

Splitting the Red Sea

What is the lesson of the miracle at the Red Sea?
 Who was the first to leap into the Sea? Why did
 Pharaoh's army perish? Why did God tell Israel
 to stop praying and take action? What can we today
 learn from this mighty miraculous deliverance?

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The greatest miracle in human history occurred in the days of Moses and during the Exodus of Israel out of Egyptian bondage and slavery. It was the crossing of the Red Sea by four million Israelites on dry ground, after the sea was rolled back by the Almighty.

The Scriptures narrate the awesome event, saying, "And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years – on the very same day – it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night of solemn observance to the LORD" (Exodus 12:41-42). The first day they journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, 600,000 men besides women and children (verse 37).

Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century, picks up the story. He relates:

"But the Egyptians soon repented that the Hebrews were gone; and the king also was mightily concerned that this had been procured by the magic arts of Moses; so they resolved to go after them. Accordingly they took their weapons, and other warlike furniture, and pursued after them, in order to bring them back, if once they overtook them, because now they would have no pretence to pray to God against them, since they had already been permitted to go out; and they thought they should easily overcome them, as they had no armor, and would be weary with their journey. . . .

"Now when the Egyptians had overtaken the Hebrews, they prepared to fight them, and by their multitude they drove them into a narrow place; for the number that pursued after them was six hundred chariots with fifty thousand horsemen, and two hundred thousand footmen, all armed. They also seized on the passages by which they imagined the Hebrews might fly, shutting them between inaccessible precipices and the sea; for there was [on each side] a [ridge of] mountains that terminated at the sea, which were impossible by reason of their roughness, and obstructed their flight; wherefore they there pressed upon the Hebrews with their army, where the [ridges of] the mountains were closed with the sea; which army they placed at the chops of the mountains, that so they might deprive them of any passage into the plain" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, book 1, chapter XV, section 3).

This army was of considerable size. In modern terms, the Egyptian army included both infantry, cavalry, and armored units. The 600 battle chariots would be equivalent to today's armored tanks – such as the Abrams A1A battle tank of the U.S. army. An army of some 250,000 is similar to the size of the U.S. military which conquered the nation of Iraq.

The Red Sea

But where did this miraculous crossing of the Red Sea take place? Where is the “Red Sea”? Some scholars have speculated that the Hebrew expression for Red Sea, *yam suph*, could possibly be translated as “Reed Sea” or “sea of reeds.” Reeds or rushes can be found in some lakes in northern Egypt. Could this account have been the crossing of such a lake?

This theory falls flat on its face. The hypothesis that the children of Israel passed over a sandbank of a lake at low tide, completely contradicts the eyewitness account found in the Scriptures. Moses wrote, “Then 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 into dry land, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a WALL to them on their right hand and on their left” (Exo.14:21-22).

This was a stupendous, and imposing, scene. The waters of the “sea” – not a mere “lake” – stood up like a solid barrier WALL on both sides of the Israelites.

Where was this Red Sea location, where Israel crossed? The Bible states, “So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness” (Exo.13:20). From here they were told to “turn” (Exo.14:2). And they camped “before PiHahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon” (*ibid.*). “They moved from Etham and turned back to PiHahiroth, which is east of Baal Zephon, and they camped near Migdol” (Num.33:6-7). From there they passed through the midst of the sea (verse 8).

These place-names help to identify the location of the Red Sea crossing.

Etham is designated as “where the desert began” or “edge of the wilderness.” They had already been passing through one desert – Sinai – so this had to be another desert region east of Sinai. Another desert begins at the northern point of the Gulf of Aqaba – the desert which includes most of Saudi Arabia. From this Red Sea crossing, they journeyed to Mount Sinai, which the apostle Paul tells us, “Mount Sinai [is] in Arabia” (Gal.4:25). After reaching the borderland of Etham, at the northern point of the Sinai peninsula, near Aqaba or modern Eliat, they “turned.” That is, they turned southward, down the Sinai peninsula. Strategically, this would make no sense. But God had a plan in mind, whereby He would demonstrate His awesome power of deliverance for His people!

