

The People of God In A Strange Land

Ex. 14:10-14

Introduction:

1. The Bible tells a story about God's people in a strange land.
2. It tells the story over and over again.
 - a. The characters change somewhat. You may be reading about Joseph in Egypt or as we have just read about Israel in Egypt.
 - b. The places change. Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden into a world characterized by struggle, enmity and death. Israel was in Egypt, and later in Canaan, Babylon, and the Roman Empire. But all these are strange places for the people of God.
 - c. Even though the world we live in is so common to us . . . it is what we know . . . it is a strange land . . . and the Lord has prepared a better place for us. But how do we get there from here?
3. It would seem that it is God's intention that we reflect on our history in order to gain such insight.

Discussion:

- I. The strange land (the wilderness) is very frightening (Ex. 14:10-12).
 - A. Death is what makes it frightening.
 1. When Pharaoh marched after Israel they were afraid they were going to die.
 - a. They cried out to the Lord.
 - b. They complained to Moses.
 2. Death is the main threat in all of our strange land experiences.
 - a. The first account of history after the Garden of Eden is a story of death (Gen. 4:1-8). And why shouldn't it be? Life was associated with the Garden of God; death is associated with the strange land.
 - b. Also in Gen. 4 Lamech is said to have killed "a man for wounding me; and a boy for striking me." It appears that he fears for his life.
 - c. Gen. 5's statement, "And he died," leads us into Gen. 6 and all the deaths associated with the flood.
 - B. Death threatens in all the strange lands (wilderness).
 1. Even in the promised land of Canaan death was always threatening.
 2. Yes, it was a land flowing with milk and honey; it was a land promising life. It is even analogous with heaven itself.
 3. But there were always threats of death from enemies—Midianites, Philistines, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon. There were threats from famine. Abraham had to go down to

- Egypt. Joseph preserved the 12 tribes when famine overtook them in Canaan.
4. Assyria and Babylon killed many and took the rest into captivity.
 5. The N.T. opens with the people back in Canaan, but under the threatening hand of the Romans. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist prays for a time that they can serve the Lord “without fear” (Lk. 1:67-74).
- C. Death threatens us in this strange land (this wilderness) in which we live. It is very frightening.
1. We wear masks and socially distance.
 2. We try to eat right, exercise and go to the doctor.
 3. And we still plan for our funeral.
 4. 2.06 million have died from Covid-19 world wide. 410K in the U.S.A.
 5. Overall 59.23 million die in the world each year. That is 147,118 each day.
 6. Heb. 9:27 says, “It is appointed to men to die.” You had better plan for your funeral or someone else will do it for you!
- D. Our brothers in the wilderness had good reason to be afraid. They knew the threat of death. They had good reason to be afraid. They were made aware of the immediacy of their deaths. They had good reason to cry out to the Lord and to complain to Moses.
- E. As we struggle in the wilderness there are reasons to be fearful.

II. The salvation provided by the Lord confronts the fear (Ex. 14:13-14).

- A. Fear stems from our powerlessness over death.
- B. Moses defined salvation in terms of overcoming death and its fear (13).
- C. Salvation from death is only from the Lord.
 1. It is right to appeal to the Lord.
 2. There is no other who has the power to deliver us.
 3. Just as God had delivered Israel from Egypt He would deliver them from death.
 4. It would not be their own power that delivered them. For this reason sometimes what God calls on His people to do seems unusual.
 - a. He did not tell them to fight.
 - b. He said, “I will fight for you while you keep silent.”
 - c. He called on them to cross the Red Sea. It is so unbelievable that people today are trying to figure out some scientific explanation as to how it could have happened. Others are trying to figure out where Israel may have crossed. “Perhaps it was at some narrow area. Surely it could not have been a wide area.” “Perhaps the story is not even true.” It is so incredible that people are searching for some way to make it more believable.
 5. God called on Jerusalem to “give up” to the Babylonians.
 - a. Jer. 37:6-10.
 - b. Jer. 38:2-4, 17-18.

c. Not what they expected or wanted to hear.

D. Israel was called on to trust the Lord, as are we.

1. We are called on to do just as all the people of God have always been called on to do. Trust the Lord.
2. There is something that the people of God need to do—"Go forward" (Ex. 14:15).
3. Ex. 14:21-29.

III. The Lord saves His people from the strange land and its strange people (Ex. 14:21-31).

A. When Israel saw the great power that God had used to deliver them they respected the Lord, they believed in Him and His servant Moses (31).

B. So they worshiped and sang a song of praise to the Lord (Ex. 15).

C. God has sent His Son into the wilderness of this world and has rendered powerless him who had the power of death (Heb. 2:14-15).

1. Notice the imagery of slavery in this text.
2. Does this not hark back to the days of Israel in fear of death as they left the slavery of Egypt?
3. Does it not remind us of deliverance from the slavery of sin and death?
4. How should we respond? In faith, in reverence, in praise! For now, we are in the wilderness. But God has brought us through the wilderness before. He has sent His Son into the wilderness and through Him has rendered powerless him who had the power of death. "Let us hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end" (Heb. 3:6).

Conclusion:

1. Let fear be conquered by the power of God.
2. The Lord will fight for you.
3. Go forward!