

## **Dr. John Oswalt, Exodus, Session 7, Exodus 12-14**

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This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Exodus. This is session 7, Exodus 12-14.

Let's pray together. Thank you, Father, for this day. Thank you for the beautiful sunshine. The cool breezes.

Thank you for all the ways in which you show your love to us, and we receive it with thanks and joy. Lord, you know every concern that we bring to you. In a room full of people like us, there are many issues.

Health issues, financial issues, issues of family, and the list goes on. Thank you that you know these, you care about them and you are reaching out to deal with them. We would pray, especially this evening, for our friends, the rulers.

We pray that you would touch both of them, her as she is the caregiver and him. Be with them, Lord. We would ask you to restore them to whatever degree of health is possible in these days.

Thank you for them, and we pray your comfort for them. Thank you again for this marvelous opportunity to study your word. Once again, we ask you, Holy Spirit, come.

Open its truth to us. Open our hearts to that truth, and help us to be more nearly the people that you need for us to be in this world in these days. In your name, we pray. Amen.

Alright, we are looking at chapter 12, verse 43, through the end of chapter 14. This, of course, is the Red Sea Crossing, and there's something very appropriate that we would be looking at this passage here on Monday of Holy Week, because there's a great connection between the Exodus and the Resurrection.

Of course, you have Jesus and the Passover meal in the upper room, all of those factors, so there's something wonderfully appropriate for us to be talking about that here. We begin at the end of chapter 12, and we have more Passover regulations. And so, my question to you is, why do you think that these regulations were not given with the others back there in chapter 12? All the way through chapter 12, verses 1 through 20.

Any thoughts about why these regulations should be separated from the others? Yes, yes. It's sometimes a good idea to spread things out. Yes.

And there was a clear distinction between His people. You're exactly right. If you look at those verses, verse 43, these are the regulations for the Passover meal.

No foreigner may eat it. Any slave may eat it. A temporary resident or hired worker may not eat it.

Verse 48, a foreigner residing among you who wants to celebrate the Lord's Passover must have all the males in his house circumcised. So, I think that Ruth is exactly correct. We have had the Exodus, not the crossing of the sea yet, but the departure from the land, and we're told, if you look at 1238, many other people went up with them.

King James translates it pretty literally, and it's called a mixed multitude, a mixture of people. People who perhaps were Semites, but were not of the family of Jacob. Maybe some Egyptians went along.

They had seen what this God could do, and they thought maybe it would be a good thing to be on His side. So, I think that's exactly right. These restrictions are given here in light of the other people who have joined the Exodus group.

Here are some additional things that need to be said about it. So that if you as a foreigner are willing to accept the covenant obligations as indicated by circumcision, then you, in effect, are joining the covenant, and that's very significant, I think. The covenant was not ethnically based.

The covenant was not merely for the physical descendants of Abraham. Yes, that's where the core focus was, but anybody who wanted to accept the covenant obligations could do that, and that signals for us the truth that God is not merely interested in the physical descendants of Abraham. He's interested in bringing the world into the covenant, and so here is the evidence of that, and that's going to increase as we go through so that if you look over at Isaiah 56, which is on page 693, verse 3, Let no foreigner who is bound to the Lord say, The Lord will surely exclude me from His people.

Let no eunuch complain, I am a dry tree. For this is what the Lord says, To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, who choose what pleases Me, and hold fast to My covenant, To them I'll give within My temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters. I'll give them an everlasting name that'll endure forever.

And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord, to minister to Him, to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, who will keep the Sabbath without desecrating it, those who hold fast My covenant, These I will bring to My holy mountain and give them joy in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted

on My altar, For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations. You remember that's the very language that Jesus used when, on Monday morning of Holy Week, He cleansed the temple.

My house is to be a house of prayer for all nations, but you have made it a den of robbers. So, here in Isaiah 56, we are building on this thought, and eventually, Paul can say that the true children of Abraham are those who accept the covenant by faith. So, you've got this progression running all the way through the Bible, and these Passover regulations here are a step on that path as we go through.

Okay, back to Exodus. Once again, we have things sort of mingled. Chapter 13, verses 1 to 16, is primarily about the consecration of the firstborn.

But in the middle of it, we have regulations about the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Verses 3 through 10 are really not about the firstborn but about the Feast of Unleavened Bread. What do you think is going on here? No thoughts, okay? You can talk again.

If they won't, you might as well. All right. All right, all right.

