

Exodus 13:17-14:31 - Rescue is Central to Redemption

To Read:

1. Joshua 3
2. Romans 7:21-8:39

I. Introduction

A. For the last two weeks we have been in the central section of Exodus that describes the actual Exodus from Egypt

1. Two weeks ago we consider the last plague and saw that judgment was central to salvation
2. Last week we saw the commands of the Passover and saw that redemption was central to salvation
3. As we continue this week, we see another one of the famous stories of the Bible, the crossing of the Red Sea

B. Although we all know the story well, as we come to it in our cycle, it ought to give us pause

1. Why does this story exist here? Why did God ordain these events to happen to His people? What do these events teach us about God's plan of salvation?
2. As we look back at what has already happened, God's people have been redeemed and set free from bondage and their enemies have already been defeated in judgment
3. So why do God's enemies appear again and why do we have another cycle of destruction and deliverance after the Passover? Have not God's enemies already been destroyed?

C. This question is going to be answered in our passage this morning

1. As we considered when we looked at the judgment of the last plague, Egypt has been defeated, her strength and her future have been broken, yet she still lingers on
2. And this morning we will see her in her lingering harass and attack Israel while they leave allowing God to continue His display of His salvation by destroying His people's enemies in their sight and rescuing them from destruction
3. So, this morning we will see that just as judgment and redemption are central to salvation, rescue is also central to salvation - God will rescue His people from every enemy and bring them safely to His land

D. As we go through our passage this morning, we'll see that there is a rough mirror image in this story

1. The first half of our passage focuses on God leading the people out of Egypt and how He entices Pharaoh
2. The second half of our passage focuses on how God destroys Pharaoh and rescues His people
3. And we'll hear several similarities in the two halves which call us to consider the very center of the passage - Moses speech to the people and God's speech to Moses, the purpose of our passage will be found in those two speeches in the center of the mirror halves of our passage

E. Read Exodus 13:17-14:31

F. Proposition and Outline:

1. Proposition: Rescue is central to salvation because God desires for His people to see His glory and therefore we must wait eagerly for God's salvation.
2. Outline:
 - a. God will rescue His people
 - b. God has rescued His people in Christ
 - c. We must wait for God's salvation

II. God will rescue His people

A. God leads His people for their good (Exodus 13:17-22)

1. The first story we see in our passage this morning is the story of God's presence leading the people
 - a. God had not only released His people from bondage through judgment and redemption, but He went with His people in a powerful way, a tangible way to bring them into His land
2. And the presence of God went with the people for a specific purpose
 - a. Exodus 13:17 - *When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, "Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt."*
 - b. God led His people out of Egypt toward His land for their good, to protect and preserve them on their way and make sure that they made it to His land - He didn't free them from bondage to leave them to wander and maybe make it to His land, He went with them to ensure that they made it to His land
3. And there is a great tie back to Genesis in this passage, which upholds God's faithfulness to His people
 - a. God is being faithful to His people by leading them, as it were, by the hand out of Egypt
 - b. And, at this point, Moses reminds the Israelites that this entire saga is an amazing demonstration of God's faithfulness to His promises and to His people
 - c. Exodus 13:19 - *Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones with you from here."*
 - d. God had been faithful to the Patriarchs and was continuing in faithfulness to His people

B. God leads His people for His glory (Exodus 14:1-9)

1. As we continue into chapter 14, we see another aspect of God's purpose in leading His people
 - a. In fact, God leads the people in an unexpected direction, they don't set out directly for Canaan, and they don't even set out on a path that would get them to Canaan in a roundabout way
 - b. God leads the people to what appears to be a dead end, it's not clear where He's leading His people
2. But God had a purpose and He tells Moses why He is leading His people out to a dead end
 - a. Exodus 14:3-4 - *For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, 'They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.' And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD." And they did so.*
 - b. God was leading His people for their good - to destroy their enemies, but God had a greater purpose in mind as well, ultimately He led His people for His glory
 - c. God picks a fight so that He can win, a fight that will benefit His people but ultimately glorify Him
3. And true to character, and under God's sovereignty, Pharaoh takes the bait
 - a. Apparently he quickly forget the lessons of the plagues and decides to undo what God has done
 - b. Having been through the story, we know that Pharaoh and Egypt have already been defeated in the last plague, but in their last moments of strength they come to harass God's people on their way out
 - c. And God ordains this so that the people of Israel will see the utter destruction of their enemies

