

The Divine Exodus Exodus 15

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon explores the themes of deliverance, redemption, and the believer's journey from bondage to freedom through Christ's sacrifice and God's guidance.

Scripture: Exodus 14:13

Topics: "Redemption", "Deliverance"

Description

John Nelson Darby explores the significance of the Red Sea crossing in Exodus 15, illustrating how it represents both judgment for the Egyptians and salvation for Israel. He emphasizes that while the blood of the Passover lamb spared Israel, true deliverance came through the Red Sea, symbolizing Christ's death and resurrection. Darby explains that believers are not only forgiven but redeemed and brought into a relationship with God, highlighting the importance of understanding our weakness and dependence on Christ. He contrasts the experiences of Israel in the wilderness with the believer's journey, emphasizing the need for faith and the transformative power of Christ's work. Ultimately, he concludes that true deliverance involves recognizing our inability and relying on God's grace.

Transcript

The British Herald, 1875, pp. 109-112.

In a certain sense the Red Sea had closed the whole history, if you take it in itself as to Egypt (it begins the life in another sense); but it closed the history by redemption and judgment (for the Egyptians were judged), for death which was salvation to Israel was judgment to the Egyptians.

As regards Israel, the Lord comes down, "I have seen the affliction of my people," and He sends Moses. In coming to the passover, the blood is put upon the lintels and the door-posts. There God comes judicially and passes over, but still He has the character of a judge. He does not touch Israel, but that is all; He does not come in. It is not deliverance, though the ground is laid for deliverance. There was no knowledge of God for them, it was only that He spared them. When they set out in haste to get away and save their lives, they are brought to a point where they cannot get any farther, Pharaoh pursues them, and the Lord led them on purpose down to the sea with Pharaoh behind them. Pharaoh thought he had gained his point, and if it had only been Israel, he would have done so.

Then you get a second thing -- not the blood that meets the judge, but the power that delivers. "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." Then the Lord says to Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel that

they go forward." And this is not the blood that meets the righteousness of God, but it is death looked at as deliverance, completely clearing them out of the place they were in. To us it is Christ's death. It was death and judgment which really secured Israel. The sea that let Israel out swallowed up Pharaoh and all his hosts; that to believers is in fact the judgment that came in Christ. Death and judgment are what has saved us; only Christ took it for us, of course. You see people now commonly saying, There is death and judgment before us, and they think they must behave themselves to meet the judgment, whereas when I get death and judgment in Christ, sins are swallowed up. It is redemption, which is a great deal more than forgiveness. The blood met the case of imputing sin, but there was not deliverance out of Egypt; in point of fact they did not get out of Egypt till they passed through the Red Sea. It is not the forgiveness of sins only, it is a great deal more. Two stages for us, but not in the work done. I think the death and resurrection of Christ go farther than His blood-shedding as to that; it all goes together as to fact, not as to application; it is all the same work of Christ, but there are two distinct things. They were really more guilty than the Egyptians, for they ought to have known better. You see in Ezekiel they had been worshipping idols.

I may be a responsible child of Adam, and I get forgiveness; but this is not all. But here I get the fact that Christ has been there under death and judgment, and delivered me. In Rom. 5 you are not supposed to have crossed Jordan. I am a child of Adam there, but a child whose sins are put away: peace is made, and you get the grace of God towards us which carries us on to glory (vv. 1-3). You get God in more grace than you do in Rom. 8. There I get the believer's standing before God, an advanced position for the believer, but not so much for the grace of God, for grace is towards a sinner. You bring me before God in Christ, instead of God before me when I was in sins. Our old man has sinned, but I do not want forgiveness, for my evil nature, I want condemnation for it. And this is God's word regarding it -- "Condemned sin in the flesh." There is no forgiveness of a nature. None of the past sins can be on my conscience. Supposing I were converted this moment, it is the sins I have committed that are on my conscience; but when I come to the work of Christ, it would be simply improper to speak of that as if He bore only "all the sins I had"; for all my sins were future when Christ bore them, and of course He bore all; in Him there is no future or past at all. But there is the difficulty as regards me. If all are not atoned for, Christ must suffer again. But there is no forgiveness of a nature; it is condemned in Christ -- of course He had it not, but it is dead in Christ, for the condemnation of it was in His death.

