

EXODUS 14–17

Introduction

This portion of the "Witnessing Christ from the Old Testament" study covers Exodus chapters 14–17.

[You can find the LDS outline of study and resources here.](#)

LDS Study Focus

The LDS study guide focuses on the theme: "Stand Still, and See the Salvation of the Lord."

The Israelites were trapped. The Red Sea was on one side, and the army of Pharaoh was advancing on the other. Their escape from Egypt, it seemed, would be short-lived. But God had a message for the Israelites that He wanted them to remember for generations: "Fear ye not. ... The Lord shall fight for you" ([Exodus 14:13–14](#)).

Since that time, when God's people have needed faith and courage, they have often turned to this account of Israel's miraculous deliverance. When Nephi wanted to inspire his brothers, he said, "Let us be strong like unto Moses; for he truly spake unto the waters of the Red Sea and they divided hither and thither, and our fathers came through, out of captivity, on dry ground" ([1 Nephi 4:2](#)). When King Limhi wanted his captive people to "lift up [their] heads, and rejoice," he reminded them of this same story ([Mosiah 7:19](#)). When Alma wanted to testify to his son of God's power, he also referred to this story (see [Alma 36:28](#)). And when we need deliverance—when we need a little more faith, when we need to "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord"—we can remember how "the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians" ([Exodus 14:13, 30](#)).

NOTE: The LDS resources take the deliverance of Israel and diminish its spiritual significance, missing connections to deliverance by Christ from slavery to sin. Instead, deliverance from challenging situations and trusting in God for daily bread is emphasized. By themselves, these topics are good, but without connections to our eternal deliverance, they are irrelevant.

The emphasis of this section is placed on the necessity of having more faith rather than trusting in the object, God, in whom that faith is placed. In Mormonism, faith is about achievement and accomplishment rather than reception and trust in God. It places the focus on man and what he must produce for God rather than what God is doing for man.

Biblical Focus

Throughout the time of the Exodus, the LORD sets up salvation situations in which the Israelites could not save themselves. Their only hope was to trust that they had a God that would rescue and provide.

EXODUS 14–15:21

The Father of Israel knew his children well. The slave nation was still fragile and weak. It was not yet time for them to fight battles with God *alongside* them. They still needed God to fight the battles *for* them. God considered the best route for their exodus from Egypt. God didn't pick the easiest path; instead, he chose the path through the sea, a path that didn't even exist! The Creator of all specifically chose the uncreated path and would use it to create a new life for Israel.

Israel had finally left Egypt, but their enemy, although weakened, still lived, and wanted to reclaim them. As God was apt to do, he set the stage. He left Israel vulnerable and hopeless in the face of the enemy—so that his name might be proclaimed among the nations for all time.

Even though they had just seen God decimate their enemy with ten apocalyptic plagues, Israel was terrified. How was Israel still unable to trust God after witnessing such might and commitment? Their behavior is also the condition of the human heart. It is easy to forget what God has done for us in the past, even though he has more than proved his love and commitment to us through Jesus. Even when faith in God exists, doubt can quickly move back into our hearts and manifest itself in worry, anxiety, fear, or selfishness.

The Bible contains over 300 commands about not being afraid, worrying, and the like! God is not surprised when we struggle with fear and is highly interested in calming our hearts. "*The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still*" ([Exodus 14:14](#)). Doubt in God is a reoccurring theme for the Israelites in the wilderness. Watch how God patiently responds along the way.

The crossing of the Red Sea was the beginning of a new life for the nation of Israel. From this point forward, the Israelites would refer back to this event over and over again throughout Scripture. This isn't just another display of God's might, but on this day, God completed their rescue from captivity and gave his children a new identity. The Israelites crossed over from death to life, slavery to freedom, and from fear to peace. No longer could their enemy pursue them, taunt them, claim them, or own them. The enemy had been stripped of all power and control, drowned, and thoroughly defeated. God's adoption of Israel was complete!

There is a great amount of spiritual significance in the parting/crossing of the Red Sea, and Christians will need to make efforts to help LDS who won't see it see it. Applications of this event go beyond the LDS focus of: "God rescues us from challenging circumstances." Indeed, this story can remind believers that God will preserve and protect them daily, but more importantly, this story points us to a greater rescue. God not only rescues us from slavery to fear, death, and sin, but he has thoroughly defeated these enemies. God has fully adopted us for eternity with an adoption that is complete, giving us life with him.

Moses' song contrasts what God had done and what Egypt thought they could do. Draw attention to the pronouns. The pronouns point to God and what he had done for the people. Moses does not praise the faith of the people but the God in whom that faith is placed.

Conversation Starters:

- What does it mean to be a slave to fear? What day-to-day fears do you have? What eternal fears do you have?
- What promises of God can rescue you from your fears?
- How does the crossing of the Red Sea and the defeat of the Egyptians remind you of Jesus' rescue of sinners?
- What was God teaching the Israelites about themselves? What did God teach the Israelites about himself?

