

Exodus 13–15 — From Bondage to Redemption

Chuck Missler Teaching Guide

Central Theme

Exodus 13–15 moves Israel from being a people **delivered from judgment by blood** to a people **separated permanently from Egypt through the Red Sea**.

Missler sees the sequence as a remarkable picture of salvation:

Blood → Deliverance → Guidance → Red Sea → Death to the old life → Redemption → Praise → Testing → Healing

Israel does not rescue itself. God redeems them, leads them, fights for them, and then begins teaching them how redeemed people are supposed to live.

Missler identifies **Exodus 15:13** as perhaps the key verse summarizing Exodus:

“Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.” — Exodus 15:13

His point is that Exodus is not merely the history of an ancient nation. It becomes a model of **redemption, guidance, and ultimately dwelling with God**.

EXODUS 13 — THE REDEEMED BELONG TO GOD

1. The Firstborn Are Set Apart — Exodus 13:1–16

Immediately after Passover, God declares:

“Sanctify unto me all the firstborn... it is mine.” — Exodus 13:2

Missler emphasizes that **sanctify simply means “set apart.”**

The firstborn had just been spared from death through the blood of the lamb. Therefore, God establishes the principle that the redeemed belong to Him.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread then becomes an annual memorial through which parents teach their children what God did in Egypt.

Missler connects the feasts prophetically:

Passover → Christ sacrificed as the Lamb of God

Unleavened Bread → Christ's sinless body given for us

Compare:

- **John 1:29** — “Behold the Lamb of God...”
- **Luke 22:19** — “This is my body which is given for you.”
- **Leviticus 23** — Israel's seven appointed feasts.

The donkey and the lamb

Exodus 13:13 contains a curious command:

“Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb.”

Missler sees a typological picture here.

He argues that throughout Scripture the **donkey can represent natural man**, while the **lamb represents Christ**.

He points to:

- **Job 11:12** — man compared with a wild donkey's colt.
- **Genesis 16:12** — Ishmael's description.
- **Genesis 22** — the donkey remains behind as Abraham and Isaac ascend the mountain.

- **Deuteronomy 22:10** — the ox and donkey are not to be yoked together.
- **1 Samuel 9:3** — Saul searches for his father's lost donkeys.

Thus Missler sees Exodus 13:13 as another miniature picture of redemption:

The unclean creature lives because a lamb dies in its place.

That is essentially the Gospel pictured in one strange little Mosaic command.

2. God Takes Israel the Long Way — Exodus 13:17–20

The shortest road to Canaan would have taken Israel through Philistine territory.

God deliberately avoids it.

Why?

“Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.” — Exodus 13:17

They were **redeemed**, but they weren't yet spiritually mature.

That produces an important lesson:

God's shortest route is not always God's best route.

Sometimes what looks like a delay is actually God's protection.

3. Joseph's Bones Leave Egypt — Exodus 13:19

Moses carries Joseph's remains from Egypt because Joseph had prophetically commanded Israel centuries earlier:

“God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.”

Compare:

- **Genesis 50:24–25** — Joseph's command.
- **Hebrews 11:22** — Joseph's request is specifically identified as an act of **faith**.
- **Joshua 24:32** — Joseph is ultimately buried at Shechem.

Joseph died believing God's promise before Israel's Exodus ever occurred.

Missler also reminds the listener that Joseph is one of Scripture's great **types of Christ**, making the presence of Joseph's body during the crossing especially interesting.

4. The Pillar of Cloud and Fire — Exodus 13:21–22

God Himself guides Israel:

“The LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud... and by night in a pillar of fire.”

Missler interprets the pillar as a striking picture of the **Holy Spirit**.

Notice its ministries.

He guides.

- **Romans 8:14** — “As many as are led by the Spirit of God...”
- **John 16:13** — “He will guide you into all truth.”

He is given by the Father.

- **John 14:16** — the Father gives another Comforter.

He covers and protects.

- **Psalms 105:39** — God spreads the cloud “for a covering.”
- **Ephesians 4:30** — believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

He speaks.

- **Psalm 99:7** — “He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar.”
- **Exodus 33:9**
- **Numbers 12:5**

Missler makes a particularly beautiful observation:

The pillar never left them.

Compare **Exodus 13:22** with Christ's promise concerning the Comforter in **John 14:16** — “that he may abide with you for ever.”

EXODUS 14 — THE RED SEA

5. God Intentionally Leads Israel Into a Trap — Exodus 14:1–9

From Pharaoh's perspective, Israel makes a military mistake.

They become trapped:

Egyptian army behind them.

Sea before them.

No obvious escape.

But God intentionally placed them there.

Pharaoh thinks:

“They are entangled in the land.” — Exodus 14:3

God says He will use Pharaoh's pursuit so that:

“The Egyptians may know that I am the LORD.” — Exodus 14:4

The apparent trap was actually **God's battlefield.**

6. “Fear Not, Stand Still, and See” — Exodus 14:10–14

Israel sees Pharaoh's army and panics.

