



# Geography of Salvation

## Preaching the Map

A Bible Study with Stan Key

### THE RED SEA

#### Exodus 5–14

When Moses returns to Egypt from the burning bush and announces that God is ready to deliver his people out of bondage and lead them to the Promised Land, the response is encouraging:

*Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. Aaron spoke all the words that the LORD had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. <sup>31</sup> And the people **believed**; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and **worshiped**. (Exodus 4:29–31)*

OK, let's go! If we *believe* and if we *worship*, isn't that the point? If we are saved by grace through faith, then aren't we almost home? Not so fast. Things are going to **get worse** before they get better... a lot worse.

I. This is harder than I thought (Exodus 5:1–7:13).

A. Was this a mistake? (Ex. 5:1–23).

1. Moses confronts Pharaoh (5:1–2). Thus says the LORD (*Yahweh*), "Let my people go." Pharaoh replies: "Who is *Yahweh* that I should obey his voice? I **do not know** *Yahweh* and I will not let Israel go."
2. The stage is now set! Pharaoh (chief priest over all the gods of Egypt and himself a god) doesn't know *Yahweh*. The rest of the book is *Yahweh's* reply: "You want to know me? Let me introduce myself!" (7:17; 8:8–10, 22; 9:14, 29; 10:2; 11:7; 14:4).
3. In anger, Pharaoh makes life **more miserable** for the Hebrews (vv. 4–21):  
*O LORD, **why** have you done evil to this people? **Why** did you ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all (5:22–23).*

B. No, this is no mistake: everything is under *Yahweh's* control (Ex. 6:1–7:13).

1. "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh..." (Ex. 6:1).
2. "I am the *Yahweh*" (Ex. 6:2–8). Abraham knew God as *El Shaddai*, which is a title, not a personal name. But you know my name, *Yahweh* (v. 7). Salvation is not just about getting out of Egypt. It is about **knowing God**. (Jer. 9:23–24; John 17:3).
3. The people would not listen to Moses "because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery" (Ex. 6:9).
4. Moses is ready **to quit** (Ex. 6:10–13, 30). *The people of Israel won't listen to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me?*
5. The greatest battle we will ever face on the journey of salvation is this: do we know God well enough to believe his promises even when all hell is breaking loose? "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even **our faith**." (I John 5:4).

## II. The battle of the gods (Exodus 7:14–12:51).

- A. The **ten plagues** are not a divine temper tantrum! They are, rather, a systematic dismantling of the entire Egyptian pantheon (12:12; 15:11; 18:11). “For this purpose I have raised you up (Pharaoh), to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth” (9:16).
- B. The battle of the gods (aka “the ten plagues”):
1. Water turned to **blood** (7:14–25). The Nile was source of life in Egypt (Hopi).
  2. Frogs (8:1–15). “You like frogs? I’ll give you frogs....” (Heqt).
  3. Gnats (8:16–19). The magicians can’t duplicate. “This is the **finger** of God.”
  4. Flies (8:20–32). Everywhere except Goshen.
  5. Livestock die (9:1–7). Apis, the **bull** god of Egypt.
  6. Boils (9:8–12). The magicians have them, too!
  7. Hail (9:13–35). Not in Goshen. Moses urges Egyptians to find **shelter**.
  8. Locusts (10:1–20). Osiris is the vegetation god.
  9. Darkness (10:21–29). Ra was the sun god. It is light in Goshen.
  10. Death of the first born (chapters 11–12). The heir to the throne is a deity.
- C. Pharaoh’s hard heart.
1. At times, his heart is just said to be hard (7:13, 14, 22; 8:19; 9:7, 35).
  2. At times, he hardens his own heart (8:15, 32; 9:34).
  3. At times, **God** hardens his heart (4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17).

## III. Redemption through **blood** (Exodus 12–13).

The real hero of redemption is not Moses... but **a lamb**! The Passover is a perpetual reminder to all those on the journey of salvation that we will never arrive at our destination without the help of the lamb.