C. God leads His people to increase their faith (Exodus 14:10-14)

1. As Pharaoh hems the people in, trapping them by the Red Sea, the people of Israel respond by complaining
 - a. Pharaoh forgot God's lessons during the plagues, but it seems that God's people had forgotten them as well and they overlooked God's presence which was physically with them leading and protecting them
 - b. The people of Israel lacked faith in God's plan, not that they lacked all faith - they had by faith taken the Passover and left Egypt - but they were weak in faith and when trouble came they shrank back
2. So, Moses addresses the people and tells them why God has brought them to this point
 - a. Exodus 14:13-14 - *And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."*
 - b. Moses told the people that God had brought them here so that they would see the full salvation of the Lord, that they would see His glory and His deliverance
 - c. And Moses told the people what they must do in four exhortations - they must fear not; stand firm; see the salvation of the Lord; and be silent - they must rest and trust God, believing He would win
 - d. God leads His people in order to increase their faith as they see His great works to rescue them

D. God rescues His people for His glory (Exodus 14:15-18)

1. As I said in the introduction, at the center of our passage, we have two speeches, one from Moses and one from God - we just heard Moses' speech and now we turn to hear God's speech
2. Exodus 14:15-18 - *The LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."*
3. At the center of our passage this morning, God promises continuing and final salvation - He has already worked salvation through judgment and redemption, but God will continue working salvation by rescuing His people
4. And just as God had emphasized in leading His people, His purpose was clear - to bring Himself glory
5. God continues to save His people so that all the world will know that He alone is God, Pharaoh will have received the final answer to His question, "who is the LORD that I should obey His voice?" The LORD, He is God.

E. God rescues His people for their good (Exodus 14:19-29)

1. After the two speeches at the center of our passage, God acts to save His people and fulfill His purpose - God's presence protects His people as the pillar of fire blocks the Egyptians from attacking, God's power rescues His people as He opens up a path through the sea, and God's wrath destroys their enemies in the tumult of the sea
2. God is fighting for His people, on their behalf, just as He promised so that even the Egyptians acknowledge that God fights for Israel, Exodus 14:25 - *And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."*
3. God orchestrated all of these events, their apparently fruitless journey into the wilderness, the attack of the Egyptians and their rescue so that He could fight on their behalf, so that He could utterly destroy their enemy so that they would never bother them again
4. For centuries, Israel existed next to Egypt without fearing any hint of danger because God had defeated Egypt, and, at this ultimate defeat, God brings His people one step closer to His land
5. In fact, as Israel passes through the Red Sea on dry ground, you could say that they were passing into God's land - now we know that this doesn't really happen until the next generation with Joshua, but it happens in an event that closely parallels our story this morning with the crossing of the Jordan
6. In fact, as we look at the story of the Old Testament, we could put those two stories together and connect them, the main story goes from Israel in Egypt crossing the Red Sea/Jordan and entering God's land
7. The period between the two crossings is kind of a nebulous period, not directly on the line from Egypt to Canaan, but a time-out, as it were, to consider the implications of entering God's land - the covenant of God will take the forefront in this in-between time as Israel learns what it means to live in God's land
8. In a significant way, then, Exodus 13 and 14 represent the time between initial and final salvation, the battle was one in chapter 12, but the battle is finally won in chapter 14 and God's people enter God's land
9. So, there is a real sense of finality to this story, this is the last battle God's people face and God wins this battle just as He had won every other battle, the people cross the Red Sea on dry ground and begin their journey to God's land - God rescued His people for their good, to bring them to His land
10. In fact, every time the concept of dry ground comes up, it points to God's land - the dry ground after the flood represented God's recreation of a place for His people, the dry ground at the bottom of the Red Sea represented God leading His people through the waters of wrath into His land, and similarly the dry ground at the bottom of the Jordan represents God leading His people through the final barrier to enter His land

F. God rescues His people to increase their faith (Exodus 14:30-31)

1. The last two verse of our passage complete the mirror as we here Moses command fulfilled in the Israelites
2. Moses commanded the people to stand firm, fear not and see the salvation of God
3. And Exodus 14:30-31 says - *Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.*
4. God's purpose in rescuing His people was to increase their faith, they experienced the trial of Egypt so that they would see the power of God and believe God

III. God is rescuing His people in Christ

A. As we finish this passage and turn to consider how to apply it to us, I think this passage has great application to us