It is to honor God for their deliverance. When they do this, they are to remember. And I think this is very much to the point.

It's very easy for us to get in a habit of doing certain rituals and forget why we do them. Forget what the significance is. Okay, we always consecrate the firstborn.

And it has to be said, the Hebrews are not the only ones who consecrated their firstborn to the God. This is not something unique to the Hebrews. Many of the pagan nations did the same kind of thing.

And so, what's happening here is God is saying, don't forget why you do this. This is true of other of the festivals. At the time of the Passover, pagans were celebrating the New Year.

And they are rehearsing the story of the God who defeated chaos and brought order out of chaos. At the same time the pagans are doing that, the Hebrews are remembering God brought us out of slavery. God delivered us from death.

Not in the never land of myth, but in our time and space, God broke in. So, I think Ruth is exactly right that it is in that context; it's in the context of the unleavened bread feast that we remember. We've got a very different reason for consecrating the firstborn.

That is because God delivered us. It can be said that at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall, the pagans are worshiping the God Bacchus, the God of alcohol. And the Hebrews are called to remember their unintentional sins of the previous year and to weep over them.

Unintentional sin, remember, not intentional sin. There is no stated festival, and there is no stated sacrifice for that. Those things have to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

But on the Feast of Tabernacles, the pagans are getting drunk, and the Hebrews are weeping, weeping over their unintentional sins of the previous year. Okay, notice verses 5 and 19. When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites, the land he swore to your ancestors to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you are to observe this ceremony in this month.

Now, it's interesting that we're focusing ahead. The regulations in the previous chapter were focused on. You don't eat unleavened bread because God brought you out, and you didn't have time to raise the bread.

Now, it's when you come into the land. Again, in verse 9, this observance will be for you like a sign on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that the law of the Lord is to be on your lips. Now, here is the memory, for the Lord brought you out of Egypt with his mighty hand.

You are to do this thing as a way of writing God's commands. We're going to be coming up to the covenant here. On your forehead, on your hand.

These things are a means of reinforcement. You remember that in Deuteronomy, they are told to write God's commandments on the doorposts as they go in and out so that they will see them. But now, let me push this a little bit.

Question 3 there. What's the connection between the sacrifice of the firstborn and what God did in Egypt? I mean, why do I sacrifice the firstborn lamb? I mean, God spared the firstborn in Egypt because of the blood. Why do I have to make this sacrifice? Of course, I cannot sacrifice my son, but I do have to redeem him.

I have to buy him back from God. Now why is that, do you think? Does this go back to the thing that Jesus is the firstborn and, therefore, Jesus was the supreme ultimate sacrifice? Everything. Yes, yes, I think it is possible.

This is a way of preparing for God's sacrifice of his firstborn son. Yes, I think so. Look at verses 14 through 16, particularly verse 14.

What function is the sacrifice of the firstborn going to fulfill, according to verse 14? It's a reminder, yes. It is not only a reminder, and it's a teaching device. Dad, why are we doing this? Let me tell you, son.

Over and over and over again. Why are we alive today? Why is our nation going on? Because of the grace of God. And by doing this, we force ourselves to remember.

And this is exactly what Jesus said in the upper room. As often as you do this, do this in remembrance of me. Why do we take communion over and over and over again if we are forgiven? It's to remind ourselves on what basis we live. What's the basis for this faith of ours? So, yes, the blood really did cover them, but this is a continual reminder of that truth.

Don't forget it. We live because of that. So, what does all this say about the importance of history to theological truth? There are facts that back up the faith.

That's right at the heart of it. I can say, well, I believe that I am going to rise from the dead. And somebody else says, yeah, and I believe I'm a ham sandwich.

One belief is as good as another. Ah, ah. Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

The tomb is empty. One of my favorite stories comes from Jerry Walls, a former professor at the seminary, who in his introductory philosophy course at a certain point said, Now, folks, suppose, suppose I could bring someone here today who had incontrovertible proof that Jesus did not rise from the dead. We've got the body of Jesus.

How many of you would still be Christian? And typically, half the class would raise their hands. And he would just almost come over the desk at them. What do you think? What are you doing this for? That's stupid.

If he didn't rise from the dead, as Paul says, we are of all people most to be pitied because we have believed a lie. And that doesn't begin with the resurrection. It goes all the way back into the very core of our faith, at least as far as this, if not farther, to Abraham.

Yes, we believe certain things because there is evidence external to our own psyche that confirms it. And we mustn't ever lose sight of that. That's why the question of the historicity of the Bible is so important.

