

God's Way of Salvation

Key Verse:

“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed... but with the precious blood of Christ...”

1 Peter 1:18-19a

Extra: Compare God's way of salvation with man's way.

Level 5 lesson 17

Read: Exodus 12:21-38 and Romans 5:6-11

We have recently celebrated Easter: a time when we remember the greatest deliverance this world has ever seen; as Jesus Christ rose from the dead, victorious over sin and death, mankind's greatest enemy. Today we're going to be looking at a momentous occasion in the history of Israel, which is inextricably linked with Easter, and which also involved an amazing deliverance.

Moses warned the elders of Israel that God's coming judgement on Egypt would result in "loud wailing" throughout the land. However, he also told them that God in His mercy had graciously provided a unique way of salvation, whereby they might escape this terrible punishment. The people of Israel listened and wisely obeyed the Lord's message through Moses.

ISRAEL SAVED: Just as Moses had instructed, each household took a lamb from their flocks and ensuring it was without blemish, killed it on the 14th day of the month, at evening. Then they brushed the blood on the door posts of their houses with hyssop. Going inside, they roasted the lamb and ate it just as God told them. Then they obediently remained inside behind the door, trusting in God's promise that, "When I see the blood I will pass over you."

So where's the link with Easter you may ask? Well, like the Egyptians and Israelites, we too are under the threat of God's judgement against sin. In fact, the whole world is under the sentence of death, "for the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). However, God in His infinite mercy and grace has made a way of escape! It too, is through the blood of a lamb, but not an animal that we provide. The lambs Israel sacrificed pointed forward to God's 'Lamb' who was to die at Calvary. Jesus Christ is the "Lamb of God" and He died on the cross to take the punishment of death that we deserved. Now, to those who acknowledge their sin and accept His sacrifice on their behalf by faith, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7)

The moment we trust Jesus for the forgiveness of our sin we are sheltered from God's judgement. Just as the Israelites were safe when they were sheltered by the blood, so is everyone who is sheltered by the blood of Jesus Christ. But there was no escape for anyone not sheltered by the blood of the lamb: "The Lord killed all the first-born, from Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the first-born of the prisoner who was in the dungeon." It's the same with us, so make sure you are relying on the shed blood of Jesus to save you from sin and protect you from God's judgement.

Don't rely on good works, religious observances or festivals, or even going to Church. These things, though good, can never save us! Just as Israel had to obey God's instructions exactly in order to be saved, so we too must place our faith wholly in what Christ has done for us and not trust in our own efforts. The blood on the doorposts of the Israelite's houses is a wonderful picture of the Salvation offered to us through the blood of Jesus Christ, the "Lamb of God." Are you protected?

EGYPTIANS DEFEATED: The effect of God's terrible punishment was immediate. Pharaoh and his servants and all the rest of the Egyptians awoke and a terrible "loud wailing" went up throughout the land, just as God said it would. In terror, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, "Get Up! Get out! Go worship the Lord as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, and go!" Then, in selfish, superstitious fear, he asked Moses and Aaron to 'bless him' also!

While this was going on the Egyptian people too, were urging the Israelites to hurry up and leave the country, "otherwise we will all die!" They fearfully heaped gold, silver, and fine clothing upon the Israelites. In this way God rewarded His people for their centuries of slave labour. Finally, about six hundred thousand men, along with their women and children, left Egypt. You will notice in v38 that many other people went with them as well, along with all their animals and herds. What a huge crowd! We will soon see how they journeyed and finally entered the land God had promised to their Fathers.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Why is the whole world under the sentence of death?	.....
2. What provision has God made for our salvation?	.....
3. How can we be protected from judgement?	.....
4. How does the blood on the door have any relevance for us today?	.....
5. From this study, what do you see as the significance of obedience to God?	.....

My Name is Age

The Enemy Destroyed

Key Verse:
“By faith the people [Israelites] passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so they were drowned.”

Hebrews 11:29

Extra: How do you think the Israelites felt crossing between two walls of water?

Level 5 Lesson 18

Read Exodus 13:17-14:31 and Psalm 106:1-12

Having finally gained their freedom, the Israelites were naturally keen to get out of Egypt as quickly as possible. Their ultimate destination was Canaan, ‘The Promised Land,’ but their more immediate goal was to get beyond the Red Sea and out of the reach of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. God kindly “did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter.” Instead, they were led another, longer way, to enable them to avoid attack from this warlike people.

GOD’S PRESENCE: It is interesting to note that the vast crowd of over two million was not a disorderly mob, but a well organised company prepared for battle (12:51; 13:18). Leaving Rameses in Goshen, they journeyed to Succoth, and from there they proceeded to the edge of the wilderness and camped at a place called Etham. God provided an amazing way of both guiding and assuring the Israelites of His constant presence: during the day an immense upright ‘pillar’ of cloud went before them, and by night it became a pillar of fire.

From these symbols of God’s actual presence they heard His voice from time to time also. So it was that the Lord instructed the Israelites to move into a position, which appeared to put them in danger of being trapped close to the Red Sea. But this was no mistake, rather, it was all part of God’s sovereign purposes to deal with wicked Pharaoh and receive the honour rightly due Him from the Egyptian nation.

