

March 1

Scriptures: Read Exodus 14

Key Verse: “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, (Exodus 14:13)

Overview

After the Israelites had traveled for three days, Pharaoh heard they had fled rather than making a pilgrimage to offer sacrifices. He realized the great loss and the great value of those slaves and wanted them back. Moses, following the instructions of the Lord, had led the people to a seemingly defenseless position, with the sea behind them and the wilderness in front. This enticed Pharaoh to recapture them, but his plan was but a part of God’s larger plan, for He had one final lesson to teach Egypt. God hardens Pharaoh’s heart so that He may bring further judgment upon him and his army, to show them once again, His great power that they might know Him as greater than Pharaoh and any of their gods.

The Lord had a lesson for the Israelites to learn as well. In this event they saw God as the all-powerful Holy judge of the ungodly so they might grow in the fear of Him. They also saw Him as their protector; this gave them the added faith they needed for their journey since they would come against great odds. At this point, however, the people were terrified and as slaves they would have been without weapons, so they complained to Moses. This the psalmist called rebellion against God (Psalm 106:7). Humanly speaking they were faced with certain recapture and possibly many would be killed. They still had to learn to trust in God. Moses spoke boldly to them with great faith in Almighty God that the battle was His. Today, when we come up against the enemy, we can still be sure that our God will fight for us and be victorious!

The Lord put His pillar between the Egyptians and the Israelites. He made darkness for the enemy, but on His children’s side He gave them light to see their way across the sea. The pillar not only gave them supernatural divine protection, but it concealed their movements from the Egyptians. They did not cross a shallow swampy area as some liberal critics propose, but walked across on the dried sea bottom. The parting was not caused by a tide as some say in trying to explain away the supernatural, because there were walls of water on both sides of them. It was truly a miraculous event from God. When Moses held out his rod, God sent the east wind to part the water and dry the sea bed.

Once all the Israelites were across safely, Moses used the same motion and God let the walls of water fall in on the Egyptians. As they saw it was the hand of God and tried to flee, He confused them and sent them into panic. “He took off their chariot wheels”. This might have been because God, who had miraculously kept the sea bottom dry for the Israelites to cross, allowed it to become muddy and soft again, causing the wheels to get stuck and fall off. We read that not one of the Israelites’ enemies were left; this means that Pharaoh as well, their greatest enemy, must have died (14:28; Psalm 106:11). The bodies of many Egyptian soldiers were swept ashore, no doubt supplying Israel with a great quantity of weapons which they would need at a later time.

The Lord’s love, care and guidance of His people is beautifully described in Isaiah 63:12. “Who led them by the right hand of Moses, with His glorious arm, dividing the water before them to make for Himself an everlasting name.” The next two verses continue to express the care and concern of the Lord who led them so they would not even stumble. He gave them peace and rest by His Spirit and in His leading made form Himself a glorious name. Indeed, the news of this miraculous act of God reached and alarmed the surrounding nations who came to fear the God of the Israelites (15:14-16).

Prayer

Great miraculous God, we wait for Your supernatural acts. Only You can do those necessary acts which are humanly impossible.