

Baptism in the Sea

There are many lessons to be learned from the Red Sea crossing. While encamped at the Red Sea, Pharaoh again hardened his heart and pursued “with a high hand” (Exod. 14:8). Israel was hemmed in. Jehovah commanded Israel, “Go forward” (Exod. 14:15). Two words, small in content, yet great in power. The greatness was attributed to the source—Jehovah. Moses lifted his rod, stretched out his hand over the sea, parting it, and the Israelites crossed on dry land. When the Egyptians followed, Jehovah received honor upon Pharaoh (Exod. 14:15-18). The results were exactly as Jehovah foretold.

God’s ways are always aligned with His eternal purpose (Heb. 1:1-2). Pharaoh’s rise to power was with purpose (Rom. 9:17). God purposed to baptize both nations, yet God’s purpose for both baptisms differed. Israel humbled their heart and entered in faith (1 Cor. 10:3-4). Egypt hardened their heart and entered in rebellion. When God’s word is despised, “iniquity shall break suddenly” (Isa. 30:13). Their purposes for baptism mattered.

In Rom. 9:21-23 we read about vessels of wrath and of mercy. Both vessels carry out God’s will. Pharaoh prospered for a reason but only for a season. Israel suffered for a reason but for a season. Faith must be exercised in submission, not in rebellion. (2 Peter. 1:5-11). Which vessel will you be in God’s plan?

This story foreshadows the baptism Christ commanded in the gospel. Let us never assume that Christ’s command for baptism is without purpose (Rom. 6:3-5). Neither Israel nor Egypt was saved before their baptism; only one was baptized in faith and emerged saved. Going forward in faith will always produce the same two results: rejoicing for those whom God saves; and honor for God (read Psalm 66). RDB