The name PiHahiroth literally means “Mouth of the Cave.” In Egyptian it could mean “mouth of the valley.” “Migdol” means “tower,” or “watch-tower.” “Baal Zephon” means “Baal” or “Lord” of the “north.” This was an idolatrous site where human sacrifice was performed. This was the one remaining Egyptian god who had not been conquered and demolished back in Egypt. It stood guard at the north-eastern border of Egypt, at the northern tip of the Aqaba arm of the Red Sea. Zephon was also the name of a grandson of Esau or Edom, who dwelt in the region south of the Dead Sea and toward Aqaba (Gen.36:11).

Interestingly, the coastal side of the eastern Sinai peninsula is rough and mountainous, with mountains up to 6,000 feet high. They extend right to the coastline. However, there is a wadi or valley called the Wadi Watir, which runs just inside the coastal range from north to south, and empties out on the Red Sea at the Nuweiba peninsula – a flat sandy area of about seven square miles. To enter this valley, one must change direction from going east, and detour southward, bringing them out on this large, sandy peninsula – a huge plain which is large enough to hold three million Israelites and a pursuing Egyptian army!

This valley, as Josephus and the Scriptures state, is bordered by precipitous mountains to the north and south, enclosed except for the wadi entrance to the northwest. The only escape would be back toward the direction from which they came, or through the Sea itself.

In the northern part of the Nuweiba peninsula is the remains of an ancient Egyptian fort. This fort blocked passage to the mountain ridge to the north. There is an old well in the court yard which is still used by Bedouins today. This may have been PiHahiroth.

Across the Red Sea, on the Saudi Arabian side, is a place a bit inland called in Arabic “Saraf-al-Bal.” “Bal Zephon” in English could be “Baal Sefon” in other languages. Transpose the “f” sound and the “r” for an “n” and you would have the same name, slightly altered by the passage of time.

Jewish tradition tells us the Israelites reached the Red Sea after six days of marching out of Egypt. On the seventh day, early, they crossed the Red Sea. From Rameses in Egypt, to this location, would be a distance of approximately 200 miles. Given six days to cross the Sinai peninsula to this spot, the Israelites journeyed about 33 miles per day. The trip was fairly flat, so this should have been no problem, especially since they had both a cloud by day to shelter them from the sun’s heat, and a pillar of fire by night to guide them on their journey.

Exodus reveals, “Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD moved the sea with a strong east wind all the night, and He turned the sea into damp land and the water split” (Exo.14:21).

According to the Malbim, the sea dried in two stages. Says the Jewish Chumash, “The water was swept away revealing the muddy *damp land* of the seabed; then it miraculously became completely *dry land*” (p.373).

The Chumash goes on: “**The water crashes down upon Egypt.** In a historic demonstration of how human beings can refuse to see the truth, the Egyptian survivors of the Ten Plagues refused to realize that a sea that had never before split had been manipulated by God to save His people. The pillars of fire and cloud made no impression on the Egyptians; they saw what they wanted to see and believed what they wanted to believe. So they saw a vulnerable nation of slaves, *their* slaves, and they plunged after them into the newly vacated seabed. The Egyptian debacle began with the incredible, confounding meteorological phenomena, and then the hardened seabed turned hot and muddy. As the Psalmist expressed it: *Clouds streamed water, heavens sounded forth, even your arrow [of lightning] sounded forth. The rumbling of your thunder was in the rolling wind, lightning bolts lit the world, the earth trembled and roared (Psalm 77:18-19).*”

Egypt disappeared as a world power – the leading world superpower of that age.

But what is the lesson for us? How does this miracle impact our lives?

Faith and Loyalty

Israel was terrified. Surrounded by mountain ranges on two sides, the sea in front of them, and Pharaoh’s army attacking them from the rear, they saw their destruction was imminent. Pharaoh’s surprise attack caught them unprepared, shocked, mortified. What could they do? They cried out to Moses, and “cried out to the LORD” (Exo.14:10).

