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2-23-2022

THE LIFE OF MOSES – LESSON 23

THE RED SEA CROSSING

Chapter 14 of Exodus describes the deliverance of Israel as they left Egypt and entered the wilderness of the Sinai Peninsula. This came after their miraculous crossing of the Red Sea which divided Egypt from the wilderness.

Exactly where this crossing took place has long been a subject of debate. The encampment of Israel near Pihahiroth and Ba'al-Zephon in verse 9 is of little help since those places are unidentified today. There is also a debate in critical scholarship whether Israel crossed the "Red Sea" or the "Reed Sea" (Yam Suph in Hebrew). We will simply follow the scripture as it is written. The scholar's debate is irrelevant to this lesson.

Israel camped next to the Red Sea. With a hardened heart, once again, Pharaoh pursued them to capture and return them to slavery. Everyone in Israel's camp became terrified when they saw 600 chariots coming after them.

God had given Israel a cloud over them by day to guide them, and a pillar of fire by night to light their way. An angel of God intervened to protect them. He moved the cloud between the Egyptian chariots and Israel. The cloud was so dense they could not see through it (Ex. 14:19-20). Nightfall came and the pillar of fire gave light to the Hebrews. There was a clear division between the cloud and the fire.

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and a strong east wind parted the water. All that night was spent crossing over the Red Sea on dry ground until all were across into the wilderness. When morning came and the cloud had returned to its position over Israel, the Egyptians saw the sea parted and the land bridge and they continued to cross it in pursuit of the Hebrews (vs. 24).

God said, "No, you don't!" He troubled the Egyptians as their chariot wheels bogged down and came off. As Moses again stretched out his hand over the sea (vs. 11-12) the sea waters that had been parted converged upon them and drowned all who tried to cross in pursuit of the Hebrews. Moses' faith combined with wisdom in leadership stood strong despite the lack of faith of the people. They feared and severely criticized and accused him before they crossed the sea. Moses stood strong and on the Sinai side of the sea (victory side) Moses and the children of Israel sang jubilantly (15:1-21).

How do we respond when it seems adversity presses us on all sides? Will we give in to fear, despondency, or defeat? Or will we by faith, stand on God's word and Jesus' name to cross on to victory? Memorize II Timothy 2:7 and it will help you in times of trouble where it says, ***"For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."***