

SABBATH THOUGHT 2023-11-11—SECOND CROSSING

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

One of the great Bible stories is that of the Israelite's Exodus from Egypt. At one time, it was taught to every school boy and girl from a very early age. What impressed me was seeing the Ten Commandments starring Charlton Heston, which featured the incredible crossing of the Red Sea. The biblical story, though, never prepared me for the reality of the height of the walls of water that flanked the Israelites as they passed through. In quite an understatement, all that the Bible really says is "the waters *were* a wall":

EXODUS 14:21-23, 26-31 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and **the LORD caused the sea to go back** by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry *land*, and the waters were divided. 22 So the children of **Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground**, and **the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left**. 23 And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. ... 26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen." 27 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, *and* all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. 29 But the children of **Israel had walked on dry land** in the midst of the sea, and **the waters were a wall** to them on their right hand and on their left. 30 So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 Thus **Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done** in Egypt; so **the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses**.

Of all the routes theorized for the Exodus, one likely possibility would have made the wall of water over 1/2 mile (850 m) high. This even dwarfs the walls of water depicted in the movie. Regardless of where they crossed, I do not believe it was through the shallow swamps near Egypt so the height of the wall of water must have been staggering. In the song of Moses, he described the waters and sang that they "stood upright like a heap":

EXODUS 15:8 And with the blast of Your nostrils The waters were gathered together; **The floods stood upright like a heap**; The depths congealed [*settled*] in the heart of the sea.

In fact, 'heap' is used to describe it elsewhere such as Psalms 33:7 and 78:13. So the 'heap' of water is describing something phenomenal. But keep that word in mind because it is used to describe another momentous event that likely has escaped your attention—it did mine.

After crossing the Red Sea, many of the Israelites rebelled against going into the Promised Land. As a result, God determined that none of those above the age of 20 years would ever go into it:

NUMBERS 14:29-35 Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, **from twenty years old and upward**, which have murmured against Me, 30 Doubtless **ye shall not come into the land**, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, **save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun**. 31 But **your little ones**, which ye said should be a prey, **them will I bring in, and they shall know the land** which ye have despised. 32 But *as for you*, **your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness**. 33 And **your children shall** wander in the wilderness forty years, and **bear your whoredoms [infidelities]**, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. 34 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, *even* forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years, and ye shall know My breach of promise. 35 I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against Me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

As a result of their rebellion, God refused the Israelites entry into the land of Canaan. But did you notice what God said? Their CHILDREN had to ‘bear’ the punishment of 40 years of wandering because of THEIR sins. Can you imagine a parent and finding out that *your* sins caused your children to suffer for 40 years?

During their escape from Egypt, God did something that I doubt any of the people recognized at the time—they were baptized under the cloud AND by their transit through the Red Sea. Most interesting of all, they were not baptized unto God, but unto MOSES:

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-2 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 **all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea**,

Paul does not say whether this was one baptism or two separate ones but he goes on to say:

1 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5 And did all **eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ**. 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Clearly, this is not the Passover bread and wine of Christ’s body but the manna and water that came from the rock¹ struck by Moses. I suspect that they were “baptized into Moses” because God used Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and then gave them water and manna through His servant Moses. In other words, Moses was the physical stand-in for the true Savior Jesus Christ who was yet to come.

But back to the other part of the Exodus story. Since the Israelites rebelled and were sentenced to die in the wilderness, the land of Canaan would be populated by their children. But something interesting happens when they enter. Read the account of their entry and remember that the original children were 39 to 59 years old (and likely had children of their own):

¹ Exod. 17:5-7; Num. 20:8-11.

JOSHUA 3:2-11, 13, 15-17 So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp; 3 and they commanded the people, saying, “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. 4 “Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits [0.6 miles or 1km] by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed *this way* before.” 5 And Joshua said to the people, “**Sanctify [cleanse spiritually] yourselves**, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.” 6 Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, “Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people.” So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people. 7 And the LORD said to Joshua, “This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, **as I was with Moses, so I will be with you**. 8 “You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, ‘When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.’ ” 9 So Joshua said to the children of Israel, “Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God.” 10 And Joshua said, “**By this you shall know that the living God is among you**, and *that* He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites: 11 “Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. ... 13 “And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, **that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off**, the waters that come down from upstream, and **they shall stand as a heap**.” ... 15 and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), 16 that **the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap** very far away at Adam, the city that *is* beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, *and* were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. 17 Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and **all Israel crossed over on dry ground**, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.

Notice that it says the waters “rose in a heap.” This is the same description as the Red Sea waters. In other words, this was not just a small stream that God dried up—the blockage of the Jordan river produced a wall of water that could also have destroyed the Egyptian army. This escaped me for a long time mainly because the Jordan was a substantial river in those times.

Notice what it says in verse 16: the waters of the river Jordan backed up from the city of Adam to the place where they crossed. That is a distance of about 20 miles (32km). The valley above the crossing point could hold a flood 2 miles (3.2km) wide and 120 ft. (37m) deep². While it is not the height of the wall of waters at the Red Sea, it would still be a stunning sight. You may recall that God planned to bring the Israelites into Canaan by a different route; one that did not involve crossing a river. This was because they had already witnessed the power of God at the

² <https://www.holylandsite.com/jordan-river-crossing>.

Red Sea. So, why did God do this miraculous work for the children of the original Israelites who escaped from Egypt?

JOSHUA 3:10 And Joshua said, "**By this you shall know that the living God is among you**, and *that* He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites:

The original Israelites failed to believe that God would fulfill His promises and give their enemies over to them even after all the miracles. Now, with all of them dead, He did the same thing for their children so that they might believe in God! Compare Exodus 14:31 and Joshua 3:10. While those who were approaching the age of 20 years saw the original miracles of the Red Sea, the manna, and water from the rock, many were too young to remember and eating manna was not a miracle but just a fact of normal life.

The rest of the book of Joshua is a record of their successes (and failures) in the battles to take over the land of Canaan. Perhaps God's miracles had more impact on them since they were not raised in Egypt. They seemed to have more faith than their fathers, at least for awhile.

How about us? Is the miracle of our calling, repentance, baptism, forgiveness, and God living in us miracles that sustain us? They were for Abraham. You see, we are the spiritual seed of Abraham³ **the Hebrew** (Gen. 14:13). The Hebrews are children of Eber whose name means "**to cross over**." As descendants of Abraham, our destiny is to cross over into a new Promised Land where we will eat new things and drink pure water:

REVELATION 22:1-2 And He shewed me **a pure river of water of life**, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, **was there the tree of life**, which **bare twelve manner of fruits**, and yielded her fruit every month: and the **leaves of the tree were for the healing** of the nations.

After crossing over into the coming Promised Land, we will drink from the River of Life that proceeds from the throne of God and Jesus Christ and eat from the Tree of Life! They are the eternal manna and water from the Rock Jesus Christ! Our wanderings are difficult, and the 'sea' may seem impassable, but never forget the miracles of God that prove His promises that He will make that crossing possible!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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³ Gal. 3:29.