- A. The lamb **shows me my need**. Neither Israelites nor Egyptians had a clue that a sentence of death was hanging over every house. The lamb teaches us our need for protection from **wrath**, deliverance from **slavery**, and spiritual nourishment for the **journey** ahead.
- B. The lamb **dies in my place**. The choice in every household is simple: either find a suitable substitute or death will come to this family. The Good News is that God will accept a substitute (Isa. 53:4–6). He himself will provide a lamb (Gen. 22; John 1:29).
- C. The lamb **bids me follow**. The whole point of the Passover meal was to receive sustenance for the journey ahead (12:11).

## IV. Redemption through **water** (Exodus 13:17–14:31).

- A. Divine guidance (13:17–22). It’s time to leave. The journey is about to begin. But **which way do I go**? God does not give them a map. He gives them a Guide. “The LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire” (13:21). “Follow me.” Notice: God does not lead them the easy way. He leads them **into the desert** (13:18).

- B. Between the devil and the deep blue sea (14:1–12). The pillar of cloud leads them to where the sea is before them, steep mountains are on both sides, and the Egyptian army is behind them. It appears that God has led them into **a trap!** “It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness” (14:12). Is life more valuable than **freedom?**
- C. What does it take to break us out of our bondage and get us started on the journey of salvation? This is what redemption looks like:
1. The **promise of God** is where it begins. He gives a solemn oath: I will bring you out and I will bring you in. “I promise...” (3:15–17).
  2. The **blood of the Lamb**. Redemption is simply impossible without a lamb who dies in our place and who nourishes our soul.
  3. **Faith**. The promise and the blood are meaningless without faith. True faith is not just an intellectual acknowledgment of the reality of God (4:31). In the Bible, faith and **obedience** are virtually synonyms. Faith without works is dead (James 2:14–26). Only when we are confronted with an impossible situation do we really discover whether we are believers or not. In such situations God often gives three commands:
    - a. **Fear not** (14:13). This doesn’t mean don’t tremble. Rather, don’t be controlled by your fears.

*Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you... For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom... (Isaiah 43:1–3).*
    - b. **Be still** (14:14). Don’t just do something; stand there!

*They who **wait** for the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31).*
    - c. **March forward** (14:15). The call to “be still” is not a call to passivity. But how can I wait and march forward at the same time? The key is timing. It was only as they moved forward in faith that the waters began to part.

*And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it”.... (Isaiah 30:20–21).*
- The way out is the way **through** (14:13–31). The miracle at the Red Sea teaches us that often God does not deliver us **from** our difficulties but through them!

## TABLE TALK

1. Is it possible to really believe in the true God if your false gods haven't yet been exposed as frauds?
2. How does the miracle at the Red Sea help you to understand how faith and works go together? Is it possible to say you believe if you don't obey?
3. Has God ever led you into a situation that felt impossible? What was God teaching you? Did you learn the lesson?
4. Think of a time in your life when God told you to wait; *Don't just do something; stand there!* What did you learn?
5. Make it personal: Think of a challenge you are currently facing. Does God want to deliver you from it...or through it?

## Lead On, O King Eternal

By Ernest W. Shurtleff (1862–1917)

*Lead on, O King eternal,  
the day of march has come;  
henceforth in fields of conquest  
your tents will be our home.  
Through days of preparation  
your grace has made us strong;  
and now, O King eternal,  
we lift our battle song.*

*Lead on, O King eternal,  
till sin's fierce war shall cease,  
and holiness shall whisper  
the sweet amen of peace.  
For not with swords' loud clashing  
or roll of stirring drums  
with deeds of love and mercy  
the heavenly kingdom comes.*

*Lead on, O King eternal;  
we follow, not with fears,  
for gladness breaks like morning  
where'er your face appears.  
Your cross is lifted o'er us,  
we journey in its light;  
the crown awaits the conquest;  
lead on, O God of might.*