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THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 111
HEBREWS 11:29

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Before we begin this study, let's get a corrected translation of several verses--

Verse 26

"Having concluded on the basis of doctrine resident in the soul that the reproach from Christ (divine discipline) greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for, you see, he kept concentrating on the reward."

Verse 27

"By means of doctrine resident in the soul, he gave up the throne of Egypt not being afraid of the anger of the king (Thutmose III); for, you see, he kept strong under pressure as long as he kept seeing the invisible one."

Verse 28

"By means of doctrine resident in the soul, he executed the passover with the result that it became a permanent institution; even the sprinkling of the blood so that the one destroying the firstborn might not touch those same ones."

Verse 29

Here again we have the instrumental of pistis and it means "by means of doctrine resident in the soul." "They passed through" is the aorist active, indicative of diabaino and it refers to walking dry shod through the Red Sea. This aorist tense covers the whole incident. It took quite a long time to get two million people through that Red Sea and this aorist tense covers that whole operation. The active voice means that those Jews produced the action of the verb and they did so by following the leadership of one great super grace believer. Two million people delivered by God through the life of one super grace believer. The indicative mood of this verb says that this was an actual historical event. The Red Sea is the accusative of eruthros thalassa and it means the actual Red Sea. It doesn't say anything about reeds or marshes. This is the Red Sea. (Some liberal went over there and saw some reeds and marshes and came back and reported that they crossed at that spot.) The language here is quite different. Now we have the little word "as" from hos and this is the comparative and this means the sea had been prepared for their crossing. The waters had been separated by a command from God. Then we have dia plus the genitive of zeros ge and those words mean "through dry land."

This is a summary of the information we have in Exodus 14. At the spot where they crossed, there was a mountain range on the north and one on the south and Pharaoh and his army closed in on those Jews and there was no way for them to go but forward. There is a fort at the base of one of those mountains we read about in Exodus 14:1-2.

Verse 4----This is the story of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart which we have studied quite extensively before. Pharaoh was on negative volition and had gone so far on negative volition that this is all that God could do for him.

Verse 5----The decision of Pharaoh to go after them.

Verse 6----Pharaoh took 600 select chariots--three regiments.

- Verse 10---This is the cry of fear from Israel. Many of them hadn't thought much about the Lord and now they cry out to him.
- Verse 11---They turned on Moses as though he wanted to destroy them. These people were in reversionism and have very little common sense and can't actually see the issue as it is.
- Verse 12---This is "I told you so, Moses." They actually say it would be better to be slaves than to die in the desert. That's like saying, "It is better to be Red than dead." The idea is that principles can be damned just so I can stay alive.
- Verse 13---Moses didn't mince any words here. This is one of the great utterances of faith of all time. Moses was telling them that he was going to get through the sea and if they would just stand with him, they would get through also. Here is where one super grace man saved a nation. I like the way the verse ends--"You will never see them again, forever."
- Verse 14---The Lord fought for them when they were put to silence. This is the perfect of charash and it means to be caused to be silent. They were awe struck.

Now turn back to our passage--

"They passed through the Red Sea as through dry ground." Next we have the word "which" and this is the genitive, singular, relative pronoun and refers back to the dry ground. The Egyptians "assaying to do" is a classical greek idiom which only appears here this once in the New Testament. These two words are from the aorist, active, participle of lambano plus the accusative singular of the noun peira which means "to test." When you put the words together, they mean "to receive a test." We might translate this "when they attempted to pursue." Next we have the aorist, passive, indicative of katapeno. "Kata" means "down" and peno means "to drink." So, they drank down too much water and were drowned.

Now turn back to Exodus 14.

Verse 23--This is how the Egyptians were wiped out. They thought they, too, could go through the sea. The whole Egyptian army went down into that sea.

Verse 24--It happened in the morning watch and caused confusion to the Egyptian army. The pillar of cloud by day and the fire at night really confused the Egyptian army.

Verse 25--This is the confusion that struck the Egyptian army. Chariot wheels came off. The Egyptian army recognized the fact that the Lord was fighting for Israel.

Verses 26

and 27--Moses waved the sea back on them as God commanded him to do.

Verse 28--Not even one survived.

Verse 29--This is a beautiful picture of how God delivered Israel. Dry ground and the walls of water on either side.

Verses 30

and 31--Please notice the emphasis on "Israel saw." They saw the deliverance and they saw the dead army of Egypt.

So, in this verse we have, "By means of doctrine resident in the soul, they passed through the Red Sea as through dry land which they (the Egyptians) in attempting to pursue, they were drowned."

There are three kinds of people involved in this amazing deliverance.

1. Category super grace believer--Moses.
2. Category reversionistic believers--The Children of Israel.
3. Category unbeliever--The Egyptians.

These unbelievers died immediately. The Jewish reversionistic believers will die over a period of the next forty years. Super grace Moses and others like him will survive.

Blessing By Association

Two million people were blessed by associating with Moses. God often used a super grace believer to bring blessings to a multitude. We will now leave Moses' generation and nothing will be said about Joshua and Caleb but much emphasis will be given to Rahab the prostitute.

Verse 30

Again we have the instrumental of Pistis and it means "By means of doctrine resident in the soul the walls." The word for walls is teichos and these were big thick walls used for fortifications. Jericho comes from iericho. It actually means fragrance and in Hebrew it means moon city. It was the hell-raising good time town. It was where the farmers came on Saturday. Jericho is right in the middle of a very rich valley. Jericho was full of bars and brothels. It was the most important city in the Jordan Valley according to Numbers 31:12 and 34:15 and 35:1. It was the gateway to the entering into the land. It was a large fortified city and it had to be taken before the Jews could enter the land and capture it. They couldn't bypass this fort or their supply lines would be cut off from the rear.

