

## **Review of Lessons 10 – 22 Exodus 14:15 to Joshua 3**

We began the year with Lessons 10 through 12, when God parted the Red Sea and made a way for the Israelites to escape the Egyptians who were pursuing them. The people, in a state of panic because they were hemmed in on all sides with that great sea before them, were able to walk on dry land through the sea that God parted for them. They understood what Moses meant when he said, *“Stand still. and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today.”* (Exodus 14:13) Not only did God make a way for them, but He also conquered their enemies who had enslaved them. He had promised, *“For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.”* (Exodus 14:13)

In Lesson 13, we had an opportunity to reflect on what the Lord had done for Israel and the faith it should build in our lives to know that God is always faithful to those who are called His and that He keeps His promises. We read the words of Psalm 106:8-10:

*“Nevertheless He saved them for His name’s sake, that He might make His mighty power known. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up; so He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. He saved them from the hand of him who hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.”*

All this God did because He loves His people, just as He loves us today. God wanted the Israelites to take a step of faith when they began their walk through the dry land of the Red Sea. In the same way, God calls us to take that same step of faith when we face challenges and trials. We must learn to be obedient, listen for His counsel, and trust that He will make a way for us, too.

At this point in time, the Israelites were in awe of God’s power; their belief in Him grew stronger and they were also filled with fear of Him. Their confidence in Moses grew and they understood that he was indeed called by God to deliver them. Unfortunately, their feeling of awe and gratitude and respect for the Lord would soon grow weak, as they continued to blame Moses for the hardships they experienced as they wandered through the desert. They were quick to forget all the mighty works the Lord had done for them and the promises He had given them through Moses. This serves as a reminder to us to heed the words of 1 Peter 1:6-7 when we face the difficulties of this life:

*“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*

God wants us to depend on Him when we face the *“various trials”* that the scripture talks about here. When we stand on the promises of God and trust Him, our character grows, and so does our faith, and that faith is more precious to Him than gold!

Lesson 14 began with a song of high praise to the Lord in Chapter 15 of Exodus. The Israelites were filled with joy and gratitude at what the Lord had done, and they could not contain their praise. And rightfully so, because He is worthy of all our praises. They sang about His victory, His strength, His power, and they pretty much recounted the whole story of their deliverance. Part of the song they sang said, *“Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?”* Sadly, their enthusiasm for what the Lord had done did not last when, after three days in the wilderness without finding water, sparked complaints against Moses in Lesson 15. When they finally did find water at a place called

Marah, it was bitter and not good for drinking. God, in His infinite mercy, once again comes to their aid and shows Moses what to do in order to make the water sweet and drinkable. (Exodus 15:22-27) If this was a test to see if they were becoming the people of faith God wanted them to be, they did not score well. As he would do many times, Moses interceded for the people, and God was moved with compassion. He continues to demonstrate that compassion in Lesson 16 when, once again, the people cry out to Moses because they have no meat or bread. God rains manna from heaven for them in the morning (manna that could be made into bread), and sends quail in the evening to satisfy their need for meat. (Exodus 16:11-30) The Lord told Moses that He was going to test the people to see if they would obey His instructions regarding the manna and meat He was supplying for them. He had instructed them to gather only enough manna and meat for that day. This was His way of teaching them to trust that He would make daily provision for them. Did they obey and follow the steps that Moses had given them from the Lord? No, they did not. They had not yet grown enough in their faith. They were quick to learn, however, that God's word was law. Anything extra they collected out of fear that there would be none the next day, was full of worms and stank by the next morning. Though Moses was angry with them, God was merciful with His people. He continued to make provision for them, in spite of their doubt. He does the same for us today, so we must always strive to be people of faith.

In Lesson 17, we moved from God supplying water, bread and meat for the Israelites to His defeat over their attackers; Amalek and the Amalekites. We see a picture of God as the good shepherd tending to his flock in the wilderness, leading them to water and preparing a table for them, even in the presence of their enemies, just as it says in Psalm 23. God had to protect them from their enemies because, just like sheep, they were vulnerable and needed a shepherd. When Amalek attacked them, we saw the miracle that God did, again, through His servant Moses. Whenever Moses' arms were raised, Israel was victorious; when he became tired and lowered them, the Amalekites got the better of them. Aaron and Hur held up the arms of Moses, with one on each side of him and, in this way, Joshua and the Israelites were able to defeat Amalek. (Exodus 17:8-16)

