

ISRAEL'S FIRST OBSTACLE

Psalm 106:9

Introduction: Discuss: God calling Moses to lead HIS people out of bondage in Egypt - all the plagues God did through Moses - Israel finally released - on their way to a promised land, leaving all their enemies, woes and cares behind them - being led by a cloud guiding Moses to the Red Sea - Egyptian soldiers came up behind them, trapped with rocky clefts on either side of them the sea in front of them and the soldiers behind them. They were trapped with no hope of escape.

- Christians often have very similar experiences in their lives.

I. ISRAEL FACED THREE EXCEEDING GREAT DANGERS

1. The Red Sea was in front of them which God had made Himself, not by an enemy.
 - God will place trials before all His children to test their sincerity and faith.
 - Family, health, business, friends, circumstances, etc.
 - When all seems well, suddenly there comes a difficulty, sent by God.
2. Israel was terrified by the appearance of the Egyptian soldiers, now their enemies.
 - In the life of a Christian, things that never bothered them can become frightening.
 - Simple, little things can become more difficult, more awful, more bleak, more painful, and like Paul the Christian will cry out, "*..Oh, wretched man that I am, there is a war within me..that which I ought not do is what I do and that which I should do I do not..who shall deliver me?*"
3. Israel had such weak faith. The Red Sea before them, the soldiers behind them and they blamed their deliver, Moses, for their situation.
 - So it is with the Christian often. Weak faith causes one to cry out as did Israel.
 - We don't care about this or that until we face it and are quick to blame somebody.

II. THERE WERE THREE HELPS FOR ISRAEL

1. The first help was God. God had put the Red Sea there, then led them by a fiery cloudy pillar to this first difficulty.
 - God had brought them there, so God could and would take care of them.
 - However great the trouble, God is greater.
 - That great trouble which comes upon us is planned by love, the same love that will intercede and protect us, God's love.
2. The second help is that they were God's people. Though in difficulty, God had brought them there and therefore God would bring them out.
 - Thus it is with the Christian also. Belonging to God but it is God who brings His own to a Red Sea. Therefore let all fears be gone for God will lead His own through what He has brought them to.

3. The third help was in a man, a man with a staff, Moses.
 - Moses did everything for them through God.
 - The Christian has Jesus who has not a staff but a cross.
 - What Moses did with his staff, Jesus does much more with His cross, therefore we Christians can cry to Him, call to Him and Jesus will make the way clear.

III. GOD HAD A DESIGN IN IT ALL

1. Through all the troubles, trials and wanderings, God was to thoroughly prepare Israel to truly be His people.
 - Paul said: *"They were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea."*
 - God's design in bringing His people into trouble and raising sins at their heels is to condition them for His service, consecrating them forever to Himself.
 - When some Red Sea rolls before you, be delighted that God is conditioning you and developing your trust and faith.
 - We will never be as God wants us to be until we have had some sharp trials and tests.
 - The purpose of all the Christian's afflictions and troubles is the development of an entire dedication to Christ in everything with all the heart.
 - As God used the Red Sea, the soldiers, the desert, the trials and wandering in the desert to teach Israel total, complete dependence and obedience to Him, thus He has the same reasons for the distress He sends to us Christians. Count yourself blessed when He does.

CONCLUSION:

1. If God be God, then serve Him with all your heart, soul and mind.
2. It would be good for those who profess to be Christians but whom are seldom seen in God's service to have a Red Sea thrust into their lives. Am I saying that trouble should come to the weak and wayward Christian? **YES!** If that would bring that Christian back to where he/she should be with Christ.
3. Some you know, perhaps in this very room, are on a journey that will end at a Red Sea and for them there will be no escape. Their sins will catch up with them and drown them in that sea for they are no of God's own.
4. What then, shall one do to escape this death? Nothing? A person can do nothing but there is a MAN who can do all things. The MAN is Jesus Christ. Only He can snatch a person from the depths of the sea of death and bring eternal security and life. *"..Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved..."*
5. Christian, rejoice when you are surrounded by affliction, in the midst of trials, over your head in the depths of despair for the God who placed you there did so for a reason, to make you a better child of His. Rejoice, look up, step out on faith and He who put you there will also deliver you.