1. As we have just seen, this passage is about the time between initial and final salvation
 - a. The Israelites had been freed from Egypt in judgment and redemption, but they had not crossed over into God's land yet
 - b. In a real way, the time in chapter 13 and 14 is an already and not yet situation, the people were free and yet not free, the people were God's and yet not in God's land
2. So we ought to be able to well relate to the people of Israel in this passage because we also find ourselves between initial and final salvation, we are in the already and not yet
 - a. As we have consider over the last two weeks, in Christ, God has delivered His people - we have been freed from the bondage, the dominion and the effects of sin through the sacrifice of Christ - the already
 - b. And just like the Israelites this happened through a one-time judgment and redemption even at the cross of Christ were God poured out His wrath on sin and bought back His people
 - c. But, if this is true, why does the great enemy of God's people still persist? Why is sin still present with us? Was it not really defeated in Christ? We find ourselves just as the Israelites trapped beside the sea.
 - d. The apostle Paul felt this clearly, as he writes in Romans 7:21-24 - *So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*
 - e. Paul saw that salvation had already happened and yet there still need to be a deliverance, a rescue
 - f. And Paul continues in Romans 7:25 - *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*
 - g. Just as much as initial salvation was found in Christ, so continuing salvation and final salvation, the leading and rescuing of God's people are found in Christ
3. And so our passage this morning should again point us to Christ, Christ fulfills God's rescue of His people
 - a. So we should see that God's presence leading His people for their good, His glory and their faith should be fulfilled in Christ
 - b. And we should see that there will be a final rescue that will be lead God's people into God's land and demonstrate His glory fulfilled in Christ

B. In Christ, God is present with His people

1. The first half of our passage focused on God being present with His people after judgment and redemption
 - a. Christ, after accomplishing judgment and redemption at the cross, has promised His presence with us
 - b. We see in Matthew 28:19-20 - *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*
 - c. In his parting words to His disciples, Jesus promised that His presence would go with them to lead them on the way, a promise He made before His death as well, John 14:2-3 - *In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.*
 - d. Like the pillar of cloud and fire, Jesus is still God's presence with us to lead us on the way to His place, and His presence is manifested through His Spirit, as Jesus promised, John 15:26 - *"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.*
 - e. So Paul can equate the Spirit presence with us with our Lord Jesus Christ because They are truly one, II Corinthians 3:17 - *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.*
 - f. Christ presence with us, through the sending and dwelling with us of His Spirit, is the fulfillment of God's leading presence

2. And Christ not only fulfills God's presences, He fulfills its purpose as well
 - a. The first purpose of God's presence was to lead them for their good, to keep them on the way and to prevent them from turning back and failing to reach the promised land
 - b. Christ's presence through His Spirit is for our good, Romans 8:9-11 - *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*
 - c. Our main enemy isn't external, like the Egyptians, but internal, our own sin, but the Spirit gives us power to turn away from sin and follow Jesus Christ to new life - Jesus has left His Spirit for our good
3. But the ultimate purpose of God's presence was to display His glory, and Christ's presence through His Spirit is showing us the glory of God as well
 - a. II Corinthians 3:18 - *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*
4. So Christ fulfills what the pillar of cloud and fire typified - God's leading presence for His people's good and His ultimate glory, Christ through His Spirit is our pillar of cloud and fire and we follow His lead

C. In Christ, God will rescue His people

1. The second half of our passage this morning focused on God's rescue of His people, His final act of deliverance to free His people forever
 - a. And again, this is fulfilled in Christ, or rather will be fulfilled in Christ
 - b. So, Paul tells us that we await Christ's deliverance in I Thessalonians 1:10 - *[we are] to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*
 - c. Or again in Philippians 3:20-21 - *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.*
 - d. Or Titus 2:13 - *looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,*
 - e. Christ has promised to return and to deliver His people and now we are awaiting that return - God's final act of rescue and deliverance for the Egyptians is fulfilled in Jesus' return when He rescues His people
2. And again, if Christ is the fulfillment of God's rescue, then we should see God's purpose worked out in it, we should see that Christ's rescue will be for our good, to deliver us from our enemies forever
 - a. So, Paul's lament is cut short by the promise of Christ's deliverance in Romans 7:24-25 - *Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*
 - b. And Peter knows that God had delivered in the past and will deliver His people from every enemy at the end in II Peter 2:7-9 - *and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,*
3. And Christ's rescue should ultimately be about displaying His glory
 - a. So Paul looks forward to a final deliverance that brings Him into God's land and praises God for the glory that He sees in II Timothy 4:18 - *The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*
 - b. When we see the final return of Christ when He comes to deliver His people, then we will truly see His glory revealed and we will praise Him forever

