

**The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe**  
**Wednesday Morning Women’s Bible Study**  
**Week #10**

**Exodus 14:1-31**

**November 15, 2023**

**Introductory Thoughts**

1. The Passover and the Sea Crossing are the two acts of divine deliverance in the story that is the Exodus
2. Different pieces of historical memory are combined with liturgical expression in an effort to explain a divine act that is in some sense unexplainable on human terms, leaving us with an “impressionistic” picture that cannot be forced into a precise or simple chronological telling (Fretheim)
3. The redemption accomplished here is one of a piece with the creation and creative action of God
4. This single experience, located in a particular place and time, has cosmic and eternal consequence: it is not just a story for the Hebrews/Jews, but a story for all
5. The Red Sea:
  - a. May have actually been a sea of reeds in the delta region of the Nile
  - b. The actual location is not as important as the fact of deliverance by divine or miraculous action

**Exodus 14:1-18**

1. God “strategizes” about the escape of the Hebrews
2. The Hebrew’s seeming aimlessness will entice Pharaoh to go after them
3. God uses Pharaoh’s will against him, in a sense, amplifying it and “hardening” it
4. God’s purpose is so that the Egyptians will finally realize that he is actually God!
5. The Egyptians will be forced to believe and to proclaim the glory of God
6. In this, a deep objective of God is accomplished: God will be revealed to all
7. The entire Egyptian army is committed to the battle
8. The Israelites are caught between Egypt and God
9. The Israelites are afraid, and like many oppressed peoples, they wish to return to simpler, less threatening circumstances, even if it means servitude
10. Within themselves, the Israelites do not have what it takes to achieve their liberation: they are dependent on God
11. Moses, as God’s chosen leader, issues several commands:
  - a. Do not be afraid
  - b. Stand firm
  - c. Keep still
  - d. Be silent
  - e. You will be saved (Hebrew: *yesu ah* – later will be Joshua, or Yeshua, or – eventually – Jesus)
  - f. The Lord will fight for you
12. Moses: Even though God is directly at work here, still he uses human leader to be involved in accomplishing his will
13. Nature: God also uses nature (wind) to accomplish his ends
14. The People: God expects/commands the people to become part of their own salvation – “tell the Israelites to go forward”

**Exodus 14:19-31**

1. Notice all the “dramatic” elements of the story that serve to note actual history as well as to indelibly impress the event into human souls:
  - a. Divine messengers, pillars of cloud and fire, light and darkness, wind, walls of water, dry path through the sea, mighty army, frightened refugees, one man’s hand commanding the sea waters, the mighty army dead on shore
  - b. Again (Fretheim) we have an “impressionistic” picture that conveys truth in a way perhaps deeper than sharp precision might
2. God works through nature: cloud, darkness, wind
3. God works through human agency: Moses & Pharaoh

4. Still, it is God who is working as well
5. There is connection to creation: God moved over face of chaos/waters to form land in Genesis, now God moves through waters to rescue Israelites and eliminate Egyptians (the threat to creation)
6. There is human response required: the Israelites must leave, march, and finally walk the pathway through the waters
  - a. Here is faithful action that receives divine gift
7. Both Egyptians and Israelites are prompted into confession & proclamation of who God is
8. Note the importance of Moses: he is not God, but his faithful leadership of the people as he himself follows God is pivotal to the success of God's plan

### **Questions for Your Life Today**

- A. Think of an instance in your life when you set out to do something but then were tempted to turn back. How does the story of the Red Sea inform your own faithfulness and history?
- B. What has been a "Red Sea" for you? Or a pursuing Egyptian army?
- C. Describe a time when people, places, events, experiences, and God, all "came together" in order to accomplish something in your life.
- D. When have you been helpless to help yourself?
- E. When have you been God's agent of redemption or salvation for someone else?

Notes by The Rev. Dr. Jack Baca, Senior Pastor, The Village Church, Rancho Santa Fe, California

#### Resources:

- a. Interpretation Commentary on Exodus, Terence E. Fretheim, John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 1991
- b. The Communicator's Commentary Series, Old Testament, Exodus, Maxie D. Dunnam, Word, Inc., Waco, TX, 1987
- c. The Old Testament Library: Exodus, Brevard S. Childs, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, PA, 1974