It's also why the enemy makes it a number one priority to undercut the historicity of the Bible. But we can't get away from it. If these accounts are false, then we are kidding ourselves.

But they're not false. They're true. And good reason to believe them.

All right, let's push on. Verse 17, when Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. Ah, yes, here we are.

They're in Goshen, which is here. A short way to Canaan is right up the coast, and that's an 11-day journey by walking. That would have been the easy way to get them to Canaan if that was the purpose.

I've talked about this again and again, but I want to hit it again. Getting them to Canaan is not the primary purpose. We're going to have another chance to talk about this next week.

Suppose God had led them that way. What would not have happened? Crossing the sea would not have happened. They would never have had that remarkable confirmation of God's absolute incomparability.

The easy way, in fact, would have not been the easy way over the long term. It certainly would not have been the best way. But look what God goes on to say.

If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt. Well, God could have delivered them from war. Why do you think he didn't want them to encounter war at this point? They're too inexperienced.

Exactly. I'm glad you said that because I was going to push you to that very point next. Yes, it's not a question of experience in war.

It's a question of experience in faith. The Lord knows they had enough problems with that as it is. But without the confirmation of the crossing of the sea, it would be very easy for them simply to throw up their hands and say, this is all over.

There's no point in that. Yes, they might have lost all the offering that they had for the tabernacle. They wouldn't have had a witness either to tell.

That's right. They would not have had that witness that is, again, that we'll look at in some detail next week in chapter 15. At that point, they were far enough away from Egypt up here that it wasn't easy to go back.

But here on this road, they could have easily gone back if they had been confronted with that war. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Yes. It's interesting.

About three times in this section, we see the words that we hear here at the end of verse 18. The Israelites went up out of Egypt, ready for battle. Oh, really? Now, literally, what it says is they went out of Egypt like an armed troop.

I think the point of that is not that they were ready for battle. This is not my translation. I think what it's saying is that they didn't sneak out by night, and nobody knew they were gone.

What it means is they marched out. They went out in the full sight of everybody. I think that's the point.

But three times, it says they went out marching like a troop, and I think that's the point that's being made there. Do you have some experiences of the hard way versus the easy way that you'd care to share with us? Well, you always have that proverbial selling of a house. The proverbial selling of a house, yes.

Yes. My first situation, I was totally outside of my comfort zone and in the middle of absolutely nowhere. There's hardly any civilization except for the thousand people in that town.

My next-door neighbors were a bunch of deer. I'm a city boy. I prayed and asked God, God, do not send me.

This is not where you want me. In a mobile home parsonage where I lived for two and a half years, God said to me, this is where I'm calling you. And it was a hard, hard two and a half years.

But there's no way that God could have brought me to where I am today without that experience. It had to be that for a nice city trip somewhere.

A little more salary, a nicer apartment. I think of a similar situation, but now I think of the people that I met. All right.

That was a tremendous blessing to just show the heart of God that it was worth the trip. Okay. The people.

Yes. Anyone else? Go ahead. After we made the application to go to Japan after the seminary, we had to wait seven years.

Two churches passed before we actually got there. It was well worth it after we left that.

Yeah. Yeah. Many important things.

Hindsight is 20-20. Yes. It was many years after moving away from the people that I was growing up with, not knowing anybody in Kentucky.

After I came out of that organization, I became so angry with God. He said, why did you let me grow up here? And he finally told me, because I can use you now. There are thousands and thousands of people that have come out of that organization, and I didn't know that.

There are other people that have come out to help me. Now, we help other people, and I can look back on that now and see that God made a purpose. Yeah. Yeah. Amen. Amen. Amen.

So, God did not take them the easy way. Instead, we're told, in verse 20, that they camped by Etham at the edge of the desert.

Verse 2 of chapter 14 tells the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pihahiroth, between Migdal and the sea. We don't know any of those locations. There to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Bal-zaphon.

Pharaoh will think the Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert. So, it appears that they came out this way and looked as though they were starting here, and then, now, the sea that they crossed was not the Red Sea. The Red Sea is down here, and it is 1,200 feet deep.

They would have tumbled down one side and had to go up hand over hand over the other side. They may have crossed the tip up here, the Gulf of Suez, but the Bible actually says they crossed the Reed Sea. The Hebrew Bible, only at the very end, in the late prophetic period, talks about crossing the Red Sea.

