

Exodus 14:15-15:21 (Part V)

I. Week ONE: Five weeks ago, we saw that the parting of the Red Sea can only be fully understood in connection with the creation of the world. In the crossing of the Red Sea on dry ground, God is beginning a new work of creation that will surpass, in the end, the first creation in Genesis chapter one.

II. Week TWO: Four weeks ago, we saw the emphasis on vengeance, and retribution, and judgement in the parting of the Red Sea. God purposefully herds the Egyptians into the Sea after the Israelites *so that* He might bring the waters of the Red Sea back upon them and destroy them all. The destruction of the wicked and the salvation of God's people are two sides of the same coin.

III. Week THREE: Three weeks ago, we saw how this destruction of the wicked (week 2) is intimately connected with the Bible's theme of a New Creation (week 1). In the pagan creation myths we have battles and wars between the gods of creation and order and the gods of chaos and disorder that live in the sea. The prophet Isaiah borrows this imagery, and pictures the Red Sea as the sea monster from these *pagan myths* just ready and waiting to devour the people of God. So when God parts the Red Sea, He is—as it were—slaying the monster, in order to bring into being a *New Creation*. Now the sea is really just a picture of the real monster and enemy of God's New Creation, which in Exodus 14 is the army of the Egyptians. But throughout the Bible, this sea monster takes on many different forms. And underneath all these different forms, the monster in the sea is always the same; it's this present world system with all of its hatred for God's people inspired by Satan himself. And so the monster in the sea not only represents Satan and this world, but it also represents sin, and death, and sorrow, and suffering, and everything that first came into the world when Eve believed the serpent's lies. The monster in the sea is everything that's ever caused God's people to groan and to cry out for deliverance and salvation. In Exodus 14, when God drowned the Egyptians in the sea, He was slaying *this monster* – in order to bring into being a New Creation.

IV. Week FOUR: Last week, we took everything we learned in the first three weeks and saw how it points us forward to the hope of a Second Exodus, and the final completion of God's New Creation

In the end, because of Israel's constant sin and rebellion, God sent his people back... to "*Egypt*." God's people were to understand that Assyria was nothing less than a *second* Egypt where they would again be "enslaved" and "oppressed." After Assyria, Babylon would take over the role of that second Egypt.

But why is Israel's exile to Assyria described as a return to the land of Egypt? On the one hand, it's meant to reveal the true hopelessness of our sin. On the *other* hand, it's meant to set us up for a never-before-imagined revelation of the redeeming power of God – of God's power to bring about a "second exodus" and so to call into being a whole New Creation. So in Isaiah, God's people are assured that there will once again come a day when Yahweh will go forth to battle with Leviathan, the great sea monster in the deep. On that day, God will slay every enemy of His people once and for all. He'll even turn the Sea into dry land once more, opening up a way for

the redeemed to return and come to Zion – this time with everlasting joy upon their heads as all sorrow and sighing flees away. When all this happens, God’s people will no longer be divided between the North and the South as they were before the exile, but they’ll live together in unity and love as true brothers and sisters. What we learn in Isaiah is that Exodus 14 was just the beginning and the shadow of the New Creation. It’s only in this *second* exodus from Egypt that God will bring His New Creation to its completion. Isaiah even says that God’s creation of a new people will be so glorious as to require, in the end, the creation of a whole new heavens and earth.

Well, Ezra and Nehemiah tell the story of how God *did* gather His people from Assyria and from the land of Babylon and plant them *together* back in their land. But it was still clear to everyone that this couldn’t yet be what they had all been looking for. There was nothing here to surpass what had happened when Israel came out of Egypt. There was nothing here to truly require the creation of a whole new heavens and earth. So God spoke once more through the prophet Zechariah. This return to the land was still just the shadow of the greater things to come – of the true *Second Exodus* that all the prophets foretold. This return to the land, as small and insignificant as it might have seemed, was actually a *guarantee* of the New Creation. And so the faithful men, and women, and children in Israel lived their lives – *in hope*. And then one day...

