

Exodus 14:5-7, 10-14, 21-29
Fear Not, Stand Firm, and See Salvation!
WRCoB 10.2.22

From NPR this past Wednesday, September 28.



Hurricane Ian delivered an eerie omen to coastal Florida residents Wednesday morning, as the powerful storm's winds pulled massive amounts of water away from beaches and shorelines, exposing the seabed that's normally covered by feet of ocean water.

Spectators and photographers gaped at the suddenly remade coastlines — but the water is expected to return with a vengeance: The latest storm surge estimates predict up to 12-18 feet of water above ground level hitting an area from Englewood south to Bonita Beach, the National Hurricane Center said.

What we have here is a phenomenon called *Wind Setdown*.

Carl Drews, a researcher

At the National Center for Atmospheric Research
Describes the weather dynamic.

Wind setdown is the drop in water level caused by wind stress acting on the surface of a body of water for an extended period of time.

As the wind blows, water recedes from the upwind shore and exposes terrain that was formerly underwater.

Now, what's that remind you of?

Like the research, I mentioned a couple of weeks ago
Led by Robert Ballard
In search for evidence of the Great Flood

I fancy the idea
That these biblical stories
Originate from actual historical events.

That there is evidence out there in history
That affirms much of the biblical accounts.

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Here's another observation of *wind setdown*
Taken many years ago.

It is taken from a journal written in 1882
By a Major-General Alexander B. Tulloch.

He was an official in the British army
And in his diary, he reports on an event
That occurred on Lake Manzala.

Lake Manzala is a part of the Nile Delta
And a possible location for the crossing.

This is what he wrote.

One day, when so employed [surveying] between Port Said and Kantarah, a gale of wind from the eastward set in and became so strong that I had to cease work.

Next morning on going out I found that Lake Menzaleh, which is situated on the west side of the [Suez] Canal, had totally disappeared,

the effect of the high wind on the shallow water having actually driven it away beyond the horizon, and the natives were walking about on the mud where the day before the fishing-boats, now aground, had been floating.

When noticing this extraordinary dynamical effect of wind on shallow water, it suddenly flashed across my mind that I was witnessing a similar event to what had taken place between three and four thousand years ago, at the time of the passage of the so-called Red Sea by the Israelites.

Note in both the biblical account

And Major-General Tulloch's journal

Mention of a strong easterly wind.

It seems possible, then, that *wind setdown*

Could explain the parting of the sea.

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Does this take away from the miracle of it?

Absolutely not!

The real miracle is not that the waters parted.

That can be explained as a weather phenomenon.
To me, the real miracle is the timing of it!

From the exact moment

The Israelites found themselves on the shore
With no possible escape route
The east wind began to blow.

It blew all night!

It blew so hard

That it blew away the water exposing the sea bottom.

When all the Israelites made it through to the other side
The wind stopped blowing

And the water rushed back in a fury

Drowning the Egyptians who were trying to cross!

There's the miracle!

No wonder this was THE defining moment
For the people of Israel!

Israel built its faith on the foundation of the Exodus event.

And you can see why!

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To me, I believe the Exodus event exposes a problem
We have in our post-modern world.

We have developed a small view of God.

We limit our understanding of what God can and can't do!

From Dr. Steven J. Lawson,

In an introduction of a seminar entitled, "A Puny God."

Today, our concept of God is often sentimental rather than biblically based. Many people embrace what has been called "moralistic therapeutic deism," a view of God that says [God] exists to make us feel good about ourselves, and that [God] involves Himself in our lives only to affirm us and solve our problems.

God is a moralistic therapeutic deism to be sure

But God is so much more than that.

We limit God's ability by writing off the Biblical accounts
As largely exaggerated events.

I'd like to broaden our view

To include God's miraculous works of deliverance!

From the deliverance of Noah from the flood

The parting of the Red Sea

The return from exile in Babylon

To the resurrection of Jesus Christ

God's salvation events are a lot bigger

Than we give God credit for.

Salvation is not just a guide to a better, healthier you

A gateway to eternal life

God's redemptive work is so much bigger than that!

God is concerned with the restoration of all of humanity
As exemplified in the Exodus event.

So seriously, as Moses said to the Hebrews
Fearing for their lives at the shore

Stand back, keep quiet and watch the Lord do his thing!

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From bondage in Egypt to the Promised Land
The Exodus is the signature moment
For descendants of Abraham.

Nothing so shaped and formed them as a people.