Up until that point, every occurrence was the Reed Sea. Now, the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, uses the Red Sea from the outset, and that's where we get it in our English Bibles. But the Hebrew text says they crossed the Reed Sea.

The Reed Sea was this whole area up through here where the Suez Canal is now, and it was filled with these lakes called the Bitter Lakes. And they, interestingly, were tidal. When the tide rose and fell here in the Gulf of Suez, these lakes would rise and fall some, too, the water evidently running underground, and they were salty.

That's why they're called Bitter Lakes. So, it is most people today, most evangelicals who believe the Bible, believe that probably what they crossed was one of these Bitter Lakes, 25 or 30 feet deep, which is enough to drown anybody. So, it was miraculous, but it was not like the Prince of Egypt or the Ten Commandments, where you've got 100 feet of water standing up in walls on either side.



Was the water standing up on either side? That's what the Bible says. So how that all works out, I think, is not easy to answer, but at the same time, the Bible says it was a miracle, and that's exactly the point. Because in answer to that prayer, the wind blew all night, and the water separated, and they crossed on dry land.

Okay, we'll talk more about that in a moment. Yeah? Yeah? That's not a series of lakes. No, it is a series of lakes, and the whole thing is called the Reed Sea.

It makes an even more interesting story, doesn't it? Sure. Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Yeah, yeah.

Okay. Dr. Hollisbrook. Yes.

How did you negotiate? Because I had never read. Yeah. That's why I'm here.

Laughter. You said that to the general public, and they would say, well, it's clearly taking away every translation I've had since Wendell. Yeah, yeah. So, that's a whole new concept to me.

Yes, yes. And I don't know if that's what we're about to do, but that's true. No, I don't think so.

I don't think so. You're not alone in that. I never did say.

Yeah. What I was reading in here, you did say exactly what you said in the proposal. Yeah.

But how much you have studied those, you wouldn't know that, would you? No. And it would make a significant difference. Oh, very significant difference, yes.

But in the Van Dyck translation, our Arabic translation is Suf. The Sea of Suph, yes. And Suph is the Hebrew word for reeds.

Hmm. That's what we have to say: It's not a reed; it's a sea. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

But I say again, this is not in any way to diminish the miraculous nature. That water was deep enough to drown horses, and it divided. That's a miracle in my book.

Yes. So, is it possible with this series of lakes that they could have gone around the lakes on dry ground? It's just that they found themselves pressed by that lake at that time. Exactly.

And the Lord divided it. Exactly. I think if you're going to draw it from a larger perspective, you can imagine a lake like that, and here they are, and here comes the largest chariot corps in the world at that time.

As I guess I mentioned in the notes here, the horse and the chariot at that time were the ultimate weapon. And the Egyptians, as best we know, had the largest chariot corps in the world at that time. So here they come, and there's nothing they can do.

They're backed up, desert on either side, sea at their backs. It's over. And clearly, the text says that precisely because that happened is what encouraged Pharaoh to think, now's my chance.

They're wandering around the desert. They don't know where they're going. They're going to get backed up against one of those lakes.

So, in a sense, again, God is inviting Pharaoh into this trap. Now, he didn't do it against Pharaoh's will, but he gave him a situation where Pharaoh could go back on his word if he chose to, and he chose to. Now again, I have to say, I think all of us have to be aware of that kind of a situation.

God does not tempt anyone to do evil. He does not seek to persuade us to do evil. He does not put us into a situation where we have to do evil, but he will allow circumstances so to develop that if we choose, we can walk into a trap.

Okay. Time is flying. Yes, yes, yes.

This also explains both the dry ground, this sandy bottom would dry out very quickly, but it would still, so you could walk across it, but it would still be soft, and you try to drive horses and chariots through there, you're in trouble. And it's, again, so interesting to me the way it is said in, yeah, verse 22, the Israelites went through the sea on a dry ground with a wall of water on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued them, and all of Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.

Again, I'm not thinking very clearly, but hey, here's the opportunity; we can do it now. And it's in that context that they do it. Okay.

A further reason for leading them the wrong way is in verses 4, 14, and four. I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord. Here's another for our list of no.

So, God leads them the wrong way, not only to teach them his goodness and his glory, but also to defeat the enemy. All right. Question number two under 14, one to nine is that thing about going out marching.

Now let's look at verse 14, chapter 14, verses 10 to 14. As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord, but evidently not in faith.

They said to Moses, was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us out to the desert to die? What have you done by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, leave us alone, let us serve the Egyptians? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than die in the desert. Moses answered the people, do not be afraid. Stand firm, and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today, you will never see again.