Here (Ex. 14:24) it is redeeming the people as well as blotting out their sins. Satan pursues them right up to death and judgment. I am redeemed out of that state in Christ's death. Then this ch. 15 -- "Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation." That is more than forgiving them, they are brought to God. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God," and to God in His "holy habitation." I find death and judgment on Christ. It is the ruin of those who attempt to go through it in their own strength; and the saving of those who believe in Christ -- deliverance to God through it by faith in the work of Christ. They had not got the inheritance yet, but you get it here; if we were as simple as when a person first knows redemption, it would be, -- "Oh, if God has come in and is for me, it is not much matter if Satan is against me." They had not got to "the dukes of Edom" or "the mighty men of Moab." The thing is to have our faith as simple and our eye as clear as when we were only starting. Here is God delivering us and God for us, what matter about anything else? The "holy habitation" is where God was. We are completely brought to God out of Egypt, not merely forgiven as guilty sinners -- "Joying in God." In Rom. 5 it is the same; you are actually with God there. "I have borne you upon eagle's wings and brought you to myself"; v. 17 looks on to when they are across Jordan. We have not got a bit of the inheritance; but I am just as certain I shall be in glory as that I am justified. I am not yet brought to the place "which Thou hast made for me to dwell in," but I am there in spirit in Christ. I am in Christ, but not with Him.

I do not think you get consciously into Canaan, until you have the consciousness that you have no strength at all, as well as that you need redemption. To realize "heavenly places," you need to know you are weak, besides your knowing redemption. People say, If you have only faith you need not go through the Red Sea at all -- This I do not believe. It is another question -- it is experience.

It is not a question of experience, but God has delivered me (v. 13). I am with God; Christ has brought me to God. Paul, in three days, got through much of the 7th of Romans. Paul, as the persecutor, was the highest expression of what God was judging, -- more so even than those that killed Christ; through ignorance they did it. When Christ died, He interceded for them. Peter preached to them: Now do you repent, and God will send Him back again. If you repent, and believe in a glorified Christ, He will come back then and there. Well, they would not listen to that, and Stephen rehearses all this, and shows them what was their awful condition, and that closes entirely the whole history of man. "Now, once in the end of the world," etc. The world ended morally in the cross. Saul is then found, for the first time, joining in killing Stephen, and he must be active, as he is the representative of the Jewish enmity to Christ. Not content with persecuting at Jerusalem, he must go elsewhere! The Lord stops him as a persecutor, and says, "You must be an apostle of God's grace in Christ." He takes the person who was most active in destroying Christ's name to go and preach it. He was neither a Jew nor a Gentile, -- "delivering thee from the people (the Jews), and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee." He knows nobody after the flesh, not even Christ. He was connected with a glorified Christ, a new creation; it was a new ground altogether. He went through the 7th of Romans in the time he was blinded at Damascus. What an awful thing it must have been. Take his conscience: he thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and that made him an enemy of God. The law? And that was worse, trying to put down Christ. He had all the religious authorities, and he found that his conscience and all the religious authorities had brought him into enmity with what God delighted in, in His Christ. He has to start completely afresh; it must have been overwhelming. Every principle he considered as thoroughly good he found out to be perfectly bad. In those terrible three days, he lost all the things he had leaned on during his whole past life. What had he to lean on? conscience had taken him all wrong -- law, chief priests! It was not merely the sins he got conscious of, but everything that was called good made him an enemy of God. And God turns him inwards, for He makes him blind, and leaves him there for these three days. He did not get out of the Red Sea until Ananias came to him. But we learn the revelation of Christ in glory that Saul got, that all the saints are one with Christ Himself. He could not touch Jesus in glory; but these saints were all members of Himself. The great work in the conscience was done rapidly in him, and I suppose he got through the Red Sea and the Jordan in those three days. A man may be some time about it. He was laid by afterwards for three years.