PHARAOH’S PURSUIT: After reading of all the plagues and Pharaoh’s constant ‘changes of heart,’ it comes as no surprise that shortly after letting the Israelites go, he regretted it and changed his mind! Scripture tells us, that the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart so that he decided to chase after the Israelites and capture them. With an elite force of six hundred chariots and soldiers, Pharaoh thundered out in pursuit of the Israelites.

When Pharaoh saw the Israelites seemingly trapped by the Red Sea with no way of escape, he no doubt felt pretty clever and ready to punish them!

The Israelites saw this too and their faith in God seemed to vanish. In their panic, they angrily blamed Moses for their predicament, claiming it would have been “better if he had left them in slavery in Egypt than to bring them out to perish in the desert.” Sadly, this would not be the last time Moses would hear THAT particular line!

MOSES’ FAITH: However, faced with what seemed to be impending disaster, Moses’ faith in God at this point was exemplary. “Fear not!” he told the frightened crowd. “Stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you. You need only to be still.” The ‘deliverance of the Lord’ meant that Israel had only to believe and obey. The Lord would do the rest.

What a great lesson for us! How often do we try to seek victory against our spiritual enemies (the devil and sin) in our own strength? Instead, we need to look to the Lord and seek only to be obedient to His will and Word. Instead of victory, make obedience your priority, and you will find victory in the Lord’s strength alone!

ISRAEL’S DELIVERANCE: In obedience to God’s instruction, Moses lifted up his rod and stretched out his hand over the Sea. The Angel of God and the pillar of cloud moved to a position between Israel and the Egyptians and kept them apart. This done, “the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land: the waters were divided and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.”

Seeing this, the Egyptians charged headlong after them in their chariots, only realising too late that, “The Lord fights for them against Egypt!” With the soldiers in confusion and their chariot wheels failing, God commanded Moses to stretch out his arm across the sea. Then with a thunderous roar the walls of water crashed in upon the Egyptians and all were drowned. God’s deliverance of His people was complete!

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. How did the Lord show kindness in leading Israel?
2. What was the Lord’s purpose in allowing Israel to be trapped?
3. Why did the people respond as they did when they seemed to be trapped by Pharaoh?
4. How did Moses answer the people when they were so upset?
5. What happened (a) to Israel (b) to the Egyptians?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Israel's Grumbling

Key Verse:

"[Jesus said] 'I am the living bread that came down from Heaven. If a man eats of this bread, he will live forever...'"

John 6:51a

Extra: What do you think the phrase "bread from Heaven" means?

Level 5 Lesson 19

Read Exodus 15-16 and Psalm 106:12-48

"THEN" we read, "Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord." In Egypt, you'll remember, they cried, they sighed, they groaned, but now they had been saved, gloriously saved, and their enemies were destroyed, and so "they sang." I'm sure the sound was almost heard back in Egypt, as two million people sang with all their might, in jubilation and worship to Almighty God for His marvellous salvation! There is nothing quite like the singing of God's people who know they have been similarly saved from sin and Satan's power. Can you sing in this way?

ISRAEL'S TRIAL: However, Israel's joyful, thankful singing did not last for long. Arriving hot and thirsty at a place called Marah, they found the water bitter and undrinkable. This proved too much for the weary Israelites: "What are we to drink?" they complained to Moses. Of course it is no small thing to be without water in the desert, but this was just another test of their faith and patience.

The Lord miraculously sweetened the waters and later brought them to a place called Elim where there was a plentiful supply of good water. From Elim they came into the 'Desert of Sin' and there again, they started grumbling as their food supply ran out. However, we shouldn't condemn Israel too severely, because we are often no better are we? Moses told them plainly though, that their grumbling and dissatisfaction was really against God.

GOD'S PROVISION: Graciously, God responded to Moses. "I will rain down bread from heaven for you, and the people are to go out and gather it." How merciful our God is! He would provide an abundant supply of bread. This arrived every morning (except Saturday, the Sabbath) and would do so for forty years! In addition, that very evening they would even receive an abundant supply of meat, so that they would "know that I am the Lord your God!" The supply of the bread was to be a wholly miraculous provision, and the meat would be provided by a huge flock of quails, which God would miraculously re-direct from their usual flight path, to land right in the Israelites' camp!

Sure enough, the quails arrived that evening in enormous numbers, and Israel feasted on them while they were fresh, and gathered them during the two following days to dry and preserve them for future use (Numbers 11:4-33). In the morning when the people of Israel got up, they found what resembled a white frost on the ground. Not knowing what it was they exclaimed, "Manna?" This simply means, "What is it?" Moses explained that it was "the bread which The Lord has given you to eat." After that, it became known simply as 'Manna.' What an appropriate name to give it, especially when we remember that in John 6, Jesus taught that this 'manna' was a type of Himself - the 'true bread' of God sent from Heaven to give life to the world" (John 6:32-33)

SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS: Moses proceeded to give them God's instructions about gathering and storing this strange new 'bread.' They were to gather about seven pints for every person, using a measure called an 'omer.' They were not to keep any for the next day, except on the sixth day of the week, when they were to gather a double quantity to provide for the seventh day, the Sabbath. This day was to be kept as a day of rest to the Lord and no manna would fall.

