

Ex. 13:17-15:21  
(Deliverance by the Sea)

**Preamble:**

May 5<sup>th</sup> D-group informational lunch at our house...  
Discuss the INC...  
Jason Upchurch preaching next week...

**Prayer for illumination:**

**Sermon introduction:**

It is roughly 1450 BC. The people of Israel have been in Egypt for 450 years. When they came, they were 12 brothers, now they are 2-3 million people. In the meantime, Pharaoh has made their lives miserable by forcing them into slavery.

When God sees his people suffering under the affliction of slavery, he has compassion on them, so he sends Moses to Pharaoh, demanding that he let God's people go. Pharaoh says no.

Then God sends ten plagues to change Pharaoh's mind, prove that he is the one true God, and display his glory. YHWH sends...

The plague of blood (7:14–25)

The plague of frogs (8:1–15)

Gnats (8:16–19)

Flies (8:20–32)

Livestock (9:1–7)

Boils (9:8–12)

Hail (9:13–35)

Locusts (10:1–20)

Darkness (10:21–29)

Finally, and worst of all, God sends the plague of death. He kills all the firstborn sons and livestock in Egypt (11).

After the tenth plague, Pharaoh's stubbornness is broken, and he frees the Israelites. They are now heading towards the promised land. But Pharaoh is not done harassing Israel, which means that God is not done delivering Israel, he will perform one more mighty act of deliverance.

Just like Israel, we too need deliverance from our fierce enemies. God delivered us through the death and resurrection of the Son of God.

All of this raises one crucial question—how should we respond to God's mighty act of deliverance? How should you respond? ***We must respond with worship.***

Our story unfolds in three scenes-

***God leads.***

***God delivers.***

*We worship.*

**First, God leads.**

**Where does God lead Israel? He leads them to a place of need.**

**Exodus 13:17–18 (ESV) — 17** When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, “Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.” **18** But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.

In chapter 3, God told Moses to lead the people to Horeb or Sinai, also known as the mountain of God (3:1).

The “way of the sea” was the quickest way for Israel to leave Egypt. This route would have taken less than two weeks rather than 40 years! That was the shortest way, but not the best way. There were enemies in that direction, and Israel was not ready for battle.

**Exodus 13:20–22 (ESV) — 20** And they moved on from Succoth and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. **21** And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. **22** The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

Fire was a common symbol for God’s presence in the book of Exodus. God leads his people by his presence.

**Exodus 14:1–3 (ESV) — 1** Then the LORD said to Moses, **2** “Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. **3** For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, ‘They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in’

No one knows for sure where some of these places are—although there are many plausible theories. The important thing to note, is that God led them into a very precarious place. They are clearly trapped. And it is a trap of God’s making.

Their route makes absolutely no sense military speaking. They have nowhere to go. Behind them is the Red Sea and in front of them is the desert. They are between a rock and a hard place. And God has led them to precisely this location. When Pharaoh hears of their “stupidity” he decides to come after them with a vengeance.

At this point, I’m sure the Israelites wondered what in the world God was doing? Why did God lead them here? Have you ever wondered what in the world God is up to?

**Illustration:**

Sometimes, it seems like God’s plans don’t make sense...

Service station...

God has a plan. God wants us to depend on him.

God led Israel to a very hard place, so that they would depend on him fully!

### **Application:**

Where has God led you?

Do you sometimes feel like the Israelites, trapped between Pharaoh and the Red Sea?

God often leads us to a place where the only solution is a divine solution.

If I give away all this money... I will have to depend on you.

If I tell this friend about Jesus... I will have to depend on you to convert them and preserve this relationship.

If I tell the truth on this report... I will have to depend on you to keep my job.

If I don't take the promotion to spend more time with my family and church... I will have to depend on you to provide for my family.

If I take a stand for my Christian convictions at the office... I will have to depend on you to keep me gainfully employed.

One scholar writes,

Sometimes the long way round is the best way. Sometimes what seems to us to be a hard road is God's way of developing our faith. (Chester, GWFY)

God often leads us into a "trap" or a place of utter dependence, to teach us absolute dependence on him and display his glory in our lives.

*God leads us into hard places, but will he deliver? This leads to the next scene.*

*First, God leads.*

### **Second, God delivers.**

*We learn several things about God's deliverance from this great story. For starters, we learn that...*

#### **God delivers from powerful enemies.**

**Exodus 14:5 (ESV)** —5 When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?"

At this point, Pharaoh has massive regret. He thinks, "we made a huge mistake. Our labor force is gone, and our way of life is over. We need to get those slaves back."

