

Scripture: Exodus 15:1,2
Message: God Rescues!
August 13, 2017; Bethel CRC, Brockville, ON
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Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Uzziah. I am a 13 year old Israelite. I used to have an Egyptian name, but since a fellow named Moses came around, my parents wanted me to have a name which recognizes their God. So they changed my name to Uzziah. It means "the Lord is my strength." Let me tell you my story.

Not long ago my family and I were living in Egypt. We had to work for the Pharaoh and he was a tough boss. He really made us work hard at the building projects that he had going.

One day we came home from work and a fellow named Moses had been preaching around in our colony in Goshen. He was talking about bringing us out of Egypt to a land that was promised to our great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But he kept saying that *he* wouldn't do it, God would. He called this God "Yahweh," which means "I AM." He said this was the God of our patriarchs.

Well, that sounded great until Pharaoh found out. He made us work harder. We had to get our own straw and still make the same number of bricks per day. Well, that was crazy! We could never do that! And it was all the fault of this wise guy, Moses. Who did he think he was? Our foremen were right when they said to Moses, "May the Lord look upon you and judge you! You have made us a stench to Pharaoh and his servants and have put a sword in their hand to kill us."

But this Moses, he was a strange fellow. He didn't seem to get disappointed by that. If I were him, I would have run for my life. But somewhere he got the courage to try again. He was a persistent old man. He went to Pharaoh again and demanded that we be released. When Pharaoh refused, awful plagues happened. Pharaoh seemed to give in and there was a bit of relief. But if Moses was persistent, Pharaoh was even more stubborn. As soon as things looked up, Pharaoh took his hard stand and told Moses to forget it. We were in Goshen to stay.

But then something interesting happened. More plagues came; they happened in Egypt, but we never had any of it in Goshen. It sure seemed like some kind of magic that Moses had. But he never took credit for it himself. He always was talking about Yahweh.

Then one night we had a supper like we never had before. We had to eat a lamb for

supper along with bread made without yeast. We had to eat this meal fully dressed and ready for travel. We also had to put some blood on the doorposts of our house. It made little sense to me.

Then during the night the firstborn sons of the Egyptians were killed. But whoever had blood on the doorposts was spared. I hadn't thought much about Moses before. I didn't know how he did those other plagues. But now I started to wonder if this Yahweh whom he talked about was for real.

That night was enough to convince Pharaoh to send us out of Egypt. We were free. And Moses kept on telling us that it was because of what Yahweh was doing. He kept giving credit for everything that happened to Yahweh, the Lord. He kept on saying that he got all his instructions from Yahweh, the Lord. He seems pretty committed to this God, as if Yahweh is a real person or something. Maybe he's right?!

Well, to make a longer story shorter, after we left Egypt, for some reason Moses led us right up to the Red Sea. And sure enough, Pharaoh changed his mind again and started chasing us. Now we were going to either drown in the Sea or be killed by Pharaoh's soldiers. Moses had us in a hopeless situation.

But like I said before, there's something about Moses. Everyone was yelling and even cursing at him. But Moses stood up and said, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and see the deliverance Yahweh, the Lord, will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord, Yahweh, will fight for you; you need only to be still."

Then Moses raised his staff and stretched his hand over the Red Sea. And I saw something that I will never forget for the rest of my life! A wind blew and the waters divided. This Red Sea, a wavy, churning body of water one minute, turned into two walls of water with dry land in between.

We all took off through this escape route. It was an eerie feeling. On your right and left were these walls of water; but the ground under our feet was dry as a bone! How did Moses do it? What kind of a God was this Yahweh? He had more power than all of the gods of the Egyptians combined! Even their water-god, Hapi, one of their more powerful gods, was powerless before Moses and Yahweh.

Of course Pharaoh chased us. He had the same dry ground to travel on. But for some reason his chariots got stuck. He was slowed down. And as soon as we were all safely

through, Moses stretched his hand out again. Whoosh!! The walls collapsed. The sea went back to its place. Pharaoh's army, chariots, horses, everything drowned!

Wow! Was it for real? Was it a dream? I couldn't believe it. But then some dead Egyptians washed up on shore. It was for real! This was no dream!

Where's Moses—he's our hero! He's a god himself! With power like that he must be!

But wait. What do I hear? Is that Moses singing? And Miriam, his sister? The people are joining in. What are they singing?

"I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him."

They're singing to Yahweh, the Lord. They're not even mentioning Moses. Maybe he was right. Maybe this Yahweh is real. Maybe my father and mother were right.

"The Lord, Yahweh, has hurled the horse and its rider into the sea."

"The Lord is my strength--Uzziah—my parents were right. The Lord—Yahweh—is *my* strength.

And he's my song. I will sing unto the Lord.

He has become my salvation. He saved me; he rescued me from Pharaoh. He saved me from slavery, a life of no hope. He saved me from death—through the sea I have new life.

Yes, he is *my* God. I believe in him. I can do nothing else; he has done so much for me. I will praise him. He deserves my praise. I will praise him in song. I will praise him in service. I will praise him by giving my life to him. I will praise him by putting my full trust in him alone.

He is my father's God. Yes, dad, you were right. I should have believed you all along. But it's tough. Those Egyptian kids, they said you were crazy to believe in Yahweh. They had their own gods who seemed to do all kinds of things. They seemed to be doing fine without Yahweh.

But thanks, dad; thanks, mom, for sticking it out with me. Thanks for your patience and for even dragging me along when it didn't seem to make any sense, even when I didn't seem to care. I see it now. Thanks for showing your faith and trust in the way you live everyday. It makes God more real to know he's involved in real life. I'll swallow those harsh words I said earlier when I told you your God was a hoax. It's hard to say it, but you were right. And now,

you know what, dad, mom? He is *my* God. My father's God is my God.

And I will exalt him. I'm not embarrassed about him. How can I be? He is my strength and song. He has become my salvation! I'll sing for joy to the Lord! I will lift him high above everything else. He is even more important to me than the gold from Egypt.

You know, I had to tell you this today. It wasn't easy to say, "I'll sing to my Lord." It wasn't easy to say, "The Lord is my strength and song and salvation." It was even harder to say, "He is my God." It meant saying other things weren't important. It meant putting God as number one. But it's worth it! The Lord has done so much for me. I didn't do it myself. I couldn't. If it was up to me, I'd still be in Egypt. But God brought me out. He rescued me. He saved me!! Awesome! What else can I do but make him my God?! How else can I respond but in joyful song and in wholehearted devotion?

You know, God did the same for you. He saved you from slavery and death. He brought you out of the world of sin and death into a new land, a land of life. He did it through Christ Jesus. You couldn't do it yourself.

You know that. You've been told this before. Be thankful for your parents who have told you about God. They baptized you, like going through the water, to claim you as one of God's chosen people. But now you have to go a step further. You have to say, "He is *my* God. My father's God is *my* God. He is my strength and my song, my salvation." Then I know you'll join me and sing to the Lord for he is highly exalted!

And you moms and dads and teachers and grownups— don't give up. The Lord is your strength and song. He can do wondrous things. He hears your prayers. He has seen how you have taught and guided your children. He is your salvation. He is their salvation. Keep letting the children know that. Tell them, show them, let them know how God has been and is working in your life, every day.

Every one of you, walk with God every day. God is always working. I can see now what he was doing in Egypt, even if I didn't see it then. See him working in your life.

Live in that faith and trust in God, everyday.

Amen.