From the text, God has not told him that. We have no place prior to this where God has told Moses what he plans to do. So here, one person has learned the truth of the plagues.

God can be trusted. All of them were in a mess. Obviously, the mess is hopeless.

God got us into this just because, for some reason or other, he wants to destroy us. No, stand still. Stand still and see the salvation the Lord will bring you today.

The Lord will fight for you. You need only be still. One person, one person learned the lessons.

Now, I'm sure there were others as well. But the contrast between the people and Moses here is so dramatic. It appears they haven't learned anything.

But Moses has. So, the Lord says, why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch your hand over the sea to divide the water so the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.

I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through the chariots and the horsemen. The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.

So, what are some ways that God can gain glory through our lives? I think you're exactly right. Exactly right. Any other thoughts there? How can God gain glory through our lives? By going against tradition or what is expected, and you stand for what can be seen as not expected.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. You know, I think of that T-shirt company in Syracuse and what they call... Lexington. Lexington.

I was 30 minutes from Lexington. Okay, okay. Yeah. They surely are. They surely are. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I wish I had a need for a couple thousand T-shirts. Yes.

Yes. Precisely in this situation where their backs are to the wall, and it seems as though the enemy is triumphing, God says, in this situation, I'm going to gain glory. So, not only when we're in those hard situations, and we believe, but also when we allow God to put us in those hard situations.

We've talked about some of those already. I've often said, when by God's grace I get to heaven, I'm going to ask him, what was that college presidency about? And yet, I have said to students for 30 years now, Karen and I have had every experience of divine leadership there is. From total darkness, well, I guess we should do this, to the thumb in the back.

And the college presidency was the thumb in the back. We've got to do this. Both of us knew that.

And yet, pretty hard. Pretty hard. Yep.

Yep, just so. John, if you haven't already done this, would you just say something about the magnitude of these groups here? Yes. Thousands of Israelites crossing the Sea of Reeds on dry ground, but still, there are maybe hundreds of thousands, and you may have already said something about how many.

No, I haven't. And feet and animals and carts and everything going across. And yet, the Egyptians coming could not get across.

You would think about the time it would take for all of those to pass. Yes, yes. Let me talk about that.

As I indicated in the background material, the Hebrews used numbers very differently from the way we use numbers. We use numbers exclusively for quantity. The Hebrews sometimes used it that way, but much more importantly was quality.

And you can think of the numbers like 40 and 12 and 7 that are numbers about quality, not necessarily quantity. So, this can get us in a lot of difficulty. And the numbers of the Hebrew people crossing the Reed Sea is one of those.

When you think of 2.5 million people, which is what it would amount to if there were 600,000 fighting men, we're not talking about what God could do. That's not on the

table. But the question is, what did God do? And the logistics here, when you begin to think about it, are staggering.

If you have a column of 2.5 million people, if the front is a mile wide, the tail is nearly 10 miles back. So, if you've got a front a mile wide from here into Wilmore, how long does it take a group of people 10 miles long to cross? It begins to raise some serious problems. Then, when you think about the encampment of 2.5 million people, you're talking about something in the neighborhood of 20 square miles.

And that's minimal. So again, is that what the Bible is describing? And it doesn't seem to be the case. Now, there have been a number of attempts to solve the problem.

One possible solution, and as far as I'm concerned, none of these really answers it. But one possibility is, the Hebrew language did not have vowels until 500 years after Jesus. It was written in consonants.

The consonant for 1000 is that. Here's this silent guttural, just a stop and an L and a P. The word for 1000 is LF. And the P following a vowel is soft, like an F. LF.

The word for a troop is aloof. Both those words in a consonantal text would have been indistinguishable. So, one suggestion is that the original text said 600 troops of men, with maybe a troop being 100.

I think the problem with that is that there are clearly times when these three consonants are used for a quantity of 1000. And so how you would distinguish between those, I think, raises an issue. I think another possibility, and honestly, this is the one that I find most probable, is that, in fact, the total of people was 600,000.

Half a million people is still a huge bunch of people to get across a sea in a night. But it's not beyond the realm of possibility, whereas I think 2.5 million is beyond the realm of possibility. I don't think you could get them across the sea in two days.

So those are issues that the text raises and doesn't ever, in my mind, fully answer. But I would say again, I just want to underline this: they don't use numbers like we use numbers. In interpreting any text, you have to interpret it in the terms of the original writers, not in your own terms.