**Exodus 14:6–9 (ESV)** — 6 So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, 7 and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. 8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. 9 The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

Chariots were the tanks, fighter jets, or attack helicopters of the day. They were the most technologically advanced weapons of the time. If you were a foot soldier or in the cavalry, you had no chance against a chariot.

Egypt, the mightiest superpower of this period, dispatched all their chariots after the fleeing slaves.

### **Illustration:**

To be clear, this is not a fair fight. This would be like pitting the Super bowl champs (the KC Chiefs) against a second-grade pop warner football team. Imagine a 350-pound lineman verses a 60-pound second grader! Or pitting the roughly 2,500 active Navy seals (with all their tech, air support, and weaponry) against 100 soldiers from the Colville National guard.

### **Application:**

Do you have powerful enemies?

Who are they?

Corrupt politicians

Evil bosses

How about Satan himself and his minions?

God is able to deliver from the most powerful enemies. Nothing is too hard for God.

*God delivers from powerful enemies! In addition...*

### **God delivers a terrified people!**

**Exodus 14:10–12 (ESV) — 10** When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. **11** They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? **12** Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”

Now before we get too judgy, we need to put ourselves in Israel’s sandals. The largest and most technologically advanced, and best trained army in the known world is racing toward them, and they are filled with a lust for revenge!

These were the days of hand-to-hand combat. Deaths were slow and agonizing. People died from arrow punctures, sword slashes, spear thrusts, and hammer blows. No mercy was shown to woman and children. To make matters worse, the Israelites were untrained soldiers with no weapons. They were no match for Egypt’s army.

With that said, Israel should not be afraid. Why? They just watched YHWH let loose ten incredibly destructive plagues on Egypt.

### **Application:**

What are you afraid of?  
A diagnosis.  
Financial loss.  
Death.  
The elections this fall.  
Or something else entirely?

God is able to deliver terrified people.

*God delivers from powerful enemies!  
God delivers terrified people! In addition...*

### **God delivers all by himself!**

**Exodus 14:13 (ESV) — 13** And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again.

I’m sure that many of the Israelites thought, “really, you want me to not be afraid and just stand here and do nothing, as the most powerful army in the world approaches?” Surely, nearly every instinct inside their trembling bodies was urging them to fight or flee.

God wants them to understand that salvation is all of God. He does not need our help to save us. He tells Israel to stand firm, that is to do nothing. Simply watch the salvation of YHWH. He led Israel to this hopeless impasse, and he will do all the delivering.

**Exodus 14:14 (ESV) — 14** The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

Again, this is the Lord’s battle. He will fight for you. You need to simply shut your mouth and watch God deliver.

### **Application:**

The application should be clear! God and God alone delivers! He does not need our help. The principal of grace is clearly on display in this story.

Sadly, many of us instinctively want to fight to save ourselves. Fight in our own strength, solve our own problems. Make our own way to heaven.

But this text encourages us to do nothing!  
That is right, we do nothing.  
God does everything.  
Jesus lived, Jesus died, and Jesus rose from the grave victoriously. What is their left for us to do?  
Nothing!!!

*God delivers from powerful enemies!  
God delivers a terrified people!  
God delivers all by himself!*

## God delivers with great power!

**Exodus 14:15–16 (ESV) — 15** The LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. **16** Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground.

**Exodus 14:19–20 (ESV) — 19** Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, **20** coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

Somehow, this divine cloud kept the Egyptian army at bay.

**Exodus 14:21–22 (ESV) — 21** Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. **22** And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Over the years, skeptics have suggested some interesting explanations of this passage.

For instance, they suggest that a high wind and a low tide might explain the dry ground.

However, this is ruled out when Exodus 14:21-22 mentions two walls of water—the same word used for a city wall—indicating a significant depth of water. Plus, the parting of the sea begins at Moses’ command (v 15-16, 21-22) and ends at just the right time to ensure the destruction of the Egyptian army.

