

Title: **EXPERIENCING THE POWER OF GOD**

Text: Exodus 14:1-31

Subject: *Israel Crossing the Red Sea*

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Tape: Exodus #65

Readings: *Lindsay Campbell and Rex Bartley*

Introduction:

Multitudes there are who are described by our Savior as spiritually ignorant people, who always err, “*not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God*” (Matthew 22:29). They cannot understand the teachings of this Book because they have never experienced them. They may be religious, outwardly very moral and righteous, and even orthodox in their doctrine, but the Holy Spirit declares, “*They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways*” (Hebrews 3:10). Why? Because they are utterly ignorant of the power of God. They have never felt, they have never experienced the power of God.

- They may sing, “There is power, power, wonder working power, in the blood of the Lamb,” but they have never felt the power of the blood in their souls.
- They may talk much about the power of God’s irresistible, saving grace, but they have never experienced that power for themselves.

Therefore they “*do always err in their heart.*” To them redemption is only a doctrine. Regeneration is nothing but a principle. Righteousness is nothing but a legal standing. The new creation is a confusing puzzle. They have theories about these things, theories that must be adjusted, clarified and changed year after year; but they know nothing by experience. They know nothing about “*the power of God*” by which sinners are saved.

Turn with me tonight to Exodus 14. I want to talk to you about **EXPERIENCING THE POWER OF GOD**. In this chapter the Holy Spirit gives us the history of children of Israel coming out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea, experiencing the mighty power of God. And that which they experienced is held before us throughout the Scriptures as a type and illustration of every saved sinner’s experience of grace. Here are seven things experienced by every sinner God saves by his marvelous grace.

¹ Fairmont Grace Church, Sylacauga, AL (FRI 02/15/08)

1. **UTTER HELPLESSNESS**

The first work of God the Holy Spirit upon the soul in the experience of grace is a painful, withering work. He brings the sinner to whom he is gracious into a state of utter helplessness, causing him or her to be entangled in hopelessness (vv. 1-9).

(Exodus 14:1-2) “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (2) Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea.”

Israel was brought out of Egypt in a manner altogether contrary to that which any earthly wisdom would have chosen. The Lord God took them in a path that led them directly toward the Red Sea, where they were easily trapped by Pharaoh and the Egyptians. But God’s way was “*the right way*” (Psalm 107:7). He brought them forth through “*Pihahiroth*,” which means “a hole,” and marched them directly in front of “*Baalzephon*,” one of the gods of the Egyptians, the very god who was worshipped as the god who would prevent the escape of their servants!

What a delightful picture! God causes his elect to pass through the dark hole of despair, with Satan (Pharaoh) seeking their destruction, and brings them through that dark hole in mockery of “*the god of this world*” who would hold us captive still!

Notice that it was **by the hand of Moses** that Israel was brought into this dark hole and ensnared. There must be a work of death wrought in us by the law. We cannot be raised to life by God’s grace until we have been slain by his holy law (Romans 7:9).

(Romans 7:9) “For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”

The Lord God brought Israel in the path he did, that he might make a display of his sovereignty in the destruction of Pharaoh (Romans 9:15-18; vv. 3-8).

(Romans 9:15-18) “For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. (16) So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. (17) For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. (18) Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.”

(Exodus 14:3-8) “For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They *are* entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. (4) And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD. And they did so. (5) And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? (6) And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: (7) And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. (8) And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.”

All things, even Pharaoh and the Egyptians, even Satan and the reprobate shall glorify our God (Revelation 4:11; Proverbs 16:4). **Now, read verse 9...**

(Exodus 14:9) “But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon.”

Israel was shut up between the mountains behind them and the raging sea before them, with death pursuing them. That is exactly what God does with the sinner he pursues. He shuts the guilty sinner up between the impassable mountains of offended justice and his broken law and the sinking swamps of utter inability. Satan roars, and the guilty conscience screams in

agreement, “*God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him*” (Psalms 71:11).

2. **SHUT UP TO CHRIST**

What is the purpose of this? Why does God deal so with those who are the objects of his grace? Read verse 10, and you will see that God’s purpose is to shut us up to Christ.

(Exodus 14:10) “And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.”

Their situation, to all human appearance, was utterly hopeless. Before them was the Red Sea. Behind them Pharaoh and his armies were rushing to destroy them. They were surrounded by mountains. They were shut up to God, shut up to Christ, shut up to faith. That is what God does in Holy Spirit conviction. He shuts us up to Christ, sweetly forcing the chosen, redeemed sinner to call upon the Lord Jesus for mercy and grace to help in time of need (Galatians 3:23)

(Galatians 3:23) “But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.”

Like the children of Judah before Ammon, sinners cry out for mercy only when they are shut up to faith (2 Chronicles 20:12).

(2 Chronicles 20:12) “O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes *are* upon thee.”

