

Steps to Faith

Exodus 14:19-31

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A. God Prepares the Way (vs. 19-20):

1. Angel of the Lord – God’s special messenger that speaks as if He is the Lord God (speaks in the first person), baring His credentials is on the move after telling Moses to stop crying and focus because He is going to receive glory from destroying Pharaoh’s army (14:4 – He says the same thing).
2. Being going – The same Angel of God that has been leading them away from the nearest route to where they are now, is also going to protect them. They are facing the best of the Egyptian army with the best equipment because the Angel of God led them.
 - a) Then the angel of God, perhaps a theophany (cf. comments on Gen. 16:9) or an angelic messenger, moved from the front of the Israelites to the rear to protect them from the charging Egyptians. The angel shifted from guide to guardian!
3. Went behind them – Without anyone telling the Angel of God what to do, because their obedience exposed them, He moved from leading God’s people to protecting them. This action is always going to be this way when the people of God are obedient to God (John 15:1-5).
 - a) God allows them to get use to the cloud then uses the cloud to make them feel protected.
4. Stood - To stand means that the Angel of the Lord is immovable. No matter who is coming against Israel the Angel of the Lord will remain standing upright, firmly established ready to defend Israel. No need for an army of Angels, just the Angel of the Lord.
 - a) For us, we have no armor in the back. This is a great illustration of what He does for us. It is not good for us to run in trouble because our back would be in the wrong place and that’s maybe why the writer of Hebrews says it leads to our destruction (Hebrews 10:35-39).
5. Moses stretched - After the cloud moved, God required Moses to lead by purposefully, intentionally extending his staff over the sea. The fact that the sea opened up demonstrates that God is everywhere, not just in the cloud because He opened the sea.

God required leadership but leadership still needed to depend on Him.

6. Hand – The scripture is careful to say hand because it demonstrates that God gave Moses the authority to move forward and God would move when he moves. God still uses leaders even though He can function without them.
7. The Lord – Notice that even though God required Moses to lead, He is the person who has the authority and power to rescue His people. It is because they are His people that He fights for them, fights against their enemy and establishes His divinely called leader. Egypt was doing well only to take care of God's people. When they were no longer needed God destroyed them.
8. Swept; Caused to go; swept back - The movement of the water (swept) describes the powerful nature of God. In other words, this is who God is because this word describes a lifestyle pattern that represents the nature of the person. He has the ability to do anything He needs to do whenever He chooses to do it. He is sovereign, powerful, and is not intimidated by anyone no matter how powerful they may be.
9. Strong East wind - The wind came from the east because that is where the dry air is. "The east wind is always seen as destructive and punishing partly because the east wind of Egypt, Sinai and Palestine are blistering hot and dry." (New American Commentary)

B. Faith Faces the Impossible (vs. 22; 2 Corinthians 5:7):

1. Went into the midst of the sea – With the army behind them the nation of Israel was continuously motivated to enter a sea where the water was like a wall on both sides. They had to be frightened by the Egyptians to go the way of less war.
 - a) The passageway may have been wide in order to allow about 2 million people and their flocks and herds to walk through. This was a miraculous wind!
 - b) God put the enemy on their backs, coming in after them, and the billowing water on both sides of them. Each keeps them moving in the direction He needed them to go in because He knew their non-believing hearts, which was just exposed, when they saw the army.
2. Pursuit - The Egyptians seeing the movement of the people continued into the sea with no desire to stop chasing them until they destroy them. What people mean for evil, God uses for our good (Romans 8:28). They would no longer have Egypt as an enemy and they were punished for the evil they did to Israel (God could not do this to the Philistines).
 - a) Pharaoh sent his best soldiers and chariots into the sea even when

he knew the first born of Egypt was dead and saw all the miracles God did for Israel; this is truly a demonstration of how hard a hard heart can be.

- b) Most chariot units of this period range between 10 and 150, so 600 is a large muster, and this represents only Pharaoh's unit. When Rameses II fought the Hittites at the battle of Qadesh, his enemy boasted 2,500 chariots. ^[1]

C. Remember, God Has Your Back (vs. 24-25):

1. The morning watch - This is 2 am. God allowed the Egyptians (removed the cloud – God is using different techniques to fight Egypt) to come towards Israel until they are all in the sea. It seems like God was so in control that He did not have a need to do anything all night because He knew where they would be in the morning.
2. Lord looked down – The One who has all authority remained above the issue while in the midst of the issue so He looked down from heaven. He definitely does not have short sighted vision. The pillar of fire and the cloud move from becoming a guide to a weapon of war.
3. Confusion - God used another technique to fight the Egyptians and that is to harass them but creating disturbances so that their chariot wheels would swerve creating so much difficulty for these well experienced soldiers (Exodus 14:6-7) that they became distressed.
4. He caused to swerve - The swerving the chariot wheels was supernatural and continuous. These experienced riders could not control the chariots.
5. He made them drive - Even though the chariots were moving forward it was hard to control the chariots and it seem to progressively get worse.
6. Let us flee from Israel – Because of God's supernatural actions, the Egyptians decided to turn aside continuously and rapidly from chasing the Israelites. The word to flee can also mean to escape. They needed to escape from God fighting them.
 - a) With the army in sight the Israelites became very frightened. They were not just afraid, they were very frightened. Remember this is after God performed miracle after miracle to get them released. These miracles did not occur in Goshen.
 - b) The Egyptians realized that God was fighting for Israel (vs. 25). They did not flee from Israel because Israel fought them, they fled because God was mighty and powerful.

