

Sermon Notes

20th October 2019

Exodus 13:17-14:31

Geography

- The Hebrew word for where this happened is 'Yam Suph', which means Sea of Reeds, or Papyrus Marsh. Red Sea is a traditional translation.
- Both the Egyptians and Israelites used it for a whole range of water features between the (modern) Red Sea and the Mediterranean – roughly the line of the (modern) Suez Canal.
- The climate was wetter. The Mediterranean coast was further south. The route out of Egypt the Israelites would have followed would be in that area, not what we call the Red Sea today.
- Today the desert has taken over, and the old place names are lost.

Joseph's bones

- They took a coffin with them – containing Joseph's bones!
- Another reminder that Exodus is a continuation of Genesis.
- God is faithful to his promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- Joseph made the Israelites promise to take his body with them when they left Egypt (Genesis 50:22-26).

Pharaoh changes his mind

- Why does he seem surprised that they've left? (14:5)
- Some early discussions involved only a 3 day journey (8:27).
- Now he realised they're not coming back.
- Sets off in pursuit with his fast chariot force.
- The Israelites take a roundabout route, end up trapped against the sea (lake?).
- It looks as if God has led them into danger.
- God hasn't finished with Pharaoh yet.
- God does judge. Actions have consequences.
- Pharaoh ordered the Israelite babies to be drowned, now he will suffer the same fate.

Parting the waters

- Escape blocked. Enemies gathering. No hope in sight.
- Moses' message - stand firm, don't be afraid.
- If God leads us, it's for a purpose. Trust him.
- It actually takes all night for the rescue to happen.
- God sends a strong wind to part the waters.

- Natural or supernatural? It doesn't really matter. God does it.
- Israel escapes
- The Egyptians follow. The chariots get stuck/the wheels come off.
- When the water returns, they're drowned.
- The Israelites are finally free. No-one can take them back to Egypt.

Moses' and Miriam's song (ch 15)

- A song celebrating God's victory
- Turns back the boasts of the Egyptian army on their own heads
- In the Passover they were saved from judgement. Now they are saved again through judgement.

What's Exodus about for us?

- Is it a moral lesson? Be faithful in tough times. Don't be afraid. Trust God?
 - Good things, but that's about what we do
- Is the message 'God will deliver you from all your problems'? Defeat our enemies? Set us free? Or, less about ourselves, is it a manifesto for political liberation for oppressed people?
 - Legitimate desires, but not the heart of the story
 - The New Testament writers don't pick up that theme
 - Patient endurance instead (James 1:2-4)
- It's not about us. My Egypt. My Pharaoh. It's about what God has done.
- New Testament writers use it more as a picture of salvation – the greater salvation that Jesus brought. He has died for our sins, once and for all.
- Not from a human oppressor, but from the far greater imprisonment of sin and death. Jesus sets us free from what really keeps us as slaves.
- It's looking back. God HAS done it. We're across the sea.
- Our question is – how do I live now that God has done all this for me?

Space for your notes

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