

Israel in Egypt

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon illustrates how the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and their passage through the Red Sea symbolizes the Christian journey through trials, culminating in the ultimate triumph of Christ and His redeemed people.

Scripture: Revelation 15:3, Exodus 15, Exodus 14

Topics: "Deliverance", "Christian Perseverance", "Victory in Christ"

Description

In this powerful sermon, C.H. Spurgeon draws a vivid parallel between the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and the Christian journey through spiritual trials. He expounds on the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea as a symbol of God's protection and the ultimate triumph of Christ over all enemies. Spurgeon emphasizes the importance of praising God alone for His mighty works and encourages believers to persevere with hope and confidence in God's final victory.

Transcript

"And they sang the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."—Revelation 15:3.

May God the Holy Spirit enable me to exhibit the parallel which exists between the condition of Israel when passing through the sea, and the position of the church of Christ at the present day. Next, we shall compare the triumph of the Lord at the Red Sea with the victory of the Lamb in the great and terrible day of the Lord. And lastly, I shall point out certain prominent features of the song of Moses, which will doubtless be as prominent in the song of the Lamb.

I. First, it is our business to regard THE POSITION OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AS EMBLEMATICAL OF OUR OWN. And here we observe that, like the church of God, the vast host of Israel had been delivered from bondage. We, my brethren, who constitute a part of the Israel of God, were once the slaves of sin and Satan; we served with hard bondage and rigor while in our natural state; no bondage was ever more terrible than ours; we indeed made bricks without straw, and labored in the very fire; but by the strong hand of God we have been delivered. We have come forth from the prison-house; with joy we beheld ourselves emancipated—the Lord's free men. The iron yoke is taken from our necks; we no longer serve our lusts, and pay obedience to the tyrant sin. With a high hand and an outstretched arm, our God has led us forth from the place of our captivity, and joyfully we pursue our way through the wilderness.

But with the children of Israel it was not all joy; they were free, but their master was at their heels. Pharaoh was loth to lose so valuable a nation of servants; and therefore with his chosen captains, his horsemen, and his chariots, he pursued them in angry haste. Affrighted Israel beheld her infuriated oppressor close at her rear, and trembled for the issue—the hearts of the people failed them while they saw their hopes blighted and their joys ended by the approach of the oppressor; even so it is with some of you; you think you must be driven back again like dumb cattle, into Egypt, and once more become what you were. “Surely,” you say, “I can not hold on my way with such a host seeking to drive me back; I must again become the slave of my iniquities.” And thus dreading apostacy, and feeling that you would rather die than become what you were, you this morning are filled with trepidation. You are saying, “Alas for me! Better that I had died in Egypt than that I should have come out into this wilderness to be again captured.” You have tasted for a moment the joys of holiness and the sweets of liberty; and now again to go back to endure the bondage of a spiritual Egypt, would be worse than before. This is the position of the sacramental host of God’s elect; they have come out of Egypt, and they are pursuing their way to Canaan. But the world is against them; the kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his people, saying, “Let us scatter them; let us utterly destroy them.” From the fiery days of the stakes of Smithfield even until now, the world’s black heart has hated the church, and the world’s cruel hand and laughing lip have been for ever against us. The host of the mighty are pursuing us, and are thirsty for our blood, and anxious to cut us off from the earth. Such is our position unto this hour, and such must it be until we are landed on the other side of Jordan, and until our Maker comes to reign on the earth.