V. Week FIVE: The Fulfillment of the Second Exodus and the New Creation

The New Testament tells the story of Jesus, as the Old Testament prepared the way for His coming. After the birth of Jesus and the visit of the wise men, we read in Matthew chapter two:

- Matthew 2:13–15 — Now when [the wise men] had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee **to Egypt**, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed **to Egypt** and remained there until the death of Herod. **This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”**

So right from the very beginning, the whole life story of Jesus is described as a second *exodus* – a second “coming out of Egypt.” Matthew is quoting from the word that God spoke through Hosea:

- Hosea 11:1–2, 5 — When Israel was a child, I loved him, and **out of Egypt I called my son**. The more *they* were called, the more they went away; they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols... They shall return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me.

But then God continues:

- Hosea 11:8, 10-11 (cf. Isa. 27:12-13) — How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? ... [The LORD] will roar like a lion; when he roars, his children shall come trembling from the west; they shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria, and I will return them to their homes, declares the LORD.

It is this second “calling out of Egypt” that Jesus has come to accomplish. At the very beginning of His earthly life, Jesus was called “out of Egypt” in order to show that His whole life mission is to **bring about** the promised “second exodus” – to accomplish the final “drying up” of the sea and the bringing of His people home. And how will Jesus do this? Luke tells about the day when Jesus was transfigured before His disciples:

- Luke 9:28–31 — Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his **exodus**, which he was about to bring to fulfillment [NIV; NET tr. note] at Jerusalem.

What is this “exodus” that Jesus was about to accomplish at Jerusalem? Certainly, it includes His death. But if the point was *only* His death, there would have been many other more obvious ways to say this. And who is it that Jesus is speaking with there on the mountain? He’s speaking with Moses, who parted the waters of the Red Sea and led God’s people across on dry ground! And He’s speaking with Elijah, who at the end of his life parted the waters of the Jordan River and crossed over on dry ground! (cf. 2 Kings 2:6-8) When Jesus speaks with **Moses and Elijah** of His **exodus** which He is about to **bring to fulfillment** at Jerusalem, how can we not hear in these words the **arrival** of God’s promise to “dry up the sea” once more, and gather His people home? Jesus is showing His disciples—and us—that the final exodus of all God’s people from Egypt and their “coming home” to Zion is about to be accomplished through His **death**, followed by His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God. Listen to what Jesus says in John chapter twelve:

- John 12:31–32 (cf. Rev. 12:1-11) — Now is the **judgment of this world**; now will the **ruler of this world** be **cast out** [slaying of the monster]. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth [on the cross], will **draw all people** [people of all kinds, both Jews and Gentiles] **to myself**.
- John 10:16 — I have other sheep [Gentiles] that are not of this fold. I must **bring them also**, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be **one flock, one shepherd**.

It’s through the saving death of Jesus that God is now calling His people out of Egypt, slaying the monster of sin, and death, and the devil, and gathering His people home – no longer to live divided as north and south, but now as one people, one flock, with one shepherd. That’s what this is. That’s who we are. We are part of the fulfillment of God’s gathering all of His people home. It’s already happening. When Isaiah was describing the second exodus of God’s people and their return to Jerusalem, he wrote a song that spoke to the land itself:

- Isaiah 54:1–3 — “Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married,” says the LORD. “Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and

* “The exodus that Jesus accomplished at Jerusalem was his “death... as an act of salvation, repeating the Exodus conducted by Moses... Although the accent is firmly on the death of Jesus, we should probably not exclude the thoughts of the resurrection of Jesus (since for Luke cross and resurrection belong firmly together) and of the saving significance of the event. (Marshall; cf. Green; contra, Nolland)

strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.

When Paul writes to the church in Galatia, which includes both Jews and Gentiles, he wants them to see that it's **in them** and **through them** that Isaiah's prophecy of Israel's return to the land is even **now** being fulfilled. And this return is truly far grander, and far more wonderful than any person in the Old Testament could have ever imagined. So Paul writes:

- Galatians 4:26–28 — The Jerusalem *above* is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, “Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband.” Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.

Through the exodus that Jesus accomplished at the earthly Jerusalem 2000 years ago, *we* have been set free, liberated from bondage to Satan, and sin, and death, and given the gift of life eternal in the Jerusalem that is above. (cf. 2 Pet. 1:15) And if all this is true of us, then we must be nothing less than a part of the completion of God's New Creation – which He began all the way back at the Red Sea in Exodus 14.

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 — Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a **new creation**. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
- Galatians 6:15 — For neither circumcision [being a Jew] counts for anything, nor uncircumcision [being a Gentile], but a **new creation**.

