

OUR STORY: THE EXODUS

Water from Rock, June 13, 2017, Tim Smith

REMEMBERING A NEW FUTURE

1. In this series we are re-reading the Exodus as the symbolic road map for the Christian life. In both the Old and New Testaments the Exodus is re-read as true for every generation as it portrays humanity's problem of bondage and God's will to set us free. The Exodus is the Bible's grand story about the divine-human relationship and how God acts to bring salvation. This is a story about God and us that God wants never to be forgotten.
2. The apostle Paul says that the things that happened to the Israelites in their Exodus journey were written for our "*instruction*"; they are "*types*" of us in our own spiritual journeys (I Corinthians 10:1-11).
3. "The Egypt-history, the wilderness-history, the Jordan-history, never become obsolete. The Books of Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, are almost as valid histories of our individual lives as of the life of the Hebrews at large... It is one of the marvelous characteristics of these old Bible-narratives that they still furnish us better figures and phrases than any new ones we can invent for describing events and transitions in our own experience." (C. H. Parkhurst, *Butler Bible Works*).

REMEMBERING THE EXODUS JOURNEY

Deuteronomy 4:9

"But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children."

"To us Jews, the essence of faith is memory. To believe is to remember. For what is the function of faith? Each of us at least once in life has experienced the momentous reality of God. Each of us has caught a glimpse of the beauty, peace, and power that flows through the souls of those who are devoted to God...Much of what the Bible commands can be comprised in one word: Remember!" (Abraham Heschel, *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity: Essays*)

Deuteronomy 8:1-3

This entire commandment that I command you today you must diligently observe, so that you may live and increase, and go in and occupy the land that the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors. ²Remember the long way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments. ³He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

“If God speaks anywhere, it is into our personal lives that he speaks.” (Frederick Buechner, *The Second Journey*)

“It is a delightful and profitable occupation to mark the hand of God in the lives of ancient saints, and to observe his goodness in delivering them, his mercy in pardoning them, and his faithfulness in keeping his covenant with them. But would it not be even more interesting and profitable for us to remark the hand of God in our own lives? Ought we not to look upon our own history as being at least as full of God, as full of his goodness and of his truth, as much a proof of his faithfulness and veracity, as the lives of any of the saints who have gone before? We do our Lord an injustice when we suppose that he wrought all his mighty acts, and showed himself strong for those in the early time, but doth not perform wonders or lay bare his arm for the saints who are now upon the earth. Let us review our own lives. Surely in these we may discover some happy incidents, refreshing to ourselves and glorifying to our God. Have you had no deliverances? Have you passed through no rivers, supported by the divine presence?...Surely the goodness of God has been the same to us as to the saints of old.” (Charles Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*)

MOVING WITH FAITH INTO GOD’S PROMISE

Joshua 1:1-9

“After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD spoke to Joshua

son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying, 'My servant Moses is dead. Now proceed to cross the Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the Israelites. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses. From the wilderness and the Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the Great Sea in the west shall be your territory. No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous; for you shall put this people in possession of the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful. I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you.'

Joshua 3:1-5, 12-16

Early in the morning Joshua rose and set out from Shittim with all the Israelites, and they came to the Jordan. They camped there before crossing over. ²At the end of three days the officers went through the camp ³and commanded the people, 'When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God being carried by the levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place. Follow it, ⁴so that you may know the way you should go, for you have not passed this way before. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, a distance of about two thousand cubits; do not come any nearer to it.'
⁵Then Joshua said to the people, 'Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.'
⁶To the priests Joshua said, 'Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass on in front of the people.'
So they took up the ark of the covenant and went in front of the people...¹²So now select twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. ¹³When the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the LORD of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan flowing from above shall be cut off; they shall stand in a single heap.'
¹⁴When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan, the priests bearing the ark of the covenant were in front of the people. ¹⁵Now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest. So when those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the edge of the water, ¹⁶the waters flowing from above stood still, rising up in

a single heap far off at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, while those flowing towards the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea were wholly cut off. Then the people crossed over opposite Jericho.”

Joshua 4:15-24

15 The LORD said to Joshua, ¹⁶‘Command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant to come up out of the Jordan.’ ¹⁷Joshua therefore commanded the priests, ‘Come up out of the Jordan.’ ¹⁸When the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD came up from the middle of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests’ feet touched dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before. ¹⁹The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. ²⁰Those twelve stones, which they had taken out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal, ²¹saying to the Israelites, ‘When your children ask their parents in time to come, “What do these stones mean?” ²²then you shall let your children know, “Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground.” ²³For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we crossed over, ²⁴so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, and so that you may fear the LORD your God for ever.’

CONCLUSION

“God will not force anything on you. As Joshua fought his way into possession of the Promised Land you also must fight on toward perfection, meeting and defeating whatever enemies would stand in the way to challenge your right of possession. The land will not come to you; you must go to the land... The man, for instance, who is satisfied to live a defeated life will never be forced to take victory. The man who is content to follow Christ from afar off will never know the radiant wonder of His nearness. The man who is willing to settle for a joyless, barren life will never experience the joy of the Holy Spirit or the deep satisfaction of fruitful living. (A. W. Tozer, *That Incredible Christian*)

*“Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story---
those he redeemed from the hand of the foe.”*

Psalm 107:2 (NIV)