You may know the change as true, but you do not get into it; and until you have gone through the process which makes nothing of you, you have not gone through it. Self has not been learnt so as to be disowned and distrusted. A saint who has not experienced the terrible evil of self, and got freed from it, has never got its back broken; and when it comes to the practical point, he does not distrust himself as a man who has learnt himself in God's sight. When you get a positive distrust of self, when self is learnt, the man is in a totally different state; though, after all, one has to watch.

Take the case of Moses: he gives up Pharaoh's household; but what is he going to do? He takes an Egyptian and kills him. This is human strength, and Pharaoh is greatly stronger than Moses on that point. After forty years his flesh was cowardly. Before, he carried his natural energy with him. When I find I have no strength, not merely that I am ungodly, but that I cannot do the right thing, I despair of self.

Now they get into the wilderness: a new history, a practical experimental fact. Now you have Israel with God, and God says, "I have brought you to myself, and now I have something to teach you." They had to learn their own hearts. They had learnt what was in His heart in seeing Him come down to deliver them; now they must learn what is in their hearts after being delivered. God withdraws not His eyes from the righteous, but He goes on dealing with them in grace. The first thing mentioned with regard to Israel is -- they come to Marah, and they must drink the water of the Red Sea though they were saved by it. That is what is meant by the bitter waters. They had been saved by the Red Sea, but they with must learn death too; they must drink it experimentally: only that when Christ, the Tree, is put into it, the waters are made all sweet. They esteemed the Spirit reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. It is death to sin really. The moment you get Christ brought into the reproach, I am reproached for Christ's sake -- that brought in the sweetness. The moment you put Christ into all those kinds of suffering, it is glory in it, and for our good too. "Glory in tribulations." A people is brought to God, but He must instruct them. It is the death of the flesh, but the life of the Spirit. "By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." When I see Christ, it is sweet, though at first bitter.

Then afterwards you find that they come to the sweet waters, as also the twelve wells of water and the seventy palm trees. Marah is practical tasting of the cross; Elim, the refreshings of God, in a certain sense complete in itself.

Now, in Ex. 16 and Ex. 17 there is no chastisement at all, but grace entirely above in all; Ex. 15:27, where you get this fresh water, you get the principle of obedience, but the Lord in grace healing. There is discipline in the fullest grace. In ch. 16 the people murmur, and the Lord meets them in sovereign grace with bread and water, and says not a word against them. In ch. 17 there is no water at Rephidim. Just as I got the Sabbath with the manna: when I get the waters or refreshings of Rephidim, I get conflict, and then dependence. If I get the power of the Spirit of God, that is, His refreshings, I shall have to fight Satan. The first time we get Joshua mentioned is in ch. 17. "Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek." Amalek is everything that was contrary to God -- the power of Satan -- they were in conflict with Satan always.

There we have the two great elements: Christ, as the bread of God, come down from heaven to feed us; and the Spirit of God, in the water from the rock, in conflict. Amalek is not the flesh only: there is a great deal more that Satan acts in than simply working on the flesh. Such are chs. 16, 17.

In Ex. 18 come the Gentiles. Zipporah then is a type of the Church we are getting now. The two sons are not the Church, only Zipporah, v. 11: "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods." We see the Gentiles owning Israel and Jehovah. "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people." The Gentiles are as much at home with Him as Israel. They own Israel to be Jehovah's own people, and they are not. Jehovah is greater than all the gods.

Thus I have got the deliverance, with discipline and healing in the wilderness, and then I get the manna, Christ come down from heaven, and rest -- the Sabbath; then I get the waters, the Spirit of God refreshing, but there also conflict. It is entire dependence that is depicted in this. Lastly, we find the Gentiles and Jews all together.

