



## **GOD WANTS TO TAKE THE LEAD IN YOUR UNBREAKABLE CHAINS**

### **REVIEW**

Exodus 13:21-22 says, *“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.”*

I’ve had you highlight these words in verse 21, *“And the LORD went before them... to lead them the way...”*

And we’re considering the truth that **GOD WANTS TO TAKE THE LEAD.**

In our first thought, we found that God knows you, He knows the paths that we will take, He knows the problems that we will face, and He knows the personal investment that it will require of Him, but God is still ready and willing to take the lead in our lives all we have to do is let Him.

In our second thought, we began to consider some of the specifics, and we found that God wants to take the lead **IN OUR IMPOSSIBLE OPPORTUNITIES.**

Our opportunities are always going to tell us to be **AFRAID** of what is ahead of us, to **ATTACK** those that are around us, to **ACCEPT DEFEAT** and to **ABANDON THE CAUSE.**

All God is doing is asking us to trust Him and to allow Him to the Lead.

In our third thought, we found that God wants to take the Lead **IN OUR OVERWHELMING SITUATIONS**.

Along the journey of the Christian life, we are going to face some **FOES** and sometimes we are going to have to face our **FEELINGS**, but, in either case, we God is **AVAILABLE**, God is **ABLE**, and God **ALREADY HAS A PLAN**.

Through prayer, we are simply letting Him take the lead.

In our fourth thought, we found that God wants to take the lead **IN OUR INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLES**.

The Christian life is not going to be **PAIN** free, **PROBLEM** free, or **PRESSURE** free, but we must not focus on the obstacles so much that we allow them to prevent us from claiming the promises of God and from relying on the power of God.

In our last thought, we found that God wants to take the lead **IN OUR INTENSE OPPOSITION**.

it is impossible for us to continue our journey of faith without experiencing opposition and persecution. Our enemy will use whatever he can – **PAIN, PERCEPTION, PASSION, PRESSURE, PROBLEMS**, and even **PEOPLE** – to hinder our forward progress. We must be very careful not to allow others the ability to rob us of the **PEACE**, the **POWER**, or the **PLAN** of God for our life. While we cannot control our circumstances, we can control our character and our choices.

- 1) We must control our **TONGUE**
- 2) We must control our **TENDENCIES**
  - A) We should not **DISENGAGE** with people (**SEPARATIONIST**)
  - B) We should not **DISCONNECT** from people (**ISOLATIONIST**)
  - C) We should not **DISPUTE** with people (**ANTAGONIST/OPPOSITIONIST**)
- 3) We must control our **TENDERNESS**
  - A) We must make the choice to surrender the **BATTLE** to the Lord
  - B) We must make the choice to surrender our **WORDS** to the Lord
  - C) We must make the choice to surrender our **STEPS** to the Lord

## **MESSAGE**

Exodus 14:10-18 says, *“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. 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? 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. 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. And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.”*

Exodus 14:21-31 says, “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. 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. 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. 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, 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. 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.”

If you're in the habit of marking things in the Word of God, I want to draw your attention back to verse 30 where the Bible says, “*Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians...*”

For a few moments this evening, I want to consider this thought: **GOD WANTS TO TAKE THE LEAD IN YOUR UNBREAKABLE CHAINS.**

As I have said several times through this study, in Exodus chapter 13, we find the nation of Israel **LEAVING** the land of Egypt, but, in chapter 14, we find that the nation of Israel was still

within the reach of Egypt. In chapter 14, we actually find the nation of Israel **LOOKING** back to and even **LONGING FOR** the past. Oh, they knew that things in the past weren't good, but in their mind at least the past seemed a whole lot better than their present set of circumstances.

Can I put it this way? Change is hard. So hard at times in fact that it becomes the very reason that change never happens. Here's the reality: the nation of Israel didn't want to go back to slavery but being set free from it was turning out to be a much more complicated ordeal, a much bigger risk, than they ever imagined that it would be. I mean they had seen the power of God when they were back in the land of Egypt and they just assumed that the path out of Egypt would be an easy one, but so far it has been anything but easy. What they didn't understand is that Egypt wasn't the only thing that was complicating their journey forward. It was the combination of a ruthless enemy, a strong set of emotions, and a weak faith that needed strengthening that were all contributing to the current scenario of fear and panic. And while they kept trying to move forward, it just seemed like everything, and everyone was either pulling them back, was pushing against their progress, or was trying to eliminate them altogether.

Can I ask you a couple of questions? Does your life ever feel like that? Does it ever feel like you're constantly taking one step forward and two steps backward. I mean you're trying to do right, you're trying to break free, you're trying to follow the Lord's leading, but it just feels like everything is against you and it feels like everybody is out to get you. That's where the nation of Israel is here in Exodus chapters 13 and 14. God had made His will clear to them and they were following Him, but the journey just seemed to become harder and harder with every step that they took. I think that we see that visually here in this passage.

The nation of Israel followed the Lord's leading right to a dead end at a place called Pihahiroth.

The Egyptian army didn't just pursue after them, but verse 9 says that they "...overtook them..." at Pihahiroth.

There's no where for them to go and there's no way for them to defend themselves.