Simple instructions you would think, wouldn't you? Yet as always there were those who doubted God and ignored His instructions. However, these faithless, disobedient ones who collected more and kept it overnight found that by morning it was completely rotten! Others went out on the Sabbath day searching for manna, but of course couldn't find any.

Moses was angry with them and God was too! "How long will (you people) refuse to keep My commandments and My instructions?" God questioned Moses. "I have provided a double portion for you on the sixth day, now keep My day holy!" These people still needed to learn to obey God and to really trust in His marvellous provision for their physical needs. Even more marvellous is the True Bread from Heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is God's provision for our greatest need, which is salvation... today!

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Why did the Israelites sing?	.....
2. How did they react when they found water? Why?	.....
3. How did the Lord supply the people's needs?	.....
4. What was manna, and how was it described to the people?	.....
5. What is the likeness between Jesus and the manna?	.....

God's Gracious Provision

Key Verse:
“Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.”

Ephesians 6:11

Extra: What part should prayer have in our lives?

Level 5 Lesson 20

Read Exodus 17 and Psalm 13:5

Continuing their march through the wilderness, Moses and the Israelites came to a place called Rephidim, where once again there was no water for them. Again, the thirsty people grumbled to Moses, who rebuked them for really complaining against God, as he had done earlier.

A GREAT NEED: The Negev Desert through which they were passing is one of the most terrible on earth. If you've ever been in a desert, then you will appreciate that thirst is a very serious problem! We can't survive very long at all without water, but these people forgot that God already knew that! After all the miraculous things God had done, and was still doing for them, they really should not have grumbled. After all, they were still far better off than when they were slaves in Egypt.

The Israelites should have expected some difficulties on their way to the Promised Land. They should have known that God, who had brought them into the wilderness, would not allow them to die there through either hunger or thirst. They should have trusted the LORD and asked Him for the needed water. Instead, they chose to angrily complain to Moses, even accusing him of bringing them out of Egypt to kill them all. They questioned "whether God was really with them or not." (v7) In fact, as Moses told the Lord in v4, some were even threatening to stone him!

A WONDERFUL PROVISION: Once again, we see the gracious heart of our God in dealing with His rebellious people. Truly, He knows the limitations of His creation all too well: as the psalmist put it in Psalm 103:14, "He knows how we are formed; He remembers that we are dust." God told Moses to take the elders of Israel and with rod in hand, go to a particular rock in Horeb. This time he was told to strike the rock with the rod, and as a result, water would flow out of the rock for the people to drink.

In faith, Moses did as God commanded him in the sight of the elders and immediately a torrent of beautiful, life-giving water gushed from the rock and swept along the dry river-bed.

In a moment, there was an abundant supply. We can imagine how the multitudes stooped to gulp down the cool water! I wonder how many sought forgiveness for their sinful words and accusations against Moses?

Of course, the water that came from the rock has an important spiritual lesson for us too. The rock Moses struck can be used as picture of Jesus Christ. On Calvary's Cross Jesus was 'struck' by God when He died for our sins. As a result, the 'water of life' comes from Him to satisfy the spiritual thirst of mankind. Friend, have you gone to Him for that life-giving stream? Place your faith in Christ today and quench your soul-thirst forever!

A STRONG ENEMY: No sooner had they passed through this great experience than they were confronted with another! We read in v8 that the Amalekites came to block the way and attacked Israel in Rephidim. Moses instructed Joshua to choose warriors from the ranks of Israel and confront the enemy in the plain. Moses (along with Aaron and Hur) stood on the top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand.

Then Moses lifted up his hands and prayed. As long as his hands were uplifted, Israel kept winning, but when his hands fell down the Amalekites began to gain the upper hand. To keep Moses' hands up, Aaron and Hur gave Moses a stone to sit on, while they stood on each side and held up his hands until sunset. In this way, God gave the Israelites a hard-fought victory against their enemy.

AN IMPORTANT LESSON: Of course, we can immediately see an obvious spiritual lesson for us in our daily battles with our enemy Satan. So it was that a combination of faith and obedience, and prayer and fighting gave Israel the victory over the Amalekites. It was neither fighting alone, nor prayer alone, but both together. So it is with us. As we alluded to in an earlier lesson, our spiritual foes can only be overcome by faithfully obeying the Word of the Lord and by prayerfully seeking His enabling in each situation.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. What should Israel have done when they found no water?	.....
2. How did the Lord provide water for the Israelites?	.....
3. How does this speak of our Lord Jesus Christ?	.....
4. How did Israel really gain victory over the Amalekites?	.....
5. What is the spiritual lesson in this for us?	.....

Please complete and return by post to

PSSM Bible Discovery, 5/399 New North Road, Kingsland, Auckland 1021 or scan & email to info@biblediscovery.org.nz