Others suggest that this was the Reed Sea, not the Red Sea. In other words, it was simply a marshy area which the Israelites crossed on foot. Once again, the two walls of water suggest a water level of significant depth. (Chester, GWFY)

### Illustration:

In light of this skepticism, one commentator writes,

The pastor Donald Bridge tells the story of a liberal preacher visiting a (lively) church. As the minister talked about the crossing of the Red Sea, someone shouted, “Praise the Lord. Takin’ all them children through the deep waters. What a mighty miracle!” The minister, who did not believe in miracles, was annoyed at this intervention. So rather condescendingly, he told the congregation that the Israelites were probably in marshland with an ebbing tide, so they were simply wading through six inches of water. In response to this, the same voice as before shouted, “Praise the Lord. Drownin’ all them Egyptians in six inches of water. What a mighty miracle!” (Signs and Wonders Today, page 17). (Chester, GWFY)

### Application:

What is the point? This was clearly a miracle.

Nothing is too hard for God...

He is a God of great power...

Do you need this power to deliver you? It is available to all the saints.

*God delivers from powerful enemies!  
God delivers a terrified people!  
God delivers all by himself!  
God delivers with great power! In addition...*

### **God delivers by destroying our enemies!**

**Exodus 14:23 (ESV) — 23** The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

**Exodus 14:26 (ESV) — 26** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen."

**Exodus 14:28 (ESV) — 28** The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained.

**Exodus 14:30–31 (ESV) — 30** Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. **31** Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

Pharaoh very foolishly pursued Israel into the Red Sea, and God crushed him and his armies. The next day thousands of dead bodies washed up on the shore, what a gruesome scene (v. 30).

This episode may sound harsh, but Pharaoh reaped what he sowed. Don't forget that earlier in our story Pharaoh tried to drown all the infant Jewish boys, in response God drowned his army. This is poetic justice.

Here is the point, God delivers his people by destroying their enemies.

### **Application:**

Our greatest enemy is the devil. God has delivered us by destroying the devil. He has done this through the life death and resurrection of Jesus.

**1 John 3:8 (ESV) — 8** Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

This means that we don't have to fear the devil's power.  
Which also means that we don't have to fear his accusations.

*God delivers from powerful enemies!  
God delivers a terrified people!  
God delivers all by himself!  
God delivers with great power!  
God delivers by destroying our enemies! Finally...*

### **God delivers for his own glory.**

**Exodus 14:4 (ESV) — 4** And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.” And they did so.

**Exodus 14:17–18 (ESV) — 17** And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. **18** And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

Why does God deliver Israel, and us? To display his glory in all the earth. Why does God deliver you? To display his glory. This is why you exist. You and I exist to display the glory of God for all of creation. We don’t exist primarily to make more money, take long vacations, retire into the sunset, express ourselves, or pursue our hobbies with missionary zeal.

We exist to glorify God. That is why God created us and saved us. But here is the good news, the more you enjoy God the more you will glorify God. Or to say it another way, “God is most glorified in us, when we are most satisfied in him.” (John Piper)

*God delivered Israel with mighty displays of power. How do they respond? With worship, which leads us to the last scene.*

*First, God leads.*

*Second, God delivers.*

### **Third, we worship.**

After God delivers his people with great displays of power there seems to be one and only one appropriate response—worship!

This is exactly what we see in Exodus 15:1-21. This is the first recorded song in the Bible, which comes right after Israel’s redemption from bondage—not surprising. Here we read the lyrics of a glorious song of praise to YHWH for redeeming his people.

The central event of this song is the drowning of Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea by the hand of the LORD. In other words, the central event is God’s glorious act of deliverance.

Deliverance always leads to praise!

The Exodus was the most important redemptive event in the Bible, until good Friday, when Christ died on the cross in our place. How should the saints respond?

The same way Israel did, with loud songs of praise.

The book of Revelation is a very loud book. Throughout this book, we see the saints singing loud songs of praise in heaven, for all eternity, to Christ the king, for delivering all of creation from the horrible effects of the fall.

**Revelation 5:11–14 (ESV) — 11** Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, **12** saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth



and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” **13** And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” **14** And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

### **Conclusion:**

God has given us many reasons to sing his praises.

He has delivered us from the fear of death.

He has delivered us from Satan’s power.

He has delivered us from sin’s enslaving power.

He has delivered us from God’s wrath.

He has delivered us from Hell’s eternal torments.

He has delivered us from lives of futility.

And he will deliver us someday from all the effects of the fall.

How should we respond? Like Israel did, with loud songs of praise. Which we will do in a moment. In the meantime, lets pray.