But once more: the children of Israel were in a position more wonderful than this. They came to the edge of the Red Sea; they feared their enemies behind; they could not fly on either hand, for they were flanked by mountains and stupendous rocks; one course only was open to them, and that course was through the sea. God commands them to go forward. The rod of Moses is outstretched, and the affrighted waters divide; a channel is left while the floods stand up right, and the waters are congealed in the heart of the sea. The priests, bearing the ark, march forward; the whole host of Israel follow. And now behold the wondrous pilgrimage. A wall of alabaster is on either side, and myriads are in the pebbly depths. Like a wall of glass the sea stands on either side of them, frowning with beetling cliffs of foam; but still on they march; and until the last of God’s Israel is safe the water stands still and firm, frozen by the lips of God. Such, my hearers, is the position of God’s church now. You and I are marching through a sea, the floods of which are kept upright only by the sovereign power of God. This world is a world which is suddenly to be destroyed; and our position in it is just the position of the children of Israel, for whose sake the floods refused to meet until they were safely landed. O church of God! thou art the salt of the earth: when thou art removed this earth must putrify and decay. O living army of the living God! ye, like Israel, keep the floods of providence still standing fast; but when the last of you shall be gone from this stage of action, God’s fiery wrath and tremendous anger shall dash down upon the ground whereon you now are standing, and your enemies shall be overwhelmed in the place through which you now walk safely. Let me put my thoughts as plainly as I can. Naturally, according to the common order, the Red Sea should have flowed on in a level and even manner, constant in its waves, and unbroken in its surface. By the might of God the Red Sea was divided into two parts, and the floods stood back. Now mark. Naturally, according to the common course of justice, this world, which groaneth and travaileth until now, ought, if we only consider the wicked, to be utterly destroyed. The only reason why the Red Sea afforded a safe passage for the host was this—that Israel marched through it; and the only reason why this world stands, and the only reason why it is not destroyed by fire, as it is to be at the last great day, is because God’s Israel are in it; but when once they shall have passed through, the parted floods shall meet their hands, and embrace with eager

joy to clasp the adverse host within their arms. The day is coming when this world shall reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man. Every Christian may say, with due reverence to God, "The earth is dissolved; I bear up the pillars thereof." Let all the Christians that are in the world die, and the pillars of the earth would fall, and like a wreck and a vision all this universe of ours would pass away, never to be seen again. We are to-day, I say, passing through the floods, with enemies behind, pursuing us who are going out of Egypt up to Canaan.

III. And now the TRIUMPH OF MOSES was a picture of the ultimate triumph of the Lamb. Moses sang a song unto the Lord by the sea of Egypt. If you will turn to holy Scripture you will find that my text was sung by the holy spirits who had been preserved from sin and from the contamination of the beast; and it is said that they sung this song upon "a sea of glass mingled with fire." Now the song of Moses was sung by the side of a sea, which was glassy, and still; for a little season the floods had been disturbed, divided, separated, congealed, but in a few moments afterward, when Israel had safely passed the flood, they became as glassy as ever, for the enemy had sunken to the bottom like a stone, and the sea re. turned to its strength when the morning appeared. Is there ever a time, then, when this great sea of Providence, which now stands parted to give a passage to God's saints shall become a level surface? Is there a day when the now divided dispensations of God, which are kept from following out their legitimate tendency to do justice upon sin—when the two seas of justice shall commingle, and the one sea of God's providence shall be "a sea of glass mingled with fire?" Yes, the day is drawing nigh when God's enemies shall no longer make it necessary for God's providence to be apparently disturbed to save his people, when the great designs of God shall be accomplished, and therefore when the walls of water shall roll together, while in their inmost depths the everlasting burning fire shall still consume the wicked. O, the sea shall be calm upon the surface; the sea upon which God's people shall walk shall seem to be a sea that is clear, without a weed, with-out an impurity; while down in its hollow bosom, far beyond all mortal ken, shall be the horrid depths where the wicked must for ever dwell in the fire which is mingled with the glass.

Well, I now want to show you why it was that Moses triumphed, and why it is that by-and-by we shall triumph. One reason why Moses sung his song was because all Israel were safe. They were all safely across the sea. Not a drop of spray fell from that solid wall until the last of God's Israel had safely planted his foot on the other side of the flood. That done, immediately the floods dissolved into their proper place again, but not till then. Part of that song was, "Thou hast led thy people like a flock through the wilderness." Now, in the last time, when Christ shall come upon earth, the great song will be—"Lord, thou hast saved thy people; thou hast led them all safely through the paths of providence, and not one of them has fallen into the hands of the enemy." O, it is my strong belief, that in heaven there shall not be a vacant throne. I rejoice that all who love the Lord below, must at last attain to heaven. I do not believe with some that men may start on the road to heaven, and be saved, and yet fall by the hand of the enemy. God forbid, my friends!

"All the chosen race

Shall meet around the throne,

Shall bless the conduct of his grace,

And make his glories known."

Part of the triumph of heaven will be, that there is not one throne that is unoccupied. As many as God hath chosen, as many as Christ hath redeemed, as many as the Spirit hath called, as many as believe, shall

arrive safe across the stream. We are not all safely landed yet:

“Part of the host have crossed the flood,

And part are crossing now.”