IV. We must wait for God's salvation

A. Moses called the people to a passive role

1. Moses told the people to stand still or stand firm, to be silent, just watch, and to see the salvation of God
 - a. The people weren't supposed to participate in the final battle at all, they were just supposed to position themselves to be where they could see and appreciate it
 - b. God would fight on their behalf, all they needed to do was wait and watch
2. And, in Christ we are called to this same role, the passive role of waiting and watching
 - a. Paul tells us in Titus 2:13 that we are - *waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*
 - b. And Paul encourages in Galatians 5:5 - *For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness*
 - c. So the author of Hebrews exhorts in Hebrews 9:28 - *so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*
 - d. And Jude commands in Jude 21 - *keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.*
3. Just like initial salvation, final salvation is all of Christ and nothing to do with us, we will be ultimately freed from sin and it's lingering influence in our lives when Christ returns and utterly defeats our enemy
 - a. Our hope is I John 3:1 - *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*
 - b. Or Philippians 1:6 - *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*
 - c. We will be like our Lord in sinless perfection when He appears and completes His work in us, and until that day we wait, we are watching for this final day when we will be rescued and delivered by Christ

B. But our role isn't just passive, it is what I would call an actively passive role, an intentionally passive role

1. Throughout the New Testament, we are called to a passive role, but in our passive waiting for salvation, we are called to an active role as well
 - a. A good example is Peter's exhortations at the end of II Peter
 - b. II Peter 3:11-14 - *Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.*
 - c. Peter says that we are waiting for the final revelation of God's salvation, but if we are waiting then we must be diligent, we must be actively waiting, we must be actively passive so we are ready when He comes
2. In fact, we can see this in Moses' exhortation to the people as well
 - a. Moses called the people to 'stand firm' to stand still, to stay in the place where they could see God's salvation, and this concept of standing firm is found throughout the New Testament
 - b. Paul commands in Ephesians 6:13-17 - *Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*
 - c. Or Peter says it briefly in I Peter 5:12 - *By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.*
 - d. Standing firm isn't a battle where we try to win the kingdom of God for ourselves, standing firm isn't a battle where we try to defeat our own enemies, standing firm isn't us trying to gain ground for ourselves, standing firm is merely our tooth and nail fight to stay where we are in Christ so that we will see the salvation of God

C. So our goal isn't to gain God's land by our deeds nor to gain territory in the world, our action is passive because it merely seeks to stand firm, to stay where we can see the final display of God's salvation, we fight to stand still and watch

1. So we fight against everything that would draw us away from watching and waiting for Christ final victory, because all of our hope is in that day when Christ returns and rescues us, none of our hope and joy is in this world
2. We fight against lust because it promises pleasure in sex instead of helping us look for Christ
3. We fight against greed because it promises pleasure in this world instead of helping us look for Christ
4. We fight against pride because it promise pleasure in ourselves instead of helping us look for Christ
5. We fight against worldliness, the valuing of worldly possession, because it promises pleasure here instead of causing us to wait for the final rescue in Christ
 - a. The things that the Israelites constantly wanted to go back to in Egypt weren't what we would consider directly sinful things, they simply wanted the relative rest, possessions and security they had in Egypt
 - b. And think how many times we are warned about wanting simply the things that are in this world
 - i. Luke 12:32-34 - *"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*
 - ii. Matthew 6:19-21 - *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*
 - iii. Mark 10:21 - *And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."*
 - iv. Luke 12:16-21 - *And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."*
 - v. I John 2:15-17 - *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world---the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions---is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*
 - c. We are constantly called to be fighting against things that cause us to have our desires and our pleasures found in this world, things that dull our intense longing for the final rescue and redemption of Christ - we must be waiting and watching for the return of Christ and our possession in Him

D. Our goal is really what we read at the end of Romans chapter 8

1. I think Paul did an excellent job of describing this waiting and watching period between initial and final salvation through Romans 7 and 8
2. Here how Paul kind of concludes his discussion in Romans 8:23-25 - *And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*
3. We are waiting patiently for the final redemption of our bodies, the final rescue that God will provide and we fight with every ounce of power we have to stand firm and stay in that waiting and watching stance
4. So, like the Israelites on the shores of the Red Sea, there are many things that would look good to us in this world because we are in an in-between time, but instead of turning back and finding pleasure in this world we must fight to stand firm, to wait and to see the salvation of our God
5. We measure everything in life against this: does it help me wait and watch for Jesus Christ?