Moses said to them, “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. . . The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace [be quiet, be still, remain silent, and watch attentively]” (vs.13-14).

But God said to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to **GO FORWARD**. But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea” (v.15-16).

Says the Chumash: “15. *Why do you cry out to Me?* Moses, too, was praying, and God told him, ‘Now, when Israel is in distress, is no time for lengthy prayer.’ . . . It is for Me to save the nation, therefore you should instruct them to **MOVE AHEAD**, and I will attend to their safety” (page 370).

In this perilous situation, prayer alone was not sufficient. “Faith without works is dead,” the apostle James declared (James 2:20, 26). Action, based on faith, was also

required – evidence of their faith. Israel needed to demonstrate their faith by moving forward, into the sea before them. They needed to “show” their faith by their works!

Says the Jewish Chumash: “Consequently, prayer alone could not be efficacious; there had to be a tangible merit. Therefore God commanded that the prayers be stopped and the people demonstrate their readiness to put their lives in danger in obedience to God by plunging into the water. That display of faith would earn them the miracle of the Splitting of the Sea” (p.371).

The Scripture says, “Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD moved the sea with a strong east wind all the night, and He turned the sea to damp land and the water split. The children of Israel came within the sea on dry land; and the water was a wall for them, on their right and on their left” (Exo.14:21-22).

Says the Chumash: “*Within the dry land*. The Jews had to prove their loyalty by plunging into the water. Nachshon ben Aminadav, later the leader of the tribe of Judah, was the first to obey Moses’ command; he walked forward until the water was up to his neck – then the sea split” (p.373).

Nachshon ben Aminadav

Who was this man who seized the initiative? Who was this Israelite who was the first one to exercise faith, obey God, and plunge into the sea?

Says *The Book of Our Heritage* by Eliyahu Kitov, “Israel was afraid to enter the sea until Nachshon ben Aminadav jumped in, followed by all Israel.

“*And the Children of Israel came into the sea on dry land [Exo.14:22].—*[There would seem to be a contradiction in this verse for] if they were in the sea, why was the land dry? And if the land was dry, in what sense did they enter the sea? This teaches us that the sea did not split for them until they entered it up till their nostrils. After that it became dry land” (vol.2, page 711).

Joel Ziff, in *Mirrors in Time*, declares: “The liberation from slavery requires active intervention from God, but human initiative and action are also required in the process. . . . At the sea, when the Israelites are unable to cross, Moses turns to God. God promises to respond, but the Israelites must *take the first step*. Nachshon, one of the Israelites, acting on faith, enters the water. When the water reaches his nostrils, the sea splits” (p.77).

This teaches us that even when we are at our wit’s end, and feel hopeless, and utterly helpless, we should cry out to God, in earnest prayer. As God told Moses, “The LORD shall do battle for you, and you are to remain silent” (Exo.14:13-14). There was nothing more Israel could do, as the fight was in God’s hands. But they could demonstrate their faith by moving forward, into the Red Sea, even though it had not

divided yet, and there was no visible pathway – yet. They had to demonstrate their faith by their works – by moving forward and plunging into the water!

The First to Enter the Sea

In *The Essence of the Holy Days*, Avraham Yaakov Finkel asserts: “The Talmud (*Sotah* 36a, 37b) relates that when the children of Israel, pursued by Pharaoh’s mighty legions, were facing the raging waters of the Red Sea, a fight broke out among the heads of the various tribes. One said, ‘I won’t be the first one to enter the water!’ Another said, ‘I won’t go in either! Let someone else go first!’ While they argued, Nachshon ben Aminadav, leader of the tribe of Judah, boldly jumped into the sea, whereupon the water parted” (p.171-172).