Scouts Sent Out

In order to conquer such a city, it would be necessary for them to send out some scouts to spy out the land and give a report. They sent out two men who would blend in rather well with the city and its gay life. But they discovered they didn't blend in too well with the surroundings and they had to dart into the first hotel they could find. The girl who owned the hotel was an ex-harlot and she had become highly successful. She not only was able to buy the hotel but she had a rope factory on the hotel roof. She had walked out on her former profession and was running a legitimate hotel. Rahab was her name and she had been converted some time before when she heard the story of the Exodus from Egypt and the Red Sea incident.

Rahab, The Super Grace Woman

Rahab heard the story of the scouts and she hid them in the rope factory on the roof of her hotel. She explained to them that she was a believer and had been converted when she heard the Exodus story. She realized that God had chosen the Jewish people to occupy the land and she was in sympathy with the whole project.

The Destruction of Jericho

Jericho was destroyed in 1400 B.C. Very extensive excavations have been carried out at Jericho. A very famous German archeologist first did extensive excavations there in 1907. John Garstang led extensive digging in Jericho 1930-36. Dr. James Kelso from Pittsburg went there in 1950 and the British School of Archeology came in 1952 under Dr. Catherine Kenyon. From all of this amazing work, we know some very accurate history of this destruction.

The Five Cities Called Jericho

No. 1--This first Jericho goes back to about 3,000 B.C.

No. 2--The first city was destroyed and replaced by a second Jericho in about 2,500 B.C.

No. 3--The third Jericho thrived under the Hyksos period about 1,600 B.C.

No. 4--This is the Jericho that Joshua destroyed. When the walls fell down.

No. 5--There is a modern Jericho several miles removed from the old city.

When the walls fell down, they were double walls about 30 feet high and 12 feet wide. All the other walls had fallen inward but the walls of Jericho fell outward. This is the way the archeologists found them. This city was given to the Tribe of Benjamin, (Joshua 18:21) The men of Jericho helped Nehemiah rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. (Neh. 3:2)

New Testament References

We have a number of New Testament references to Jericho. (Matthew 20:30, Mark 10:46, Luke 19)

In Joshua 6:26 we have a curse pronounced on anyone who would rebuild the destroyed city. He would lose his firstborn in the laying of the foundation and would lose his youngest son when the city was completed. A man in the days of Ahab ignored this curse. His name was Hiel of Bethel. 1 Kings 16:39 tells this story. Abiram, his firstborn, died when he laid the foundation. He lost his youngest son when it was completed. This curse was fulfilled 400 years after it was given, but the elapse of time does not keep God from keeping his Word.

Next in our verse, we have the words "fell down" and this is the aorist active, indicative of pipto. This is a culminative aorist and takes into account the entire operation that went into this battle. This literally says, "The walls fell out." The subject of this verse is "the walls" but walls don't have faith. This is the faith of Joshua and Caleb and the other super grace believers who entered into this battle with him. This was the strongest fortified city in all Canaan and it had to be taken if the land was to be taken.

The Firstfruits of Grace

The Lord gave Israel this fortified city as the firstfruits of grace. Walking around those walls didn't flatten those great walls and you know it. This was done by a miracle of grace. God did it and it was not the accomplishment of human effort. Only the walls around the home of Rahab were preserved. Only God can flatten walls like that. The walls are comparable to the pressures and obstacles we face. The reversionists are always impressed by the thickness of walls like those in Jericho. The believer is impressed by the greatness of God who can flatten walls like that.

Next we have the words "Having been encircled" and this is the aorist, passive, participle of kukloo. This sums up all the activity for the seven days activity. This is seven days of marching brought into one lump. This is a circumstantial participle and it means the walls received encircling. Then we have epi plus hepta heemera and it means "for seven days."

1. For six days the army and the Ark of the Covenant went around the city of Jericho.

2. On the seventh day the army, the Ark of the Covenant, carried by the priests, went around the city seven times. The priests blew the trumpets and the people shouted and the walls fell flat. (Joshua 6:1-21)
3. The army did not attack the walls. They simply marched around the walls to call attention to their total human helplessness.
4. Helplessness is the basis for the function and operation of divine grace.
5. Furthermore, the marching troops were forbidden to speak. (Joshua 6:10) The grace of God demands self-discipline on the part of the believer. The greatest evidence of self-discipline is the control of the tongue. They had to march around silent amid laughter, mocking. The people of Jericho would look at them with disdain and say, "Look at those foot-crunchers. They can't even march in step." This was the discipline given to this army to keep their mouths shut.
6. Under grace, the believer must avoid doing anything. Restraint from human effort is necessary under operation grace.
7. Legalism is the lack of self-discipline and the lack of restraint from the energy of the flesh.
8. Please notice the order of the march--four divisions or groups. First in the march was the First Infantry Division. The second group was the band, seven priests with seven trumpets. The third group was the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant. The fourth group was the Second Infantry Division to bring up the rear.
9. The order of march is to remind the believer that he is a member of an orderly process.
10. Grace does not mean the lack of discipline or authority.
11. The marching around the city is an emphasis on stability and consistency in the plan of grace. The believer must be consistent in his daily walk.

So in this verse we have, "By means of doctrine resident in the souls of super grace believers, the walls of Jericho fell down having been encircled seven days."

This draws back the curtain on one of the greatest believers of all the history of Israel, Rahab the prostitute. We will study about her next time.