And so, it's in that regard. Okay, let me, yes. What is the symbolism of God acting in the early hours of the morning? We're told that the wall of fire and cloud separated the Egyptians from the Hebrew people, and the wind blew all night.

Then, the Lord stretched out His hand over the sea. All that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind, turned it into dry land. The waters were divided.

Verse 24, during the last watch of the night, the Lord looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. What's the significance of God acting in the early morning? It's dark. Now, for those of us who are owls, like me, nothing really gets done in the early morning.

But God seems to be a lark and not an owl. What's the significance of the early morning? It's a time of day of great force. Yes, it's a new beginning.

What else? Yeah, the moment before and the moment after are in sharp contrast. Yes, that's night, this is day. Mm-hmm.

All right, all right. It took a great deal of faith. We can talk about the lack of faith of these people, but it still took a lot of faith to step out in the darkness toward this body of water and to believe that we're going to make it.

God usually calls upon us to step out in the dark. He rarely calls us to act in the bright midday when everything is perfectly clear. I think also, and I perhaps am speaking of my own experience here, I just don't know a more miserable hour than 3 o'clock in the morning.

Every problem is insurmountable, and it's in that moment that God chooses to act. It's in that moment that God says, As a night watchman, that 3 o'clock hour was the time when you just felt, you didn't know where you were or anything. Yeah, you're exactly right.

Forgive me if I've told this before. The summer Karen and I were married, I worked as a night watchman in a brass foundry, and a lot of the buildings were empty. Walking through those big, old, empty buildings at 3 o'clock in the morning, every shadow was a threat.

I was always so glad for my 4 o'clock round because I knew that by the time I finished, the eastern horizon would be getting pink. It was going to be okay. Yes, yes, yes.

Look back at chapter 4, verses 30 and 31. Aaron and Moses have shown up; they have performed the signs, verse 31, and they believed. And when they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshipped.

Uh-huh. Now, chapter 6, verses 8 and 9. God has said in the previous verses, I am the Lord, I'll bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians, I'll free you from being slaves, I'll take you as my own people, et cetera. Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and hard labor.

Now look at verse 31 of chapter 14. When the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in Him and in Moses, His servant. They let their circumstances control how they felt.

Yep. Oh, Moses, Aaron, this is wonderful news. Yes, we love the Lord, we'll obey Him, we'll follow Him until the Pharaoh starts making us make bricks without giving us straw.

Oh, the Lord is wonderful. He has delivered us, and He's led us across the Red Sea. Yes, we trust the Lord; we trust Moses until there's no water.

So, how does this relate to us? What does it say to us? See is believing. As long as they could see and know what God had for them, as you said, they praised God and worshipped, but then when they didn't see that, when they didn't have concrete evidence of something happening, then they didn't believe. And they mumbled and grumbled.

Yeah. Faith must overcome. Go right ahead.

Faith must overcome circumstances. Faith must overcome circumstances, yes. I was just going to say it's like you discussed Thomas and the blessing of you.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think there's some truth in that. There's some truth in that.

We're going to see an expression of that in the Golden Calf incident. Yeah, yeah. So, I think that's an important... Is our faith really in human leaders? Sometimes I believe our faith... If we have too many options, our faith begins to waver.

You ask how the Israelites could or what kind of faith it would take them to step out into that lake. They didn't have any options left. Yeah. They didn't have any options left.

There were no options. And I think the more options we have, the less faith we have sometimes. Yeah, yeah.

I was thinking about the Chuck Wagon Gang. I don't know if you ever heard of them. Many years ago, it was kind of the Western... I'm too young for that.

Western gospel kind of thing. And they had a song that said... And I remember it always went awful. I wonder if it went... Unquestionably.

He backs us into corners. Or we have to open him. Yeah.

But this whole issue of... Is my faith the result of pleasant circumstances? Is my faith the result of a human leader? Is my faith the result of... No other option. Is my faith... faith. Or is it something else? Something considerably less than faith. And that's a challenge for us, I think.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, thank you that you have come. Thank you for having died on the cross and risen from the dead. Forgive us, Lord, when we are so like the Israelites. When we are ready to believe you when all is well, and the future is clear.

And yet so easily swayed when things go wrong. Thank you that you know us. Know us so very well. And yet still have patience with us. Still, reach out to us. Care about us. Lead us on. O God, deepen our faith. Ground it. Secure it in you. Thank you. In your name, amen.

This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Exodus. This is session 7, Exodus 12-14.