In *Celebrate, the Complete Jewish Holidays Handbook*, Leslie Koppelman Ross declares: “A midrash tells us that when the Israelites were at the Red Sea, the Egyptians at their backs, they wailed and moaned and longed for the taskmaster’s whip rather than the lash of the sea’s raging waves. They hesitated. Moses prayed. And one man, Nachshon ben Amminadab, recognizing the opportunity before them, plunged into the waters. Only then did the sea subside, allowing the Israelites to continue. Like Nachshon ben Amminadab, *we have to forge ahead with faith that we will reach the goal* and the belief that the attempt to gain freedom is still better than stagnating in slavery” (p.14).

The Time for Action

We read in *The Three Festivals*, God commanded Israel to remain silent, because their salvation had to come completely from God, through divine intervention. There was nothing else they could do to defeat Pharaoh. The time for prayer was past. Now was the time for **ACTION!**

Says *The Three Festivals*, “A more profound answer to our question, however, is that by overcoming their natural urge to scream, the Jews underwent a transformation as radical and far-reaching as the Sea itself. Every instinct in their minds strained to scream, yet they remained silent. Every fiber in the Jewish body fought against plunging into the turbulent waters – and yet they followed the lead of Nachshon ben Aminadav, *Nasi [prince]* of the tribe of Yehudah, and leaped into the Sea” (p.137).

We continue: “Only after they submitted themselves totally to Hashem’s will by remaining silent did the Sea split. As the Psalmist sings (114:3) *the sea saw and fled* – when the Sea saw the magnificent courage of Israel’s silent acceptance of Hashem’s will, then it split. ‘If these humans,’ the Sea must have thought, ‘whom Hashem endowed with free choice – the ability to defy His commands – overcame their natural inclinations to obey Him, then I, a mere inanimate entity, must certainly comply with His will.’

“In this light, the opening phrase of our verse takes on new meaning: *Stand fast and see the salvation of HASHEM that He will perform for you today*. Moshe was telling the Jews, ‘Stand erect, don’t scream, and you will behold Hashem’s salvation. He will

save you from what you thought was certain death so that His name be revered by all of humanity’

“The message applies to us in all situations, particularly in times of crisis. Whenever things look difficult our task is simply to understand what Hashem wants of us and accept His will silently and completely. If we do this, if we genuinely trust that He will help us, then we will have the inestimable privilege of seeing His salvation unfold, and seeing His might and power revealed in the world” (p.137).

The lesson we should learn from the Red Sea experience, and the example of the Israelites, is that suffering is only a surface phenomenon. Although we may sometimes seem to undergo unrelenting misery for a period of time, in reality our suffering is only a preliminary to great events that are about to follow.

Declares *The Three Festivals*, “This theme of anguished cries being answered with speedy relief is voiced by the Psalmist (118:5): *From the straits [of my suffering] did I call upon God, God answered me with expansiveness of Divine relief*, by showing me that all my suffering was only a preliminary to His salvation that would quickly follow” (p.139).

Asa, King of Judah

At another time in Israel’s history, a huge army from Ethiopia came against king Asa of ancient Judah, numbering a million men under arms (II Chron.14:9). The king and all Judah were frightened. Nevertheless, they did not give up, even though they knew not what to do. The battle was set in array. At that point, we read in the Scriptures, Asa prayed to God, crying out, saying:

“Lord, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You. In Your name we go against this multitude. O LORD, you are our God; do not let man prevail against You!” (II Chron. 14:11).

What happened? “So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. And Asa and the people that were with him pursued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were *destroyed before the LORD*, and before his host; and they carried away very much spoil” (v.12-13).

After this, God sent a prophet to the king. God’s prophet said to Asa, “Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, *while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you*” (II Chron.15:2).

The prophet sent by God, went on to say, “Now for a long season Israel had been

without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. But *when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them*. And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity” (verses 3-6).

How much that period of time sounds like our age, today!

But even in such times, the prophet told Asa and Judah, “But you, *be strong and do not let your hands be weak*, for your work shall be rewarded!” (II Chron.15:7).

At another time, God's prophet said to king Asa,

“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him” (I Chron.16:9).

Let GOD Fight Your Battles!