The vanguard of the army have already reached the shore. I see them yonder;

“I greet the blood-besprinkled bands

Upon th’ eternal shore.”

And you and I, my brethren, are marching through the depths. We are at this day following hard after Christ, and walking through the wilderness. Let us be of good cheer: the rearguard shall soon be where the vanguard already is; the last of the chosen shall soon have landed; the last of God’s elect shall have crossed the sea, and then shall be heard the song of triumph, when all are secure. But O! if one were absent—oh! if one of his chosen family should be cast away—it would make an everlasting discord in the song of the redeemed, and cut the strings of the harps of Paradise, so that music could never be distilled from them again.

But, perhaps, the major part of the joy of Moses lay in the destruction of all the enemies of God. He looked upon his people the day before.

“He looked upon his people,

And the tear was in his eye;

He looked upon the foeman

And his glance was stern and high.”

And now to-day he looks upon his people, and he says, “Blessed art thou, O Israel, safely landed on the shore;” and he looks not upon the foeman, but upon the foeman’s tomb; he looks where the living were protected by the shield of God from all their enemies; and he sees—what? A mighty sepulcher of water; a mighty tomb in which were engulfed princes, monarchs, potentates. “The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.” Pharaoh’s chariots also are drowned therein. And soon, my hearers, you and I shall do the same. I say that now we have to look abroad on hosts of enemies. What with the wild beasts of Rome, what with the antichrist of Mohammed, what with the thousands of idolatries and false gods, what with infidelity in all its myriad shapes, many are the enemies of God, and mighty are the hosts of hell. Lo, you see them gathered together this day; horseman upon horseman, chariot upon chariot, gathered together against the Most High. I see the trembling church, fearing to be over-thrown; I mark her leaders bending their knees in solemn prayer, and crying, “Lord, save thy people, and bless thy heritage.” But mine eye looks through the future with telescopic glance, and I see the happy period of the latter days, when Christ shall reign triumphant. I shall ask them where is Babel? where is Rome? where is Mohammed? and the answer shall come—where? Why they have sunk into the depths; they have sunk to the bottom as a stone. Down there the horrid fire devours them, for the sea of glass is mingled with the fire of judgment. To-day I see a battle-field; the whole earth is torn by the hoofs of horses; there is the rumble of cannon and the roll of drum. “To arms! to arms!” both hosts are shouting. But you wait awhile, and you shall walk across this plain of battle, and say, “Seest thou that colossal system of error dead? There lies

another, all frozen, in ghastly death, in motionless stupor. There lieth infidelity; there sleepeth secularism and the secularist; there lie those who defied God. I see all this vast host of rebels lying scattered upon the earth. "Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; Jehovah has gotten unto himself the victory, and the last of his enemies are destroyed." Then shall be the time when shall be sung "the song of Moses and of the Lamb."

III. Now, turning to the song of Moses, I shall conclude my address to you by noticing some interesting particulars in the song which will doubtless have a place in the everlasting orchestra of the redeemed, when they shall praise the Most High. O! my brethren, I could but wish that I had stood by the Red Sea, to have heard that mighty shout, and that tremendous roar of acclamation! Methinks one might well have borne a servitude in Egypt, to have stood in that mighty host who sung such mighty praise. Music hath charms; but never had it such charms as it had that day when fair Miriam led the women, and Moses led the men, like some mighty leader, beating time with his hand. "Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done gloriously." Methinks I see the scene; and I anticipate the greater day, when the song shall be sung again, "as the song of Moses and of the Lamb."

