

April 13–19: Exodus 14–18, “Stand Still, and See the Salvation of the Lord”

Let’s discuss some of the miracles the Lord performed on behalf of the Israelites during the early days of their wanderings.

Parting the Red Sea

Exd 14:13-14,21-22

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?

12 Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

13 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.

14 The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

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.

What does the Israelites’ being “sore afraid” of the Egyptians teach us about the development of their faith?

(the children of Israel...were sore afraid)

How did Moses demonstrate his faith in God even before the miracle occurred?

(Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord)

Spencer W. Kimball

"Hope must have long since died in the breasts of the timid Israelitish souls who knew not faith.... And then the miracle came. It was born of the faith of their indomitable leader. A cloud hid them from the view of their enemies. A strong east wind blew all the night; the waters were parted; the bed of the sea was dry; and Israel crossed to another world and saw the returning sea envelop and destroy their pursuers. Israel was safe. Faith had been rewarded, and Moses was vindicated. The impossible had happened. An almost superhuman faith had given birth to an unaccountable and mysterious miracle that was to be the theme of the sermons and warnings of

Israel and their prophets for centuries." (CR, Oct. 1952)

-Faith proceeds the miracle

The Book of Mormon confirms that this miracle had such an impact on the Israelites that even Laman and Lemuel knew it was true.

1 Nephi 4:2-3

2) Therefore let us go up; 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, and the armies of Pharaoh did follow and were drowned in the waters of the Red Sea.

3) Now behold ye know that this is true; and ye also know that an angel hath spoken unto you; wherefore can ye doubt? Let us go up; the Lord is able to deliver us, even as our fathers, and to destroy Laban, even as the Egyptians.

-This clearly demonstrates that merely witnessing a miracle does not develop faith.

Waters of Marah

Exd 14:23-25

23 ¶ And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

24 And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

25 And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

What does the Israelites' murmuring at Marah teach us about the development of their faith?

(And the people murmured against Moses)

How did Moses demonstrate his faith in the Lord when the Israelites faced another challenge?

(And he cried unto the Lord)

Manna

It wasn't long before food became scarce and they began to grow hungry.

Exd 16:1-3

1 And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of

Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.
2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

3 And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

What was the reaction of the Israelites when they found that there was not enough to eat?

(Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt)

Does it seem that their faith had grown from the miracles they had witnessed?

The Lord blessed the Israelites with quail and manna.

Exd 16:12-15

12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.

13 And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.

14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.

15 And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

What parallels can you see between the manna from heaven and the sacrament?

(ye shall know that I am the LORD your God
This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat)

Lets read how Jesus uses the story of manna as an example.

John 6:26-27,30-35

26) Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27) Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

30) They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31) Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32) Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33) For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34) Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35) And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

What did the people hope Jesus would give them?

(What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee?
Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written)

But what was Jesus offering them?

(I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger)

John 6:48-51

48) I am that bread of life.

49) Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50) This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51) I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Water From a Rock

Again, the people began to thirst because of the lack of water.

Exd 17:1-6

1 And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink.

2 Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?

3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

4 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.

5 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand,

and go.

6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

What was the reaction of the Israelites when they found that there was not enough to drink?

(is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst they be almost ready to stone me)

Does it seem that their faith had grown from the miracles they had witnessed?

(Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?)

Neal A. Maxwell

"Murmurers have short memories. Israel arrived in Sinai, then journeyed on to the Holy Land though they were sometimes hungry and thirsty. But the Lord rescued them, whether by the miraculous appearance by quail or by water struck from a rock. Strange, isn't it, brothers and sisters, how those with the shortest memories have the longest lists of demands! However, with no remembrance of past blessings, there is no perspective about what is really going on." (CR, Oct. 1989)

Battle Against the Amalekites

The Amalekites came out to fight against the Israelites.

Exd 17:8-13

8 ¶ Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.

10 So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

11 And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

12 But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

What does this account teach us about supporting those whom the Lord calls to lead?

Boyd K. Packer

"The raising of the hands has been a custom since ancient times, symbolized

when Moses was confronted by the Amalekite robbers, the destroyers of the wilderness....