Another time, much later, during the reign of King Jehoshaphat of Judah, another huge army -- a vast army of Moabites, Ammonites, and the children of Seir -- came against Judah and king Jehoshaphat, who was a righteous king, who feared God. Jehoshaphat assembled all the leaders and the people in Jerusalem, and led them in prayer, seeking God's intervention and deliverance. Jehoshaphat prayed to God, and committed the entire nation and people to God's hands. Notice his fervent words. The king prayed, in part:

“O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, *but our eyes are upon You*” (II Chron.20:12).

At that point God raised up a prophet from among the people to encourage the king and the people of Judah. The prophet declared to them:

“Thus says the LORD to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for *the battle is not yours, but God’s* . . . You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, ***STAND STILL AND SEE THE SALVATION OF THE LORD, who is with you***, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you” (II Chron.20:15-17).

King Hezekiah and the Assyrians

Later, during the reign of King Hezekiah, of Judah, the world-renown army of the

fearsome king of Assyria, Sennacherib – who was that era's counterpart of Adolph Hitler and the Third Reich – came and attacked Judah, after conquering all the other nations of the Middle East.

Hezekiah, the king of Judah, set captains over the people, and gathered them in the open square of the city gate of Jerusalem, and spoke to them, saying:

“Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that is with him: for there are more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; *but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles*” (II Chron. 32:7-8).

God gave Judah a tremendous victory over the ruthless Assyrian army. In one night, Sennacherib's troops were all killed by a supernatural plague of devastating proportions. Some 185,000 of his best troops were slain by the angel of the LORD! We read of this awesome destruction: “And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel [or, "Angel"] of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses – all dead” (II Kings 19:35).

Can God save His people? Can the Almighty GOD save His people, today? Can God STILL perform miracles of deliverance and salvation?

Can God help YOU overcome your weaknesses, sins, and problems – no matter how fearsome or overpowering they may seem?

Is God's Hand Shortened, Today?

Or is the LORD's hand shortened, weakened, unable to effectively deal with our problems, today? Is God no longer capable of delivering His people who love and who serve Him?

Isaiah the prophet answers this question. He tells us in ringing words:

“Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. *But your iniquities have separated you from your God: And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear*” (Isaiah 59:1-2).

It is our sins that separate us from God. It is our iniquities that separate us from Him and the unleashing of His overwhelming POWER to deliver us!

We must be willing to do our part. We must be willing to fight, struggle, and resist sin. We must "put sin on notice." No more! We are *finished* with it! We have set our minds and locked our jaws to OBEY GOD'S LAW – *COMPLETELY* – *without*

compromise!

The Red Sea Miracle

Let's review for a moment exactly what happened at the Red Sea. "And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians. And He *took off their chariot wheels*, so that they drove them with difficulty. . . . And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. Then the waters returned and *covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them*. Not so much as one of them remained" (Exo.14:23-28).

An army of 250,000 men were buried beneath the waters of the surging, roiling, boisterous Red Sea, as the columns of water weighing millions of tons collapsed upon their hapless souls, together with chariots, horses, cattle, armed wagons, and supplies. This scene could not have occurred in a shallow pond or lake. The whole scene depicts a huge body of water – a literal SEA – being traversed during the early morning hours.

The Jewish Chumash explains: "24. *At the morning watch*. The night is divided into three parts, each called a *watch*, or shift . . . The punishment of the Egyptians took place during the watch that was before dawn.

"*And He confounded*. God caused ear-splitting noises to confuse the Egyptians, so that they acted irrationally out of sheer terror.

"25. *He removed* . . . God caused searing heat to melt the wheels of the chariots, so that the hysterical horses pulled them over the hard seabed, tossing the occupants against each other and the walls of the chariots, so that their limbs became dislocated. This was a measure for measure punishment for the way the Egyptians had mistreated the Jews" (p.373-374).

"30-31. **The salvation.** God wanted the Jews to see the full extent of the salvation, so He had the sea toss the bodies of the dead Egyptians onto the shore where the Jews had emerged" (p.374).