Moses responds with one of the great declarations in Exodus:

“Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.” — Exodus 14:13

Missler breaks it into three instructions:

1. Fear not.

Faith means trusting God when circumstances say otherwise.

2. Stand still.

Israel contributes nothing to its own deliverance.

Missler connects this directly to salvation through Christ: Israel applied the blood and trusted God to accomplish what they could not.

3. See the salvation of the LORD.

Watch what **God** does.

Then comes:

“The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” — Exodus 14:14

This is grace in miniature.

God does the saving.

Missler connects this with Gethsemane: if humanity could save itself by another route, Christ's sacrificial death would have been unnecessary. Salvation therefore rests upon God's completed work, not man's achievement.

7. Then God Says: GO FORWARD — Exodus 14:15

There is also a fascinating balance here.

First:

Stand still.

Then:

“Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”

There is a time to wait upon God.

There is also a time when God has already spoken and **faith requires movement**.

Missler humorously summarizes the principle:

Sometimes there is a time to pray — and sometimes there is a time to **bail water out of the lifeboat**.

8. The Cloud Moves Behind Israel — Exodus 14:19–20

The same presence that had **guided** Israel now moves behind them and becomes their **protection**.

It produces:

Light for Israel.

Darkness for Egypt.

The same divine presence has two completely different effects depending upon which

side one stands.

9. Israel Crosses on Dry Ground – Exodus 14:21–31

Moses stretches out his hand.

The waters divide.

Israel crosses **on dry ground**.

Egypt attempts the same crossing and is destroyed.

The New Testament interprets this event through faith:

“By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.” – Hebrews 11:29

Missler sees the Red Sea as representing the **boundary of Pharaoh's authority** and typologically the believer passing from death into life.

He therefore connects the crossing with **baptism** – leaving the old life behind and entering a new existence under God.

Compare:

- **1 Corinthians 10:1–2** – Israel was “baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”
- **Romans 6:3–4** – baptism pictures burial and resurrection with Christ.
- **Galatians 2:20** – “I am crucified with Christ.”
- **Ephesians 2:5–6** – made alive and raised with Christ.

Missler describes the Red Sea as the **boundary of Satan's authority** in the typology: Egypt/Pharaoh can pursue Israel to the sea, but they cannot follow God's redeemed people through it and survive.

He also points to:

Isaiah 43:1–2 — “Fear not: for I have redeemed thee... When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.”

EXODUS 15 — THE SONG OF THE REDEEMED

10. Israel Sings — Exodus 15:1–21

After crossing the sea:

“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD.” — Exodus 15:1

The song celebrates God's victory, holiness, power, and redemption.

Pharaoh's army did not simply lose a battle.

God defeated the power that had enslaved His people.

Missler makes an intriguing observation about singing in Scripture. Angels are clearly described as **praising** God — for example **Revelation 5:11–12** — but he argues that Scripture's explicit songs belong distinctively to **the redeemed**.

That becomes interesting when Revelation depicts redeemed groups singing before God.

And the Song of Moses appears again near the end of Scripture:

Revelation 15:3 — “And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb...”

Exodus and Revelation suddenly touch one another.

The Bible begins developing the **Song of Moses** after deliverance from Pharaoh and returns to it during God's ultimate judgment and deliverance.

11. The Key Verse — Exodus 15:13

Missler highlights:

“Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.”

Three tremendous truths appear:

Redeemed by mercy.

Guided by God's strength.

Destined for God's presence.

That is Israel's Exodus.

Missler argues it is also a beautiful summary of the believer's salvation.

12. Three Days Into the Wilderness — Exodus 15:22

Israel travels **three days** after crossing the Red Sea.

Missler sees another typological echo:

Red Sea → death

Three days → interval between death and resurrection

New life → wilderness journey with God

And immediately after the great victory comes something unexpected.

A test.

13. The Bitter Waters of Marah — Exodus

15:22–26

After three days without water, Israel finally finds water.

But they cannot drink it.

The place is called **Marah – bitter**.

And remarkably, God had **led them there**.

That is Missler's central point.

They weren't outside God's will.

They weren't lost.

The pillar had led them directly to bitter water.

Why?

Because God was teaching them.

Missler connects this with:

Ephesians 1:11 – God “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

The lesson isn't merely *How do I escape Marah?*

Sometimes the better prayer is:

“Lord, don't let the lesson of Marah be wasted.”

14. The Tree Makes the Bitter Water Sweet

God shows Moses a **tree**.

Moses casts it into the water.

The bitter water becomes sweet.

Missler immediately sees the typology of **the Cross**.