“The wicked who now oppose the work of the Lord, while different from, are no less terrible than the plundering Amalekites. The sustaining of the prophet is still an essential ongoing part of the safety of this people. Should age and infirmity cause his hands to grow heavy, they are held up by his counselors at his side. Both are prophets, seers, and revelators, as is each member of the Quorum of the Twelve.” (CR, April 1995)

Jethro

Exd 18:1,8-9

1 When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt;

8 And Moses told his father in law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them.

9 And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians.

What change does the Joseph Smith Translation make in Exodus 18:1 about Jethro being a “priest”?

JST Exd 18:1 When Jethro, the high priest of Midian...

Why is it significant that Jethro is identified as a “high priest”?

-Both Jethro and, subsequently, Moses held the Melchizedek Priesthood.

D&C 84:6

6) And the sons of Moses, according to the Holy Priesthood which he received under the hand of his father-in-law, Jethro;

Joseph Fielding Smith

“The Midianites were descendants of Abraham, through the children of Keturah, wife of Abraham, therefore the Midianites, who were neighbors to the Israelites in Palestine, were related to the Israelites, and were Hebrews. As descendants of Abraham they were entitled through their faithfulness to his blessings, and in the days of Moses and preceding them, in Midian the Priesthood was found. (Church History and Modern Revelation, 2:103)

Jethro recognizes that Moses is being overwhelmed by leading the Israelites

Exd 18:13-18

13 ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening.

14 And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?

15 And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God:

16 When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws.

17 And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good.

18 Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.

What warning does Jethro give Moses about judging every matter personally?

(Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee)

Richard L. Evans

"There is a profound wisdom in this early utterance concerning the delegation of authority and of responsibility and of work. Surely it must be evident to every thinking person that there comes a time when, no matter how able or willing a man may be, he cannot further extend himself so far as person-to-person communication and effort are concerned....

"In person-to-person appointments in this Church and out of it, there is a limit to which a man can extend himself—a truth which the father-in-law of Moses discovered and expressed many centuries ago, and which is a still more pressing truth in our day as the Church and its responsibilities grow."
(CR, Oct. 1949)

Exd 18:19-20

19 Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God:

20 And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.

How does Jethro advise Moses to organize his responsibilities so he can more effectively judge and guide the Israelites?

-First: Do the work that only the prophet can do.

(Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God)

Neal A. Maxwell

"We generally see the need for Moses to apply the delegation dimension, and we note how both we and those we serve—including family—can 'wear away.' Moses was hearing every case! Worse still, however, this pattern

kept him from his real duties....

"The original Twelve were counseled that they were not to 'serve tables' (see Acts 6:1–4). Actually, serving tables is easy. It is visible, measurable, and do-able—compared to opening up the nations of the world to missionary work or to keeping wolves out of the flock. But if the Twelve were drawn away from their scriptural and constitutional duties, the whole Church would suffer. Being drawn away can happen to all of us, almost without our knowing it." ("Wisdom and Order," Ensign, June 1994)

-Second: Teach the people to govern themselves.
(teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do)

Dallin H. Oaks

"An early scriptural account of this need is in Father Jethro's counsel that Moses should not try to do so much. The people were waiting upon their priesthood leader from morning till night.... [Jethro] gave Moses counsel that illustrates the importance of the personal line: 'Thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.'

"In other words, Israelites who followed Moses should be taught not to bring every question to that priesthood leader. They should understand the commandments and seek inspiration to work out most problems for themselves." (CR, Oct. 2010)

Exd 18:22-24

22 And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.

23 If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.

24 So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said.

What does Moses' willingness to follow Jethro's advice teach us about his character?

Neal A. Maxwell

"Moses was a righteous and remarkable man. Nevertheless, he needed to change his leadership style for his welfare as well as the people's. Moses succeeded because he was the most meek man upon the face of the earth. (See Num. 12:3) Blessed are the meek, for they are neither easily offended by counsel nor aggravated by admonition." (CR, Oct. 1991)