"31. *And [the people] revered [lit. feared]*. The nation achieved a higher attainment than simple fear of punishment. *Reverence*, as used here, implies respect and recognition that God is exalted and superior.

"*And they had faith in HASHEM and in Moses, His servant*. Although the nation had believed in God from the start of Moses' mission in Egypt (4:16), their belief in God was now strengthened, and they saw clearly that Moses spoke only in His name" (p.375).

Faith -- the Bottom Line

God's amazing intervention and deliverance at the Red Sea should encourage us and help build and strengthen our faith. But what kind of faith? Just what IS "faith"?

The apostle Paul explained, "Now *faith is* the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. . . Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God . . . But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb.11:1-6).

Abraham set us all an example of faith. We read of him: "[Abraham] being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He *staggered not* at the promise of God through unbelief; but *was STRONG IN FAITH*, giving glory to God; *and being FULLY PERSUADED that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform*" (Romans 4:19-21).

Faith ALONE Is Not Enough!

But faith alone, is dead and worthless. We must also do our own part!

The apostle James said, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" (James 2:14). James continues, "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so *faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone*" (James 2:15-17).

How plain and clear it should be! God requires both faith AND good works. We exercise faith by DOING good works, taking action, stepping out, plunging into the sea, and not holding back.

James adds, "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that *faith without works is dead?*" (v.20). James mentions the example of Abraham, "Was not Abraham our father justified by *works*, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and *by works was faith made perfect?*" (v.21-22).

Summing up his point, James concluded, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so *faith without works is dead also*" (James 2:26).

The Building of Righteous Character

The apostle Paul wrote: "Now the just shall live by faith: but *if any man draw back*, my soul shall have NO PLEASURE in him. But we are NOT of them who *draw back* unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:38-39).

Trials help us to develop and grow in faith. They teach us patience, endurance, tenacity, and true grit. If overcoming were *easy*, there would be no “character” required – or built – in the process of overcoming sin!

The apostle Peter wrote, “So be truly glad! There is wonderful joy ahead, even though the going is *rough for a while* down here. These trials are only to TEST YOUR FAITH, to see whether or not it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests gold and purifies it -- and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold; so if your faith remains strong after being tried in the test tube of fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day of his return” (I Pet.1:6-7).

All of our trials and troubles help refine, purify, and strengthen faith. They test it, as fire tests gold. We receive faith from hearing the Word of God. As Paul wrote, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom.10:17). Faith is one of the precious GIFTS of the Holy Spirit of God. As Paul also wrote: “But the FRUIT of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, FAITH, meekness, temperance (self control)” (Gal.5:22-23).

This wonderful attribute of faith is not something we must work up ourselves, by our own human efforts. Not at all. But as Paul tells us, “For by grace are ye saved through FAITH; and that not of yourselves: it [the very FAITH itself!] is the GIFT OF GOD; not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph.2:8-9).

If you lack faith, therefore, you should ASK God for it! Even the apostles said to Christ, “Lord, increase our faith!” We should pray daily for the same thing.

This faith is the very faith of Christ put within us by the Spirit of God. It is the very same faith Jesus had! It is the very faith that performed the MIRACLES He performed -- raising the dead, healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, turning water into wine, feeding 5,000 with just a few loaves of bread and fish, casting out demons, restoring the legs and arms of the lame, restoring speaking and hearing to the dumb and the deaf, and full use of the hands to those with withered hands!

As a true Christian, one who really believes and follows Yeshua, you should have this very same FAITH dwelling in you, even as Christ Himself dwells in you. Remember, Paul wrote, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

How strong is your faith, now, at this time? Have you been exercising faith, and GROWING in faith, grace, and knowledge of Christ?

Let’s meditate on these powerful lessons of faith and obedience to God – the lessons of the Passover season – and the lessons of the splitting of the Red Sea and miraculous deliverance. Let us be like Nachshon and plunge forward in faith!