But in Ex. 19 you come to law, and the whole thing is changed. Hur means purity. Moses' hands are held up for blessing. The purity is looked for in us. If I am not walking according to God's will, I shall not have strength in conflict. You have nothing to do with God here except to get His blessing. You get discipline

and conflict, but then it is all blessing. Every Christian knows that, unless he is walking with God, he cannot have strength. It is striking that "the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation," but it is in Israel that He keeps the conflict up. It gives a very blessed character to Israel's wars; he is fighting a battle for Jehovah, only now "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." In that sense Hur would represent the Spirit, because He is the power of purity: Aaron's hands, priestly intercession.

After this they come to Sinai and undertake to have their blessings on the ground of their own obedience. The law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator (Gal. 3). The moment I get a mediator, it cannot be in the hand of one, "but God is one": so it all came to nought, for man's side broke down. The moment you get the law, God raises the question of righteousness, -- not by giving God's righteousness, but by requiring man's. Blessing and promise depend on God's faithfulness. In Nehemiah it goes back to Moses. The promise to Abraham was without any condition whatever. That is the very thing that in Galatians the apostle says: you cannot add the law to it, for you have the promise in Abraham to Christ "the seed," and Christ is there and must have it; then the law was added to raise this question of righteousness. God raises the question of righteousness on man's side. The question of righteousness was not raised in Abraham; all through Scripture the difference is made between Moses and Abraham. The law never in itself detected sin in the nature. Live for ever; eat of the tree of life. Christ comes and takes the responsibility and is the life. A perpetual sinner would have been an unnatural monstrosity. God could not have allowed it.

In the desert you must go to Numbers. In Exodus, after a few chapters, you get the tabernacle. In Numbers you have every form of unbelief acting -- the history of the journey in the wilderness. They start in Num. 10:33. "The ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them," etc., that was not its place. Num. 11, they fell a-lusting, the same thing that they did before. Christ would not do for them; the manna was dry stuff. Verses 32, 33, give discipline under the hand of God. There you get a people tired of Christ, and going back in their hearts to Egypt and getting judged. Then you get Miriam and Aaron, the prophetess and priest, rising up against Moses, who is king in Jeshurun. Num. 14, you get them despising the pleasant land, and the difficulties of the way, and getting judged. The spies bring a glorious report of the land and Eshcol grapes, saying, "This is the fruit of it." But the cities are walled up, and the Anakims are there; and they give an evil report; and the people are angry and vexed. Then they get disheartened; and the positive hostility against God and they speak of stoning Joshua and Caleb. Still in Num. 15 the Lord's purpose goes on quietly. Num. 16, you get the murmurings of Korah, and then meek Moses fails, and he is not able to get into Canaan (Num. 20). Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips. They had been put (Num. 17) under Aaron -- that is, priestly superintendence in living power, the only thing that could bring them through the wilderness.

Num. 19 is extremely interesting, You get a sacrifice (Leviticus gives us all the sacrifices). In the middle of the journeyings you get this sacrifice, for it is for us in our journeyings. There is no sprinkling of blood; it is ashes and running water they sprinkle with. Supposing I have touched defilement in any way, the Spirit of God takes the ashes, which is the remembrance of Christ having put away all the sins, and puts them into the water, and sprinkles the person. Now there is no question of blood shedding or blood sprinkling, but the Spirit of God comes and deals with my conscience where I have failed: and communion is restored. I have allowed what cost Christ His agony on the cross; but the same thing, the ashes, show there can be no imputation. What are the ashes there for? Because the sin has been consumed in Christ.

In Num. 20, He smites the rock, and this finishes the history through the wilderness. Then, if you go to fight in heavenly places, you must go to Joshua and the Jordan. There you get not Christ dying for me, but my

dying with Christ. The ark down in the bottom of the river, and I going through while it is there. It is all dry-shod. He dried it up. There is no ark in the Red Sea. Red Sea is Christ crucified for me: Jordan is we have died with Him, are crucified with Christ (2 Cor. 1:9); "but we had the sentence of death in ourselves," testing whether it is done -- to see whether he was out and out in holding himself dead.

I think it is wonderful when you look at the inspiration of Scripture: the moment I have faith in Christ Jesus, the whole thing is the most detailed exposition of it.

Malvern, 1873.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-nelson-darby/the-divine-exodus-exodus-15/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net