Moses has instructed them to "...*Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD...*" (Exodus 14:13), and then Moses has cried out to God no doubt pleading, "Lord, what do we do? What do I do?"

And it was in that moment that God revealing His plan to Moses, "Go forward, lift up thy rod, and stretch thy hand out over the sea. I'm going to divide and you and the nation of Israel are going to go through the Red Sea on dry land" (My paraphrase).

Now, this is where I think the visual comes in. Moses informs the nation of Israel what is going to happen and he does what God told him to do: he lifts up his rod and stretches out his hand over the Red Sea and God parted the water.

Suddenly, there was a way forward in their impossible opportunity,  
Suddenly, there was hope in their overwhelming situation,  
Suddenly, there was a way through their insurmountable obstacle, and  
Suddenly, there was a way out of their intense opposition.

But I want you to listen to me – It wasn't an easy path. If we're not careful, we paint a picture in our minds eye of two walls of water (with little fish poking their head out of the water to watch) and in the middle a dry path for the nation of Israel to stroll from one side of the Red Sea to the other. That isn't the case at all. Yes, there were walls of water; yes, the land between was dry; and yes, the nation of Israel did walk through the Red Sea on dry ground, but I want you to notice again what verse 21 says:

Exodus 14:21 says, *"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."*

What did God use to part the Red Sea? He used *a strong east wind*. Now, let's consider those words.

The word *strong* here means "something that is stout, vehement, harsh, or fierce."

An *east wind*, by definition, is a wind that originates in the east and blows in a westward direction. There is a saying goes like this, "An east wind blows no good." The east wind is a phrase that has become something almost synonymous with hardships, with trouble, and with difficulty. As a matter of fact, we can gain the same thing through the Scriptures, as the Bible has a lot to say about this east wind.

In Genesis 41:6, 23, 27, the east wind is described as a hot and dry wind that *"...blasted..."* the seven thin ears of corn and that ushered in seven years of famine.

In Ezekiel 17:10, the east wind is again described as a hot and dry wind that caused the grain to *"...utterly wither..."*

In Ezekiel 19:12, the east wind is again described as a hot and dry wind that causes fruit to dry up, that causes leaves to wither, and that causes branches to break.

In Isaiah 27:8, the east wind is described as a *"...rough wind..."*

In Job 38:24, the east wind is described as wind that *"...scattereth..."*

In Psalm 48:7, the east wind is described as being strong enough to destroy ships.

In Exodus 10:13, it was the east wind that was used to bring locusts into the land of Egypt.

I think you get the idea.

So, let me ask you a question: are the children of Israel obeying the Lord in *moving forward*? The answer is yes. But how are they moving forward. The answer is through the Red Sea and against a strong east wind. One computer model suggested that, depending on exactly where the nation of Israel crossed the Red Sea, it would have taken between 63-75 miles per hour or greater. We need to understand that the wind wasn't just blowing against the Red Sea and against the Egyptians, the wind was also blowing against the nation of Israel as they obeyed the Lord and as they moved forward. I can help but picture that the wind was also probably picking up some dust, and some sand, and other loose debris as it made its way through the wilderness and towards the Red Sea.

The Apostle Paul's words in 2 Corinthians comes to mind.

2 Corinthians 4:8-11 says, *"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."*

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 says, *"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."*

What I'm trying to get you to understand is that God can make a way of deliverance for His people out of their bondage, but sometimes the path out that bondage isn't always an easy one, but it is through that journey out that God brings **HOPE**, God brings **HELP**, and God brings **HEALING**.

You see, while the nation of Israel was in Egypt (always a picture of the world), they had developed some things that was proving to make their path towards freedom difficult: a spirit of **NEGATIVITY**, a **CRITICAL/BLAMING** spirit, a **VICTIM** spirit, a spirit of **ANGER**, a spirit of **DOUBT**. Now, the truth of the matter is that we are all targets from time to time of each of these, but what we have to understand is that if we don't deal with these correctly, they will take over and control our **THOUGHTS**, our **FEELINGS**, our **WORDS**, and our **ACTIONS**.

Jesus put it this way, in John 8:34, when He said, *'...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.'*

We need to understand that negativity, and criticism, and self-defeat, and anger, and doubt are not spiritual qualities. They are not work of the Holy spirit in us; they are the leftovers of the world that are still in us and that still need to be given to Christ so that a victory can be enjoyed over them.

Romans 8:12-13 says, *"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."*

Galatians 5:22-25 says, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit"*

I mentioned to you last week that I'm not so sure that the nation of Israel had the ability to see the waters collapse on the Egyptian army, but verse 30 makes it very clear that in the morning *"...Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore."*

Here's what I'm getting at: there are going to be things that come into your life that are going to cause certain things to swell up inside of you:

Things that are contrary and that conflict with the very path that God is trying to take you on,

Things that are going to seem too big for you handle and too hard for you to go through,

Things that are going to try to pull you back into the old you, back to your old way of living, and back into your old way of responding.

"Preacher, what do I do?" You go forward, you follow the leading of the Lord, and you let the Lord fight for you. God is just a God that can deliver us from the bad that is this world, God is the God that can deliver you from you. He can break the chains that you know have you bound as well as the ones that you aren't aware of.

The Psalmist said, in Psalm 107:13-16, *"Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder."*

Jesus said, in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free