry seabed, God brought the waters back together, drowning Pharaoh’s army (14:5-31).

In response to God’s deliverance, Moses and the people sang praises to their incomparable, powerful God. They proclaimed that when other nations heard of His deeds, they would tremble before God and His people. The Israelites’ song of praise ended with an affirmation that God would surely bring them into Canaan. Miriam and the women then offered another brief song, thereby exalting and praising God (15:1-21).

Read Exodus 13:17–15:21 in your Bible. Identify each scene as this story unfolds, looking for how God was involved in each scene. What attributes of God are seen in this story?

Note the number of times God reminded Israel that the battle and the victory was His alone. Why was this important in bolstering their faith?

BIBLE SKILL: *Dig deeper into key concepts.*

God used “signs” and “wonders” for a variety of reasons. Use a Bible concordance or an online Bible to identify passages that contain both words. Review a sample of these passages, looking at passages from different Bible books. Take note of the purpose the signs and wonders served in these passages. Write a summary statement about what you discover.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

THE SETTING (EX. 14:13-18)

¹³ And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. ¹⁴ The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. ¹⁵ And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: ¹⁶ But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand



over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. ¹⁷ And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. ¹⁸ And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

VERSES 13-15

God's words to Israel, ***fear ye not***, were issued to bolster their confidence. ***Fear ye not*** typically was spoken by angels when appearing to humans (see Gen. 15:1; 26:24) and by God to those facing overwhelming odds (see Num. 14:9; Josh. 10:8). Moses' words assured the people they had no reason to fear. The people saw only Pharaoh's army, but God, whom they could not see, was with them and would save them.

Rather than fear, the Israelites were to ***stand still, and see***. They did not need to try to swim across the sea or prepare to fight or give up. They only needed to watch. Thus far they had seen only the Egyptian army and their predicament. Moses encouraged them to open their eyes in faith and to see God at work. The phrase ***the salvation of the LORD*** describes the deliverance only God can provide. God would do what Israel could not do.

VERSES 16-18

God told Moses to lift his staff and stretch it out over the sea, and He would divide it so that the Israelites could ***go on dry ground through the midst of the sea***. There would be no question as to who was working to bring about Israel's salvation, for God would receive the glory. Not only would God bring salvation to His people, He would also bring down the waters of judgment on His enemies. While Egypt was strong in chariots and horsemen, the God of creation commands every molecule of the sea. God chose to use weapons that no one on earth had command over and to which no one on earth had a defense. This attack on Egypt would remove all doubt that God alone was the victor. God's victory over Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea would be known throughout the land and in the surrounding nations (9:16; 15:14-16).

As Israel faced certain destruction, God delivered them by the power of His hand. We are reminded in Isaiah 54:17 that no weapon formed against God's people will succeed. Even in the spiritual realm, our battle is "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). Our God is sovereign over all.

How were the directions given by God a call to trust Him? Do God's provisions always require faith? Explain.

KEY DOCTRINE: *God*

God is all powerful.

ACT 1: THE SEPARATION (EX. 14:19-20)

¹⁹ And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: ²⁰ And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

VERSES 19-20

The angel of God stood between the Israelites and the Egyptians, keeping both groups separated through the night. We must remember that when the angel of the Lord appears in the Old Testament, he is depicted as acting and speaking for God Himself (see Gen. 22:11-18). In fact, the angel of the Lord is identified as God in Exodus 3:2-4. The angel of the Lord appeared in a flame of fire (Ex. 3:2), in the pillar of fire and cloud (13:21-22), on Mount Sinai (19:18), and in the tabernacle (40:38). In all instances, the angel of the Lord signified God's presence and protection. Here, the angel of the Lord protected



Israel in their exodus from Egypt and would go before them into the promised land (14:19; 23:20; 33:2). God's presence with Israel points forward to His presence in Christ, who is our protection and refuge against all the attacks of the enemy.

This passage reminds us that we can find hope in the presence of God. No matter what we face in this life, we can hold fast to the words of God: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). Our God is faithful to His promise to be with us, even to the end of the age (Matt. 28:20). Therefore, we can face the uncertainties of this life with confidence in God's presence and comfort in His promise.

How does the promise of God's presence give hope? How does the promise of His presence impact a person's faith?

ACT 2: THE CROSSING (EX. 14:21-22)

²¹ And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. ²² And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

VERSES 21-22

Moses and the people did exactly as God had directed them. When Moses ***stretched out his hand over the sea***, God ***caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind***, revealing the dry land that would lead to their salvation. While it is simply referred to as *the sea*, we know from Exodus 13:18 and 15:4 that the body of water Israel was about to cross was the Red Sea. Moses and the Israelites demonstrated faith by following God's directions; believers today likewise demonstrate their faith in God when they obey His Word.

The waters formed ***a wall*** of protection. This intense display of God's power over the waters was a powerful sign of His protection over His people and His judgment over His enemies (Ex. 14:28-31). This was clearly a supernatural event. Israel did not achieve any of

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this; it was all the work of God. In a similar way, God would show His power when Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan into the promised land in Joshua 3:14-17.

What is the relationship between faith and obedience? Can you have one without the other? Explain.

ACT 3: THE VICTORY (EX. 14:23-28)

²³ And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

²⁴ And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, ²⁵ And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. ²⁶ And the LORD said unto Moses,

Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.

²⁷ And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. ²⁸ And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

VERSES 23-25

When the Egyptian chariots pursued the Israelites into the dry seabed, God caused them to swerve and stall. Simply put, the powerful forces of Egypt's warfare were crippled by God. Even the Egyptians themselves realized that their confusion and difficulty driving their chariots was no coincidence; this was all happening because Israel's God was fighting for His people. They were able to understand that the supernatural protection of God guarded the Israelites against them.



VERSES 26-28

At the command of God, Moses extended his staff again, and the sea completely engulfed the Egyptian army in judgment. It is important to note God's justice here. The Egyptians had repeatedly rejected God and His warnings. Pharaoh repeatedly went back on his promise to release Israel. God gave several warnings but kept His word.

In response to God's faithfulness and protection, Moses sang a song of praise in Exodus 15:1: "I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." There is a sense of relief and joy in Moses' song. Moreover, this song is a reminder that God is true to His Word and will deliver His people from their enemies.

The cross and the empty tomb serve as eternal reminders that the victory of God is our victory.

When we see the salvation that has been achieved by our God, it should cause us to confess that He alone is worthy of worship and praise. While Pharaoh's army was powerful and frightening, it was crushed by the power of God. While our greatest enemies—sin, Satan, and death—are frightening, Christ crushed them on the cross. He is our victory. Paul exhorted the church, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31). The apostle said in Galatians 6:14, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Just as the Israelites looked back on their salvation through the Red Sea, we also look back to the cross of Christ. The cross and the empty tomb serve as eternal reminders that the victory of God is our victory.

How did the events experienced at the Red Sea impact the Israelites' understanding of God? How can witnessing a display of God's power cause us to gain a deeper understanding of God?

IN MY CONTEXT

- God delivers His people, providing a way of escape.
- Believers can find hope in the mighty power of God.
- Believers demonstrate faith in God by obediently following His directions.
- God is worthy of worship and praise as the victorious God.

Identify a situation in which you currently feel defeated. What steps should you take in light of today's study? What might victory look like in that situation?

As a group, celebrate victories given by God to group members. Be sure to include salvation in that celebration. How can awareness of the victories God is granting encourage group members in their spiritual walks?

Reflect on Exodus 15:2. Spend some time praising God for His defeat of our greatest enemies—sin, Satan, and death. Memorize this verse this week.

Prayer Needs