Now, just notice this song. In the 15th chapter of Exodus you find it, and in divers of the Psalms you will see it amplified. The first thing I would have you notice in it is, that from beginning to end it is a praise of God, and of nobody else but God. Moses, thou hast said nothing of thyself. O great lawgiver, mightiest of men, did not thine hand grasp the mighty rod that split the sea—that burned its fair breast, and left a sear for awhile upon its bosom? Didst not thou lead the hosts of Israel? Didst not thou marshal their thousands for battle, and like a mighty commander led them through the depths? Is there not a word for thee? Not one. The whole strain of the song is, "I will sing unto the Lord," from beginning to end. It is all praise of Jehovah; there is not one word about Moses, nor a single word in praise of the children of Israel. Dear friends, the last song in this world, the song of triumph, shall be full of God, and of no one else. Here you praise the instrument; to-day you look on this man and on that, and you say, "Thank God for this minister, and for this man?" To-day you say, "Blessed be God for Luther, who shook the Vatican, and thank God for Whitefield, who stirred up a slumbering church;" but in that day you shall not sing of Luther, nor of Whitefield, nor of any of the mighty ones of God's hosts; forgotten shall their names be for a season, even as the stars refuse to shine when the sun himself appeareth. The song shall be unto Jehovah, and Jehovah only; we shall not have a word to say for preachers nor bishops, not a syllable to say for good men and true; but the whole song from first to last shall be, "unto him that loved us and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood, unto him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

And next will you please to note, that this song celebrated something of the fierceness of the enemy! Do you observe how, when the songster describes the attack of Pharaoh, he says, "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them." A song is made out of the wrath of Pharaoh. And it shall be so at the last. 'The wrath of man shall praise God. I believe the last song of the redeemed, when they shall ultimately triumph, will celebrate in heavenly stanzas the wrath of man overcome by God. Sometimes after great battles, monuments are raised to the memory of the fight; and of what are they composed? They are composed of weapons of death and of instruments of war which have been taken from the enemy. Now, to use that illustration as I think it may be properly used, the day is coming when fury, and wrath, and hatred, and strife, shall all be woven into a song; and the weapons of our enemies, when taken from them, shall serve to make monuments to the praise of God. Rail on, rail on, blasphemer! Smite on, smite on, tyrant! Lift thy heavy hand, O despot; crush the truth, which yet thou canst not crush; knock from his head the

crown—the crown that is far above thy reach—poor puny impotent mortal as thou art! Go on, go on! But all thou doest shall but increase his glories. For aught we care, we bid you still proceed with all your wrath and malice. Though it shall be worse for you, it shall be more glorious for our Master; the greater your preparations for war, the more splendid shall be his triumphal chariot, when he shall ride through the streets of heaven in pompous array. The more mighty your preparations for battle, the more rich the spoil which he shall divide with the strong. O! Christian, fear not the foe! Remember the harder his blows, the sweeter thy song; the greater his wrath, the more splendid thy triumph; the more he rages, the more shall Christ be honored in the day of his appearing. They sung the song of ‘Moses and the Lamb.

And then will ye note, in the next place, how they sang the total overthrow of the enemy. There is one expression in this song, which ought to be and I believe is, when set to music, very frequently repeated. It is that part of the song, as recorded in the Psalms, where it is declared that the whole host of Pharaoh were utterly destroyed, and there was not one of them left. When that great song was sung by the side of the Red Sea, there was, no doubt, a special emphasis laid upon that expression, “not one.” I think I hear the hosts of Israel. When the words were known by them, they began and they proceeded thus—“There is not one of them left;” and then in various parts the words were repeated, “Not one, not one.” And then the women with their sweet voices sang, “Not one, not one.” I believe that at the last, a part of our triumph will be the fact, that there is not one left. We shall look abroad throughout the earth, and see it all a level sea; and not one foeman pursuing us—“not one, not one!” Raise thyself never so high, O thou deceiver, thou canst not live; for not one shall escape. Lift thy head never so proudly, O despot, thou canst not live; for not one shall escape. O heir of heaven, not one sin shall cross the Jordan after thee; not one shall pass the Red Sea to overtake thee; but this shall be the summit of thy triumph—“Not one, not one! not one of them is left.”