7. The Lord is fighting for them – The Lord, because of His covenant with Israel and the manner in which Egypt threatened Israel, is completely engaged in war against Egypt. This is the war the Lord steered them to and is completely committed to deliver them from.
 - a) The Lord will fight for you. This is His war not theirs. The Philistines would have been their war (Moses's way to leave Egypt) that would have discouraged them.
8. Lord said to Moses – The Lord, after vividly exposing His commitment for Israel, constantly kept repeating what He needed Moses to do. At His morning watch He needed Moses to act right away. The Egyptians cannot escape their punishment because they were able to get back to the shores. Israel must see God's punishment of a people who treated them unjustly to the point of killing their children. God wanted for Israel to see their bodies wash up on the seashore before they take on the wilderness.
9. Stretch out your hand – The same person whom the Lord provided the authority to represent Him opening the sea is the same person the Lord now wants to take up the same position of closing it on the Egyptians. The Lord commands Moses (so it is still His authority that is executed when the person He is talking to is obedient) to take a position before all the people and extend the rod over the sea. Upon this action the sea will close over the Egyptians.
10. They may come back; Turn away – The sea comes back on the Egyptians as a result of the Lord's orders to Moses. This action would continue until the sea is back in its place as it was before. The Lord controls the winds and the waves (Matthew 8:23-27; 14:22-36).
11. Stretch out his hand – What God has taught me is that when His people (collectively speaking) are continuously in peril, even though He is Lord and has the power to do anything at any time, He most times chooses to work through the leadership He appoints.
12. Were fleeing right into it – God so set the sea back in place that it was coming against them while they had no control over their chariots. God does not need us to fight for ourselves. He needs us to fight against our desires to disobey Him because we choose to be controlled by our fears and anxieties.
13. The Lord overthrew – The water is continuously, with no end in sight covering over the soldiers, totally destroying them because of its power. In other words, there was no chance for them to swim their way out because the power of the water crushed them.
14. Midst – The Lord made sure to talk to Moses at the right time, during His watch (in

other words, God knew when they would be in the inner-most part of the Red Sea) so that the Egyptians had absolutely no chance to escape.

15. Return to its normal state – The water will continually be the way it has always been because no one will escape. This is why the scriptures say, *"It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."* (Hebrews 10:31; NASU)
16. Covered – The water covering them means that the water totally continuously overwhelmed them. They could not escape its overwhelming power.
17. Remained – The Lord alone completely destroyed the most powerful army in the known world. Pharaoh who viewed himself as a god was shown real power and who is the true Lord God. Israel who once feared him had no need to fear him anymore. After destroying all of Egypt's gods, Israel had no more Egyptian gods to fear. They were now free from fear when called to faith in the wilderness.
18. Walked – Israel still walking (tells how large the body of people was at by midday they were still in the midst of the sea) in the midst of the sea with water towering on both sides represent the lifestyle experience they must completely submit to when they commit to obey the Lord's divine will. With water on both sides and the Egyptians dead the Lord is seeking to develop their faith, because with destruction and protection all happening at the same time they must learn to trust Him before entering the wilderness.
19. Walked – Israel walking in the midst of the sea while the Egyptians are being destroyed, represents the Lord's relationship with them while respecting their need for justice and the Lord's lack of relationship with Egypt and His punishment for their cruelty against His people.

D. Remember, Faith is Rewarded (vs. 30-31; Hebrews 11:6):

1. Thus the Lord saved Israel – The Lord on His own initiative, by His own almighty power is going to physically remove Israel from the oppressive burden and harm Egypt has constantly assigned to them.
2. Hand – The Egyptians were once operated with complete control and authority over Israel.
3. Israel saw the Egyptians dead – Israel had a clear visible understanding that those who once was oppressing them now lay dead right before them because of the Lord's power. It is the Lord's mighty hand that destroyed them.
4. When Israel saw – When Israel had a clear understanding that the Egyptians were coming after them to kill them; they realized that they were now dead before them all by the mighty hand of the Lord.

5. The great power – Israel witnessed the power, strength, and authority of the Lord when they saw their oppressors lying dead before them and they did not have to defend themselves.
6. Fear the Lord - When the Israelites saw the dead Egyptians, they became very emotional and reverence the Lord God for His power and might.
 - a) When the people saw the army that once beat them and made them slaves dead along the seashore then they recognized that the Lord their God is God and deserves to be worshipped. It is this event that finally allowed them to believe in Moses (compare to verse 11-12).
7. They believed in the Lord - All Israel, as a result of what they witnessed, continuously had a firm commitment to put their full trust in the Lord.
 - a) The people often fluctuated between trust and complaining, between belief and unbelief (4:31; 5:21; 14:10–12, 31; 15:24; 16:2–4; 17:2–3).^[2]
8. And his servant Moses – Moses' leadership that was once so questioned was now fully established in the people's minds. They viewed him as a person who faithfully executes God's agenda.

^[1]Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:131). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^[2] Hannah, J. D. (1985). Exodus. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 132). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.