

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

Feb. 6, 2016

- Exodus 14:1-15:27 – Deliverance through the Red (Reed) Sea.
- John 3:26-36 – John the Baptizer, the friend of the Bridegroom.
- Song of Solomon 2:4-7 – Romantic love.

Reflections:

1. Exodus 14:1-15:27. God delivered His people through dry land, while He destroyed the Egyptians in the sea; their dead bodies floating ashore were a grim reminder of the awesome power of God in judgment. As a result the Israelites feared and trusted the Lord. The people often fluctuated between trust and complaining, between belief and unbelief. The question

is often raised how could 2 million people (see Numbers 1:45-46) cross the Red Sea in such a short time? First, the text never says *exactly* how long it took. All we have are references to “all that night” (Exod. 14:21), the “next morning”, and “in the morning watch.”



There is no reason to

think it took place in one short period of time. Second, even if the crossing took place in a short time, like 24 hours, the passage never says that they crossed in a single file or in a width of a modern superhighway. It is much more likely that God prepared a section several miles wide, like 3-4 miles along the shoreline. Although I do not believe the crossing was at the Gulf of Suez (much more likely that they crossed north at Lake Ballah), which is no more than 40 miles across; if they did, all they would have to do is walk at a speed of less than two miles per hour to make a 40- mile crossing in 24 hours.

Here is a link to biblical and archaeological evidence on the route of the Exodus:

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/08/New-Evidence-from-Egypt-on-the-Location-of-the-Exodus-Sea-Crossing-Part-II.aspx#Article>.

2. John 3:26-36. In this section we can see how Jesus both attracts and repels individuals. Why is it that some are attracted to Jesus Christ and some reject Him? The pat and superficial answer, which really is not an answer, is volition. But what is volition? To understand volition, one needs to understand at least the basics of the metaphysics of God, creation, and man. Let me just say that there are three main views regarding “volition”—determinism, compatibilism, and libertarianism; and each one of them is very nuanced. Broadly speaking, determinism is the view that actions are determined and there is no free will. In this view it is hard to see how any person could be responsible.

Compatibilism is the view that there is compatibility between a person's nature (or other antecedent causes) and his actions. Libertarianism is the view that a person is free regardless of his character or antecedent causes. While libertarianism sounds attractive, it does not make any sense on several levels. First, to say that a person can actualize any potential choice by himself without the metaphysics of *Esse* is a non-starter for the biblical metaphysician. All things that exist are composed of act & potential and nothing has the power in and of itself to actualize its potential—God is the Actualizer of all things. Second, if libertarianism was true, then a person could be free to never sin because in libertarianism there is no need for a compatible nature or antecedents, so the old sin nature is irrelevant—this undermines the slavery that the Bible teaches that all men are born into. Third, libertarianism does not work in real life. For example, if libertarianism was true then a person's antecedent nature has nothing to do with his choices, which would mean that all choices are willy-nilly; it then would be possible for a godly person to commit mass murder for no antecedent reason. The only view that lines up with the Word of God and reality as such is compatibilism, which includes both freedom as well as certain restrictions. In compatibilism, a person acts according to antecedent causes like his nature. But he is free to change his nature due to his immaterial mind (rational). For example, a person who was raised in a horrible family, has the rationality to look and make judgments and move in a totally different direction and develop a new nature. Of course, it can go the other way too. A person could be raised properly, but make bad choices which “determines” character, from which the person loses freedom to do good—at least until they make decisions to start making good choices to build a new

character, which will provide antecedent character of virtue for future actions. As far as what this all has to do with this section of Scripture, read John 3:27 again. In verse 29 we have the fact that God is the one who chose us, not the other way around, to be His bride. He is the bridegroom (3:29) and we are the celebrated bride—what grace! God chose us believers in eternity past, which guaranteed that we would hear and believe in Jesus Christ for eternal life. There are not accidents in His-story.



3. Song of Solomon 2:4-7. The beloved's praise of her lover reveals three aspects of romantic love that are important to women. First, she felt protected by him. Sitting in his shade was a metaphor for protection, not only in the Bible but also in the literature of the ancient Near East. She had worked in the sun (1:6) but now she enjoyed resting under his protection. Second, they cultivated the kind of relationship that allowed them to know each other intimately. The word taste expressed a knowledge of someone through intimate personal experience (cf. Ps. 34:8, "Taste and see that the Lord is good"). Third, the beloved appreciated the fact that Solomon let others see his love for her. As a banner (a military standard) was easily seen by the troops

as they marched, so Solomon's love for his beloved was easily seen by anyone who observed their relationship. He was not ashamed of her; instead he delighted in her and it was evident to others. One way he showed this was by taking her to his banquet hall (cf. "table" in Song 1:12) in the palace. These three things—protection by her lover, intimacy with him, and obvious displays and expressions of love from him—are crucial factors that enable a woman to develop a sense of security and self-worth and thereby to enjoy a stable marriage. The beloved had begun to experience these three things with Solomon during their courtship so it is no wonder that she became "faint with love."



On the Glory Road,

Pastor Don