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Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. (1 Cor 10:1-2)

The reader is reminded that the Lord parted two bodies of water for the Children of Israel (excepting the parting of the Jordan for Elisha, with Elijah's mantle, alone) – one at the beginning of their Wilderness journey when they were baptized as one nation in the Waters of the Red Sea, and later at the end of their journey as they departed the Wilderness to take possession of that Land of Promise for which they had sought for forty years beyond Waters of Jordan Banks.

The Lord God precedes His people in the place of danger to guide them, and follows hard after them to defend their rear echelons. He does so for us today. He is the God of Wars and the Captain of Battles. He makes the crooked way straight before us, and positions His Holy Angels behind to guard our flanks and rear from the enemy of our souls. The Lord God Almighty is about to demonstrate His Providential care and protection to His people Israel, and to us who learn of Him in the pages of His Book.

After that first, dreadful Passover in Egypt in which the oldest child (male or female) of each family was taken by the Sword of the Lord (excepting those whose dwellings were covered by the blood of the lamb), Pharaoh, having lost his dearly beloved son, gave chase to block the escape and to capture the Children of Israel. His army was perhaps the finest in all the land for experience, equipment of chariot and sabers, and battle attire. There are four component parts of this dramatic event given in the 13th and 14th chapters of Exodus:

1. God, by design, draws Pharaoh's Egyptian army to follow hard on the Children of Israel. His purpose is to entrap that army and demonstrate the power of Almighty God against an overweening and wicked sovereign;
2. The murmuring of God's people due to their lack of faith (murmurs always arise from that cause);
3. God's final Operations Order to Moses revealing His perfect plan to both save Israel and destroy Pharaoh;

4. Nation of Israel is baptized, in Toto, under waters of the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army is destroyed, in Toto, in those same waters.

The people of Israel were terrified when they looked behind and saw the army of Pharaoh giving chase in resplendent battle array and swiftly approach by horse and chariot. These people of Israel were completely defenseless apart from the Sovereign power of the Lord upon which they must depend, or perish! The Children were led by the Lord Himself to a point, bordered on the north by the wilderness marsh, on the south by stones and crevices, to the rear by Pharaoh's army, and, just to add drama to an already drama-filled situation, God has brought them to the banks of the Red Sea before them. They are hedged in on all fronts with no weapons of war, and no good place to flee from Pharaoh. We would refer to this predicament in Alabama as "sitting ducks."

If we follow the leading of the Lord, the circumstances of terrain and odds are of little consequence. The Lord had led Israel in the form of a Pillar of Cloud by day and Fire by night. *And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.* (Ex 13:21-22) It often happens we follow the leading of the Lord to places that seem to be impossible of extrication. If we exercise patience and wait upon the Lord, we are in for a glorious surprise! This Pillar preceded the Hosts of Israel to this point of seeming entrapment. But see what God does next.

As I previous wrote in my study of Exodus, *One clear note is sounded here on the Lord's plan: He brings the Children of Israel to a seeming impasse in the marshes of the Red Sea – not for their ruin, but to demonstrate His mighty power to save. The Children of Israel were seemingly trapped in their position – hemmed in by marshes on one side, and the Sea on the other. They appeared easy pickings for the Egyptians. God not only knows the thoughts of the hearts of His people, but He also reads the thoughts of the hearts of the wicked. He knows Pharaoh's character like a book because He is the one who made him. The mysteries of God are beyond our finding out. That which is a means of salvation to the people of God is also found to be trap for their enemies.* (Devotion on Exodus 14, 11 Dec 2014 AD)

10 And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. 11 And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt. (Ex 14:10-11)

But what to do with Pharaoh's army closing on the rear elements of the Hosts of Israel? God has a means of checking that pursuit. The people murmured in fear and a failure of faith: *For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.* (Ex 14:12-14) This is the whole point of God bringing the Children of Israel to this impasse – to demonstrate His power and might. *When my mother and my father forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.* (Ps 27:10) And with what a mighty, outstretched arm does the Lord take us up!

19 And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: 20 And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all

the night. (Ex 14:19-20)

The Light of God issuing forth from the cloud toward Israel at night was light to them, but the dark cloud was the side that faced the enemy and caused them to stumble in darkness. This cloud by day and fire by night was the very Angel of God – the Lord Himself. He went before the Children to point the Way; and He moved behind them when protection and salvation were necessary. The Lord Jesus Christ was that One who followed the Children in the wilderness.

The natural law does not allow the waters of the sea to defy gravity and stand erect in vertical walls. But the God who made the Natural Law is also Lord over it. The Pillar of Fire by night gives light to Israel, but strikes terror in the hearts of Pharaoh and his army. They cannot approach the place of entrapment yet, but the Lord will allow, in due time, that army to advance to its own ruin and detriment. The Holy Ghost gives light to us in times of darkness, but to the world, that light is darkness and it stands in terror of it just as the legions of Pharaoh did.

21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. 22 And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. (Ex 14:21-22) The outstretched hand of Moses represented the outstretched arm of God. It is a sweet grace of God that He allows His children to have a 'hand' in His mighty works – but it is His power that parts the waters and not that of Moses! This miracle of the parting of the waves of the Red Sea is most extraordinary. The waters at the point of crossing are said to be more than 75 ft. deep. Imagine the two walls of water (one on the advancing side and the other on the receding side) being held erect and in place to make a way for the Children of Israel to cross over. That strong east wind was a heated tempest that dried the ground under their feet. Coming from the east, it must of necessity pass over the Empty Quarter of the Arabian Desert – the largest desert in the world (just to the east of the Red Sea). The air is completely devoid of humidity and will dry anything it touches.

That which is a saving grace to the People of God is a destroying wind to their enemies. The same miracle that saves Israel is the very one that destroys Pharaoh and his army in the depths of the sea. *23 And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24 And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, 25 And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians.* (Ex 14:23-25) The Egyptians pursued on the heels of the Children of Israel into the bed of the Sea. But the Pillar of Fire that followed them waited its due season to slam the door of the trap on the Egyptians. Once the entire Egyptian army was in the bed of the Sea, God peered back at them from the Cloud and the Light was blinding and caused confusion for the chariots and cavalry of the Egyptians. IT is likely that the traces and horses of the chariots became entangled together and must have been abandoned. It is interesting to note that a number of chariot wheels have been discovered fairly well preserved at the bottom of the Red Sea only recently.

26 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. 27 And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of

them. 29 But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 30 Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. 31 And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses. (Ex 14:26-31)

To have experienced such a mighty work of God in their salvation would seem to have sealed their faith forever, but succeeding history proves that these stiff-necked people took occasion to murmur against Moses and the Lord at a later time as if the Lord had never lifted a hand in their defense. How fickle are we in trusting both the power and mercy of God!

It seems that God sanctifies not only individuals, but nations, to His purpose as He did here with the descendants of our father, Abraham. The entire nation was baptized under the waters of the Red Sea. They were symbolically covered by the Crimson Blood of Christ in both the Passover of the Angel of Death, and the Pass-under the crimson Sea with the Angel of Life. But there were yet many who were not all clean as was not Judas. We must come before the Lord in humility and repentance to receive Him wholly. Have you done?