1 Peter 2:24 — “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree... by whose stripes ye were healed.”

The connection is:

Bitterness → Tree → Healing

Missler then follows that thread all the way to the final chapter of Scripture:

Revelation 22:2 — “...the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

Thus the Bible's imagery of **tree, curse, righteousness, and healing** stretches from the Fall through the Cross and ultimately into the restoration described in Revelation.

15. Grace Before Law

Missler makes a theological observation here that I especially like.

God gives Israel statutes **after** He redeems them.

They did not keep God's commandments in Egypt so that God would rescue them.

Instead:

The blood was applied.

God delivered them.

They passed through the sea.

Then God began teaching them how redeemed people should live.

In other words:

Obedience is the response to redemption — not the purchase price of redemption.

That's an extremely important distinction.

16. Elim — Twelve Wells and Seventy Palms — Exodus 15:27

After Marah comes Elim:

“There were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees.”

Why does Scripture bother giving the numbers?

Missler suggests a possible connection with Christ sending His disciples:

- **Luke 9:1** — Jesus sends the **Twelve**.
- **Luke 10:1** — Jesus later appoints the **Seventy**.

He doesn't present this as certain doctrine, but as one of those fascinating numerical patterns worth noticing.

And notice the sequence:

Marah first.

Elim afterward.

The bitter place was not Israel's destination.

WHAT MOST PEOPLE MISS 🧐

1. God deliberately led Israel to the Red Sea.

Israel wasn't trapped because Moses made a navigational mistake.

God engineered the impossible situation so that Israel would witness a deliverance only He could accomplish.

2. The pillar isn't merely God's GPS.

Missler sees it as a remarkable picture of the Holy Spirit:

Given by God → guides → protects → speaks → gives light → remains with God's people.

Compare **John 14:16, John 16:13, Romans 8:14, Psalm 99:7, Psalm 105:39, Ephesians 4:30.**

3. The same cloud produced light and darkness.

Exodus 14:20

God's presence illuminated Israel while obstructing Egypt.

One presence.

Two radically different experiences.

4. Joseph crossed the Red Sea too.

In a sense!

Israel carried **Joseph's bones** through the sea.

The man who centuries earlier believed God would someday bring Israel home was physically carried out when that promise was fulfilled.

Compare **Genesis 50:25 → Hebrews 11:22 → Exodus 13:19 → Joshua 24:32.**

That's an extraordinary promise-and-fulfillment chain across four biblical books.

5. "Fear not. Stand still. See."

Exodus 14:13

Missler sees the three commands as almost a miniature theology of salvation:

Stop fearing.

Stop trying to save yourself.

Watch what God accomplishes.

Then, once God opens the path:

“Go forward.” — Exodus 14:15

Grace does not produce permanent inactivity. God's work creates a path upon which faith then walks.

6. The Red Sea is explicitly connected with baptism.

This isn't merely Missler's imagination.

Paul himself says:

1 Corinthians 10:2 — “And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”

That makes the Exodus one of the New Testament's own pictures for understanding the Christian life.

7. The Song of Moses appears again in Revelation.

Exodus 15 → Revelation 15

At the first great national deliverance of Israel, God's people sing the **Song of Moses**.

Near the culmination of biblical history, the redeemed sing:

“the song of Moses... and the song of the Lamb.” — Revelation 15:3

The deliverance from Pharaoh becomes a preview of something much larger.

8. God led Israel to Marah on purpose.

This may be the most personally useful lesson in the whole section.

The presence of bitter water did **not** mean they had missed God's direction.

The cloud led them there.

Sometimes difficulty isn't evidence that we've left God's will.

Sometimes **the lesson is the reason God brought us there.**

9. A tree turns bitterness into sweetness.

Exodus 15:25

Missler connects:

Marah → Tree → Healing

with:

Cross → Tree → Healing

1 Peter 2:24 — “...by whose stripes ye were healed.”

And ultimately:

Tree of Life → Healing of the nations

in **Revelation 22:2.**

10. Israel was redeemed before Israel received statutes.

This is huge.

God didn't say:

Obey Me and I'll get you out of Egypt.

God got them out of Egypt **first.**

Then He taught His redeemed people how to live.

Redemption precedes obedience.

The Big Picture

Exodus 13–15 gives us an extraordinary progression:

THE BLOOD

God's judgment passes over.

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SANCTIFICATION

The redeemed now belong to God.

↓

THE CLOUD

God personally guides His people.

↓

THE IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION

Israel is trapped between Pharaoh and the sea.

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FAITH

“Fear not. Stand still. See.”

↓

THE RED SEA

God permanently separates His people from their former bondage.

↓

THE SONG

The redeemed worship their Deliverer.

↓

THE WILDERNESS

Redemption does not eliminate testing.

↓

MARAH

God even uses bitter places to teach His people.

↓

THE TREE

God transforms bitterness and reveals Himself as healer.

↓

ELIM

Beyond the trial waits refreshment.

The God who redeems His people is also the God who leads them, fights for them, teaches them, heals them, and brings them home.