Sometimes, our biggest challenge is simply seeing the “**already**.” Sometimes, the biggest obstacle to our joy and obedience in this life is our failure to see the wonder, and the grandeur, and the power of the “already.” The second and final exodus from Egypt is already being accomplished. It's what this is. It's who we are. If the crossing of the Red Sea on dry ground was an awesome miracle, then this is a miracle far *more* awesome. This is a salvation infinitely more wonderful – even now; even “already.” But if this is the “already,” then what will the “**not yet**” be?

When we come to the last book of the Bible—the book of Revelation—we find there the same monster that existed even in the days of Moses, in Exodus 14. The city of Rome is called “Babylon.” (Rev. 17:1-6; cf. 1 Pet. 5:13) The Roman Empire is yet another Egypt opening its mouth wide to devour and destroy the people of God. (cf. Rev. 11:8) But whether it's Egypt, or Assyria, or Babylon, or Rome, or ISIS, or the emerging America – the monster in the sea is always the same as it's always been; it's this present world system with all of its unceasing hatred for God's people inspired by Satan himself. Jesus called Satan the “god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4) and the “ruler of this world.” (John 12:31) He said:

- John 15:18–19 — If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

In the book of Revelation, the Apostle John vividly describes this world system—this monster in the sea—which in his day was the city of Rome:

- Revelation 17:3–6 — And [the angel] carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. [John says that this beast first rose out of the sea; Rev. 13:1; cf. 17:1] The woman was... holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth’s abominations.” And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

The Roman Empire has long since fallen, but the monster is constantly reincarnated – always taking on new names and new forms, and always hating and seeking to devour the people of God – God’s New Creation. But we know that this *very* monster has already been “judged” and “cast out” at the cross – 2000 years ago! (John 12:31; cf. Rev. 12:1-12) And so now, if the monster is filled with wrath and fury—if the world hates the church now more than ever—then we should know that this is only because its time is short. (Rev. 12:1-17) We know that if Christ has already “been offered once to bear the sins of many,” then He “will appear a second time, [this time] not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.” (Heb. 9:28) Are *you* eagerly waiting for Him? Are we? Am I?

John tells us that when Jesus appears the second time, He will come on a white horse to judge and make war. He’ll be “clothed in a robe dipped in blood”—the blood of His enemies, and from his mouth will come “a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.” He will “tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.” And all the birds will “gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.” (Rev. 19:11-21) Here, at last, is the final end of the monster in the Sea. Here, at last, is the final salvation of all God’s people who have been eagerly waiting, and longing, and looking for His return. John writes in another place:

- Revelation 18:1–2, 9-10, 20; 19:1, 3 — I saw another angel coming down from heaven... And he called out with a mighty voice, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!” ... the kings of the earth... will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, “Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come.” ... Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!” ... After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God... Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”

The monster in the sea is Satan; it’s this present world order; it’s Egypt, and Assyria, and Babylon, and Rome; it’s sin, and death, and sorrow, and suffering, and everything that first came into the world when Eve believed the serpent’s lies. The monster in the sea is everything that’s ever caused God’s people to groan and to cry out for deliverance and salvation. And yet here, in the book of Revelation, we have the final *end* of the monster in the Sea. And here, in Revelation,

as God's people are brought safely through to the other side, what is the song that they sing? John writes:

- Revelation 15:2-3 — I saw... those who had conquered the beast... standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sang **the song of Moses**, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.

And so we see that what we call “the song of Moses” in Exodus 15 will one day be given another name: “the song of the **Lamb**.”

And now... are we ready? The prophet Isaiah foretold that God's creation of a new people would one day be so glorious as to require even the creation of a whole new heavens and earth. (cf. Isaiah 65:17-18) After the monster in the sea was finally destroyed, the Apostle John wrote these words:

- Revelation 21:1-5 — Then I saw **a new heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, **and the sea was no more**. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

No more sea; no more monster in the sea; no more death; no more pain, or crying, or tears... but only everlasting light and life and gladness and joy. The second exodus finally fulfilled. The new creation finally finished. The song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb forever, and ever, and ever, and ever on our lips and in our hearts. This is our hope. So may we live every day of our lives anchored in—and shaped by—this hope. Worshiping... obeying... loving... persevering... trusting... rejoicing.