According to Don Carson of the Gospel Coalition:

The Exodus is the greatest redemptive event in the Old Testament to which subsequent revelation points to again and again and again.

It gave them a common identity and purpose.

It bound them together as a people
And served as a reminder of God's faithfulness.

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To the early enslaved, African American Christian
The story of the Exodus provided a hope
More so than any other event in the OT.

It was their story too
As they suffered under the strain of bondage.

To them the Exodus was God's argument against slavery.
And they saw the God's judgement on Egypt and Pharaoh
Echoing God's judgement on the Southern whites.

The Black enslaved Christian
Refused the white supremacist's position
Requiring submission and obedience
To slave masters.

Instead they used the Exodus event
To justify their fight for freedom
And deliverance from oppression.

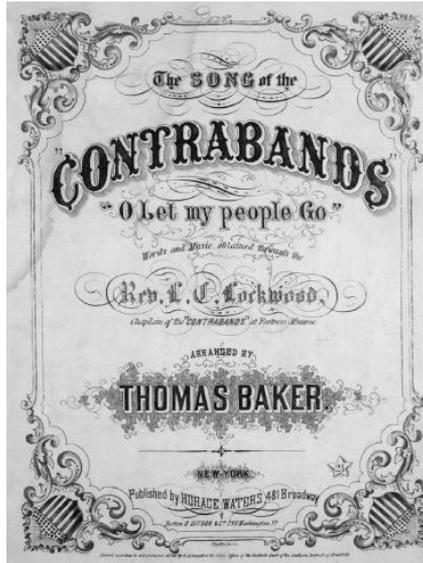
Theologians like, James H. Cone and Esau McCaulley
Developed a liberation theology
Not only centering around the Exodus story

But with Jesus' own response
To oppressed and marginalized people.

In fact, Jesus summed up his own mission as such
At the very beginning of his ministry

Luke 4:18-19 NIV

**¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."**



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The song we will close with, *Go Down Moses*
Is a song that could be sung at a Jewish Seder meal
Or a BlackLivesMatter rally.

It is thought to be the earliest published
African American spiritual.

It was officially entitled *The Song of the Contrabands*
Subtitled *Go Down Moses*

The Rev. L. C. Lockwood a chaplain
At Fort Monroe, in Hampton, Virginia
Was instrumental in publishing the song.

Fugitives who fled the South for freedom in the North
Were known as the "Contraband of War"

They escaped by the thousands to fight for the Union Army.

The song crosses the barriers of generations
Faith traditions and people's ethnicities.

So many people find meaning and purpose in its words.

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The story of the Exodus can be considered
A paradigm for the liberation of oppressed people.

It is a story of the movement of a particular people group
From oppression, to liberation, to redemption.

In the original account

It is the Hebrew people
Seeking liberation from the Egyptians.

But so many other people groups identify with the story

It is the American colonies under British rule.

It is the enslavement of Africans by the United States.

It is the Apartheid of South Africa.

The African people under European colonizers

It is the oppression under Soviet Union's rule

The struggle of Palestine against Israel's oppression.

Russia's current aggression towards Ukraine.

It is a pattern we see throughout the ages

Oppression, liberation, and redemption.

Michael Walzer in his book, *Exodus and Revelation*

Simplifies the analogy even more.

He writes we can learn three things from the Exodus event.

1. Where ever you live, it is Egypt.
2. There is a promised land.
3. And to get there you have to go through the wilderness.

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I close with a prayer by Kaitlin Curtice in *Sojourners*

O God, this morning when we woke to your presence in and around us, we also woke to a heavy world, and in this world, we can't make sense of all the things that are wrong and should be made right.

We cannot fathom that people are judged on the color of their skin, that lives are worth less because their pockets are empty, that violence is an everyday occurrence, and it seems that no place is safe.

So when we wake to the sunrise and know that you are still good, teach us what it means to seek goodness when the world is dark.

O God, teach us what it means to live in grace — not just for ourselves, but for the collective whole.

We have been individuals for far too long, and in that individualism, we've forgotten how to hold each other.

We need to return again to a love that holds together community — A love based on the way we belong to each other . . . a return to our wholeness based on compassion

toward others.

And in that returning, we find that you are always bringing us back, not to a world in which we do not see color or class, but into a world in which we see it and believe that sacred love is the imprint on everyone and everything, anyway.

O God, in a heavy world, we need to remember that we belong to each other, and in that remembering, that we belong to you.

Teach us.

Teach us because the future depends on it.

Remind us, we pray.

Amen.