All earthly help was cut off. Israel could not make a move. They were shut up in confusion and dark despair (vv. 10-12). Salvation is near when the sinner is shut up to Christ. If the Lord God ever strips you of all hope and shuts you up to faith in Christ, I say to you as our Lord did to the rich young ruler, “*Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*”

3. **GOSPEL COUNSEL**

When the sinner is in such straights, utterly helpless, suspended as it were over the mouth of hell, he cries, “*What must I do?*” That is where these people were. They cried to Moses in confusion and despair, essentially saying in verses 11 and 12, “What are we to do?” Now, hear the good counsel Moses gives, it is gospel counsel, the only counsel God’s prophets can give to the sinner God has shut in by his grace (v. 13).

(Exodus 14:13) “And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.”

God does not arm Israel and tell them to go out and fight against Pharaoh. He did not strengthen their arms to bring salvation to them. He says, “*Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.*” So with us! He says, “*Their strength is to sit still*” (Isaiah 30:7). He who is our mighty Jehovah knows how to deliver his own. **Read on**...

(Exodus 14:14) “The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.”

- Salvation is not something sinners obtain by effort (Romans 9:31-10:4).
- Salvation comes by revelation. — “*Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you to day.*”
- And when you see God’s salvation, you will see the Egyptians (your condemning sins) no more!

4. **THE WAY OPENED**

Next, we see the way opened for God’s chosen by God himself. As we read these next verses, understand their meaning. When the Lord God our Savior saves sinners by the power of his grace, when he sets his captive prisoners free, giving them faith by his Spirit to come to him, he opens the way before them, but the way was opened long before it was opened to me. Christ our Passover opened the way by the blood of his cross, when he sacrificed himself for us. — He opens the way before us in the sweet experience of grace by divine revelation and brings us through the raging Red Sea of

terror into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Now, watch how he does it (vv. 15-21).

- *First, **he commands faith**.* — “Go forward” (v. 15). — “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!”

(Exodus 14:15) “And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:”

(Exodus 14:22) “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.”

- *Second, he **opens the way before us*** by the very rod of Moses, the rod of the law by which the Rock was smitten of God (v. 116, 21).

(Exodus 14:16) “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.”

(Exodus 14:21) “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.”

- *Third, he performs **a work of sovereign, distinguishing grace*** to bring his elect through the sea (v. 19-20).

(Exodus 14:19-20) “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.”

Remember, this pillar of cloud and fire is Christ. He went before Israel to give them light and bring them through the sea; but he went behind them to confuse the Egyptians in darkness, lest they come near his chosen.

(1 Corinthians 4:7) “For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?”

- *Fourth, **the children of Israel were baptized*** unto Moses (v22; 1 Corinthians 10:1).

(Exodus 14:22) “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.”

The Holy Spirit tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:1 that this was a typical baptism, because the whole thing is a picture of faith. The children of Israel publicly consecrated themselves to Moses, committing themselves to Christ who led them through the sea. That is what believer’s baptism is. It is our public avowal of consecration to Christ (Romans 6:4-6).

(Romans 6:4-6) “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: (6) Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

5. **EGYPTIANS DESTROYED**

Remember, God said they would see the Egyptians no more; and the next thing we see is the destruction of Pharaoh and all the Egyptians in the sea (vv. 23-30).

- He troubled the Egyptians (v. 24).
- He took the wheels off of their chariots (v. 25).
- He fought against them (v. 25).
- He overthrew them in the midst of the sea (vv. 26-27).
- “*There remained not so much as one of them*” (v. 28). He “*forgiveth all thine iniquities!*” (Romans 8:1).
- He did all this by the same rod of Moses that opened the way before them (v. 26).

- As they passed through the sea in faith, the children of Israel saw God’s salvation (vv. 29-30).

(Exodus 14:29-30) “But the children of Israel walked upon dry *land* in the midst of the sea; and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. (30) Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.”

6. **SALVATION WROUGHT**

Thus God wrought the salvation of Israel; and thus he still performs this grace work of grace, by which he causes chosen sinners to experience the power of God, giving us faith in Christ (vv. 30-31).

(Exodus 14:30-31) “Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. (31) And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.”

- Israel saw the great work the Lord accomplished for them.
- When they saw it, they worshipped they Lord. They feared him, calling upon his name.
- When they experienced the power of God in salvation, they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ who had delivered them.

7. **TRIUMPHANT SONG**

Now, look at the first verse of chapter 15. Here is the result of all this. The sinner saved by the omnipotent power of God’s grace sing God’s praise, triumphing over death, hell and the grave.

(Exodus 15:1) “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

Go home and read the whole song. You will discover that in this song of praise to our great God and Savior the saved people mention God's name (Thy, Thine, and Thy) twenty-four times. All praise goes to our God, because the work is all his (Psalm 115:1; 1 Corinthians 15:57; Revelation 19:1-6).

(Psalms 115:1) "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake."

(1 Corinthians 15:57) "But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

(Revelation 19:1-6) "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: (2) For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. (3) And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. (4) And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. (5) And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. (6) And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

Amen.