Sharing Personally:

In Exodus 14, when God parts the Red Sea and rescues his people Israel from the advancing Egyptians, we catch a glimpse of God's true power and might and his extraordinary ability to save. The God who created the heavens and the earth, created a path for the people to walk through on dry ground.

What saved the people? Not their following of the path or their endurance? God saved them.

What saves us? Not our following of a path or our enduring? God saves us.

God didn't give me a plan for how to save myself or gain happiness; he gave me Jesus, who carried out the plan perfectly in my place. Why? Because saving myself from the enemies of sin, death, and Satan are as impossible for me as it would have been for the Israelites to save themselves at the Red Sea.

and

The crossing of the Red Sea in Exodus 14 reminds me of my baptism where my enemies of sin and death were drowned, and God gave me a new identity. I am no longer a slave to sin; I am set free and adopted into God's family. This full and complete adoption gives the same status in God's sight as his own perfect Son, Jesus.

EXODUS 15:22-17

God provides for all the needs of his people

The wilderness is the backdrop for the reoccurring cycle of problem, grumbling, and God's response. God addresses Israel, decreeing they must pay attention to his voice. They must live by his words alone.

Aren't Israel's grumbles relatable? How whiny do you get when you are hungry or thirsty? How would you act if you did not know where you would get your next meal? Obviously, humans need the basics to survive. However, Israel's attitude about their needs reflected the *doubt* that was rooted in their hearts. They had no reason to wonder if God had the power to provide for them, but they certainly weren't sure that God was *good*. After all, they had just been enslaved for 400 years. Israel was still learning who God was and understanding his plan for them.

Therefore, God, the Father of Israel, chose to use this time in the wilderness to train his children to rely on him and his providence. At times, God led them to specific places in the wilderness where there were no resources. It wasn't really food and water that he was depriving them of, but he was depriving them of self-sufficiency. Their only hope for survival was to look past themselves and wait for God to act.

Eventually, God sent bread down from heaven. [Deuteronomy 8:1-19](#) provides several insights as to why God provided for his people in the way he did. Their time in the wilderness taught them that God was their provider, and he would do exactly as he said. There was no room for pride or self-sufficiency in the wilderness.

Have you started to make the connections yet?

Help your LDS friends see that in our spiritual lives, self-sufficiency brings damnation, and reliance on God brings life. In [Matthew 4:3](#), Jesus quoted this Deuteronomy passage when he was being tempted by the devil in the wilderness. There in the wilderness was the exact spot where Jesus redeemed this exact sin of Israel! Where Israel failed, Jesus fulfilled. Believers can directly apply forgiveness to sins of grumbling and self-reliance because of what Jesus did.

The LDS resources talk about trusting God for daily bread and the need for spiritual manna. Their spiritual manna is necessary for daily progress and gradual transformation. Of course, Christians want God's Word to change us, but not to the same end. As we become transformed, we better serve God and our neighbor. As LDS are transformed, they continue on the path to exaltation.

Each morning as the people gathered just enough manna for the day, they were taught that God was the one who did the work and would provide for them. They could not add to his providing by their doing and preparing. That resulted in maggots.

This is the first we hear about the *Sabbath Rest* since creation when God rested on the seventh day. God will give Israel more details when they get to Mount Sinai. The *Sabbath Rest* was designed to be a foreshadowing of the spiritual rest that Israel needed and would only be given to them through the coming Messiah. The Sabbath pointed to Christ, and the rest found in him and him alone.

Conversation Starters:

- Compare Israel's and Jesus' temptation. How are they similar? How are they different? See [Deuteronomy 8:1–19](#) and [Matthew 4:1–11](#). What does this mean for us? What is vicarious atonement?
- In [John 6:35](#), Jesus claims to be "the bread of life." How is he similar to manna? How is he different?
- What is your first reaction when you are deprived of the ability to be self-sufficient? How can self-sufficiency be dangerous in our spiritual lives?
- What was God teaching the Israelites through the command to rest on the Sabbath? Check out [Exodus 35:2](#). What was the consequence for breaking the Sabbath?
- Why was God so strict about ceasing work and resting on the Sabbath? Make the spiritual connection. What will happen to the person who works for their salvation? What does God compare rest to in [Hebrews 4](#)?
- What was God teaching man about man with the manna?
- What was God teaching man about God with the manna?

Sharing Personally:

In Exodus 15–17, God, again and again, teaches his people and us to trust in him. With manna, a reminder of Sabbath Day rest, and water from a rock, God taught his people that although your work is important as you serve your fellow man, he is the one who truly works. Work now, not because you are looking to get something from him but because you already have it all.

You can rest, knowing that God has done everything necessary to save you and give you all you need to be with him forever.

Additional Resources:

For a deeper dive into how God gives us salvation, check out [Did Heavenly Father Give us Salvation or a Plan of Salvation?](#) on BeYePerfect.org.