In Lesson 18, we have the arrival of Moses and the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, where God prepares to enter into covenant with the people of Israel. He tells Moses to tell the people that after having saved them from the Egyptians, He desires obedience from them, and that they are to be a special treasure to Him. He uses the phrase that He had borne them on eagles' wings and brought them to Himself. (Exodus 19:4) This phrase paints another beautiful picture of the Lord and His love for His people. When eaglets are learning how to fly, the mother will actually shake the nest and cause them to tumble out. At first, as they learn how to flap their wings, they begin to tumble down toward the rocks. Right before they're about to hit the rocky ground, the mother swoops up under them and bears them on her wings, bringing them back to the nest. She continues to do this until the eaglets master the art of flying. God, in the same way, had borne Israel on His wings and brought them back to Himself. All the dangers they encountered, the trials, the hardships, God had always been there to swoop them up and bring them back to Himself. What a wonderful lesson for us – to know that whatever we have to face in this world, whatever crisis or tragedy befalls us, God will always be there to bear us up on His wings. He'll always be our anchor in the storm, our guiding light, our sovereign defender and protector.

*“He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand but it shall not come near you.” Psalm 91:4-7*

In the next two lessons, we are introduced to the righteousness of God through the giving of the Ten Commandments in Lesson 19, where God speaks to Moses through thundering and lightning. The people hear the trumpet blaring and see the mountain smoking, and they become so fearful that they ask Moses to speak to God for them, and that they will obey, but they are too afraid to hear from Him directly. We can thank God that we are able to seek that intimate time of prayer with Him without having to be fearful, but with the reverence and confidence of knowing that He is a loving God, worthy of all praise, and always ready to listen to our prayers, our praise and our petitions.

Lessons 20 and 21 taught us about the holy character of God; how He is a God of order and how He gave very specific instructions about how the people were to minister to Him, from the garments to be worn by the priests of the temple, to the tabernacle that was to be built, as well as the feasts that were to be observed, everything laid out in great detail, everything establishing Him as majestic, sovereign and, most of all, holy.

Last week's study on "Entering the Land" (Lesson 22) brought us full circle. The people of God had finally arrived at the land which the Lord had promised them ... a land flowing with milk and honey. Our study began in the third chapter of the book of Joshua, but we know from Joshua 1:1-2, that Moses had died, and God had spoken to Joshua, the son of Nun, directing him to lead the people into the land. When it came time for them to cross over the Jordan, God performs a miracle, reminiscent of the parting of the Red Sea when the Israelites left Egypt. Of course, by this time, the generation of people who had witnessed that great event were gone, and this new generation would experience, first hand, the mighty power of God as He held back the waters of the Jordan for them to cross over.

The book of Exodus is a love story, and a story of redemption. God loved His people so much that He redeemed them and brought them back to Himself. He entered into a covenant with them; a covenant that would teach them all about Who He was and how much He loved them; a covenant that would establish them as His chosen people forever. But it is our story, too. Just as the Israelites had to endure the dangers and hardships of the wilderness, so were we once ... lost in the wilderness and darkness of sin before God saved us. And just as He sent Moses to be the deliverer for the Israelites, something happened in our lives, too, maybe through someone's testimony, or a teaching we heard, or a friend that came to share the good news with us ... whatever means it was that God used, we were able to come to the saving knowledge of our own redemption through what our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did for us. And just as God had faithfully provided for His people and protected them, so He is with us today. And just as He desired that trust and faith in Him from His people, so He still does today. As believers, we can forever be grateful for our perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, Who took away our sins so that we might be holy and acceptable in the eyes of Almighty God.

*"You are ... Way Maker, Miracle Worker, Promise Keeper, Light in the Darkness,  
My God, that is Who You are ..."*



Heavenly Father and Almighty God, Your word says in Chapter 3 of Malachi that You are the Lord, and You do not change. I know that You are the same yesterday, today and forever. All the wonderful things You've done for Your people, You continue to do today. So I come before You this morning in faith, and with an attitude of humbleness and gratitude for all that You've already done for me by sending my Savior Jesus to die for me. I ask for Your continued guidance and protection over my life and for the strength and wisdom through the power of Your Holy Spirit to meet any difficulty I may encounter in this world. Help me to trust You and know the plan You have for me. Right now, in faith, I present this petition to You ...

Thank you, Lord, for Your love, Your mercy and Your compassion, and for accomplishing Your will in my life today. I love you and I praise you, in Jesus' name.