Just let us note again, and I will not detain you too long, lest I weary you. One part of the song of Moses consisted in praising the ease with which God destroyed his enemies. “Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters.” If we had gone to work to destroy the hosts of Pharaoh, what a multitude of engines of death should we have required. If the work had been committed to us, to cut off the hosts, what marvelous preparations, what thunder, what noise, what great activity there would have been. But mark the grandeur of the expression. God did not even lift himself from his throne to do it: he saw Pharaoh coming; he seemed to look upon him with a placid smile; he did just blow with his lips, and the sea covered them. You and I will marvel at the last how easy it has been to over-throw the enemies of the Lord.. We have been tugging and toiling all our life-time to be the means of overthrowing systems of error; it will astonish the church, when her Master shall come, to see how, as the ice dissolveth before the fire, all error and sin shall be utterly destroyed in the coming of the Most High. We must have our societies and our machinery, our preachings and our gatherings, and rightly too; but God will not require them at the last. The destruction of his enemies shall be as easy to him as the making of a world. In passive silence unmoved he sat; and he did but break the silence with “Let there be light; and light was.” So shall he at the last, when his enemies are raging furiously, blow with his winds, and they shall be scattered; they shall melt even as wax, and shall be burned like tow; they shall be as the fat of rams; into smoke shall they consume, yea, into smoke shall they consume away.

Furthermore, in this song of Moses, you will notice there is one peculiar beauty. Moses not only rejoiced for what had been done, but for the future consequences of it. He says—“The people of Canaan, whom we are about to attack, will now be seized with sudden fear; by the greatness of thy arm they shall be as still as a stone.” O! I think I hear them singing that too, sweetly and softly—“as still as a stone.” How would

the words come full, like gentle thunder heard in the distance—"as still as a stone!" And when we shall get on the other side the flood, see the triumph over our enemies, and behold our Master reigning, this will form a part of our song, that they must henceforth be "as still as a stone." There will be a hell, but it will not be a hell of roaring devils, as it now is. They shall be "as still as a stone." There will be legions of fallen angels, but they shall no longer have courage to attack us or defy God: they shall be "as still as a stone." O how grand will that sound, when the hosts of God's redeemed, looking down on the demons chained, bound, silenced, struck dumb with terror, shall sing exultingly over them! They must be "as still as a stone;" and there they must lie, and bite their iron bands. The fierce despiser of Christ can no more spit in his face; the proud tyrant can no more lift his hands to oppress the saints; even Satan can no more attempt to destroy. They shall be "as still as a stone."

And last of all, the song concludes by noticing the eternity of God's reign; and this will always make a part of the triumphant song. They sang, "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." Then I can suppose the whole band broke out into their loudest strain of music. "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." Part of the melody of heaven will be—"The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." That song has cheered us here—"The Lord reigneth; blessed be my Rock!" And that song shall be our exultation there. "The Lord reigneth for ever and ever." When we shall see the placid sea of providence, when we shall behold the world all fair and lovely, when we shall mark our enemies destroyed, and God Almighty triumphant, then we shall shout the song—

"Hallelujah! for the Lord

God Omnipotent shall reign;

Hallelujah! let the word

Echo round the earth and main."

O! may we be there to sing it!

I have one remark to make, and I have done. You know, my friends, that as there is something in the song of Moses which is typical of the song of the Lamb, there was another song sung by the waters of the Red Sea which is typical of the song of hell. "What mean you, sir, by that dread thought?" O! shall I use the word music? Shall I profane the heavenly word so much as to say, It was doleful music which came from the lips of Pharaoh and his host? Boldly and pompously, with roll of drum and blast of trumpet they had entered into the sea. On a sudden their martial music ceased ; and ah! ye heavens and ye floods what was it? The sea was coming down upon them, utterly to devour them. O! may we never hear that shriek, that awful yell of hideous agony, that seemed to rend the sky, and then was hushed again, when Pharaoh and his mighty men were swallowed up, and went down quick into hell! Ah! stars, if ye had heard it, if the black pall of waters had not shut out the sound from you, ye might have continued trembling unto this hour, and mayhap ye are trembling now; mayhap your twinklings by night are on account of that terrible shriek ye heard; for sure it were enough to make you tremble on for ever. That dreadful shriek, that hideous moan, that horrible howl, when a whole army sank into hell at once when the waters swallowed them up!

Take heed, my friends, take heed, lest you should have to join in that terrible miserere; take heed, lest that horrible howl should be yours, instead of the song of the redeemed. And remember, so must it be, unless ye be born again, unless ye believe in Christ, unless ye repent of sin and renounce it wholly, and

with trembling hearts put your confidence in the man of sorrows, who is soon to be crowned the King of kings and Lord of lords. May God bless you, and give you all to taste of his salvation, that you may stand upon the sea of glass, and not have to feel the terrors of the mingled fire in the lower depths thereof! God Almighty bless this vast assembly, for Jesus' sake.

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