

RUMINATIONS OF A FORMER HEATHEN

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Credibility

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Every blessing, as well as every curse, of the God of the Bible is only as believable as the Bible is believable. And for the Bible to be believable the events described therein had to have happened, or else what the Bible says is not true. This thing must be approached with deliberation. The promise of salvation, or rather, the certitude of the promise has to be absolute. This is as important as it can get. Was there *really* an exodus from Egypt? Was there *really* a wall of water on the right and a wall of water on the left? And did the Israelites *really* crossed on dry ground and when the Egyptians came after them the waters closed on the Egyptians and they all drowned?

That's one of the traits of the Bible. It will say things that are completely unbelievable and expect you to believe them. Well, what can you do when you are confronted in such a way? What can you do? You tell me. It's always a thing of believe it or not. Unless, of course, you choose to allegorize it. That is to say, give the story a spiritual meaning of some kind. You know, the people were delivered from the slavery of sin, were baptized in the crossing of the Red Sea, and what ever else clever people can come up with. I'm going to tell you something personal and relatively important. I'm a country bumpkin. I am not a sophisticated theologian. I don't have a degree from some school that would have trained me to think like an adult. Country bumpkins are somewhat like children, they are gullible, they tend to believe what they are told. Oh, well, somebody is going to say, you can't take these things literally, that's just the way Moses told the story, but that's not what really happened. The Red Sea should be, some say, more accurately called the Reed Sea. This is important because reeds grow in shallow water, at the edges of the high tides and the low tides. The reeds need water that ebbs and flows, they do not live in deep water. In other words, the "crossing of the Red Sea" happened at the very end of the Red Sea, marsh lands, an area subject to low and high tides. The Israelites crossed in low tide, and when the Egyptians got there the high tide was starting to come in, the incoming tide softened the soil and the wheels of their chariots got stuck in the mud and the tide kept coming in and eventually they all drowned.

So. If you call the Red Sea the Reed Sea then you are in a position to debunk the crossing of the Red Sea having been done at such depths that there would have been "a wall of water on the right, and a wall of water on the left." The problem is the language. One can explain by what natural means things could have happened,

but the language leaves no such room to maneuver. It says “a wall of water on the right, and a wall of water on the left.” Did Moses exaggerate? What really happened? If it was an exaggeration, it went way past exaggeration. It was a lie. And the Bible cannot be trusted in anything. For anyone who tries to say that the great moral teachings should be separated from the account of “miracles,” one would have to wonder what kind of moral teachings are those which start out with lies.

I may be a country bumpkin but I am not stupid. I’m only ignorant. I only have to be exposed to something to learn it. I have been reading the Bible for 25 years, give or take. How should one read the Bible? What are the guidelines? Do you need some kind of program where you read selected verses over a period of time? Someone has to be in charge and give you a way to understand the Bible and you should yield to some learned authority, is that it? Every Church of every denomination has a plan, a way of accessing God. One way or the other you have to follow their doctrines, if you really want to understand things. I am not fettered by such constraints. I was a heathen for too long and I know the ways of man. They are all corrupt. The best way to study the Bible is to read it over and over. You add mosaics, one tile here, another one there, and suddenly an overriding theme emerges, everything is understood at once. I am not suggesting that one can ever grasp the entirety of the Bible. But the Bible must be read over and over; only then connections can be made. Even the long boring genealogies eventually begin to make sense. Oh, so this guy was cousin to so-and-so, no wonder he did that, etc. Let the Bible tell the story. When John says “behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,” you know what he’s talking about. He is talking about the lamb of sacrifice instituted by God in the Law. When Christ is called the “Lamb of the Passover,” we know what is being said. Jesus is that lamb whose blood was painted on the top post and side posts of the door to the house that would be protected. When the Israelites, and anyone who believed what God had said through Moses, killed the lamb of the Passover, they were to take the blood of the lamb and paint it, brush it on, the top post and the side posts of their doors. When the Angel of Death was loosed at midnight, he would see the blood and pass over that particular house. What a relief that was to me! All I had to do was to paint the blood on the top post and side posts of my door and I would be spared! I didn’t have to be good, I didn’t have to be perfect, I didn’t have to examine myself, I didn’t have to make a commitment, I didn’t have to “accept” Jesus, I didn’t have to “invite him into my heart,” only paint his blood on as per instructions. Man, I can do that. I may not be able to do a lot of other things but I can claim his blood and none can say: What doest thou?

Jesus is not someone one “accepts” as if he were a nice used sweater or a good used refrigerator. Neither is Jesus someone one ‘invites into his heart’ as if

doing Jesus a favour. Jesus is the one to hang on to with teeth and nails. He is the last boat, he is the last train, he is the last line of salvation. He is the one we need with total desperation.

Here we go back to the subject of credibility. I have listened to many people, I have heard all sorts of explanations as to how the miracles preceding the Exodus, and those in the wilderness, happened. There are some discrepancies on dates regarding the Exodus. Some say it happened around 1250 B.C., others say it was earlier, 1425 or 1450 B.C. What is not in doubt is that the Exodus happened. But why did it happen? I have not heard an explanation about why the Exodus happened. There is no logical reason for it to have happened. The Egyptians were in a building binge, building monuments and towers, temples, edifices everywhere. Why would they let the Israelites go? Here they had all this cheap labour, they needed the Israelites to build these projects. There is a hint in the Bible that the Egyptians might have started some of those projects precisely to keep the Israelites busy lest they join an opposing army in case of a war. But all they had to do was to kill a few of them and intimidate them that way. Obviously, the Egyptians were able to dominate the Israelites as they made slaves of them. They had total control. The Egyptians were not afraid of the Israelites. Why would they let them go? It doesn't make sense. Unless, of course, one accepted the explanation of the Bible, that God did something to the Egyptians that *made* them let the Israelites go. God did something to the Egyptians that was traumatic. It was the Angel of Death killing the firstborn in every household not covered by the blood of the lamb. From the Pharaoh that sat on his throne to the prisoner in the dungeon, in every household there was one dead. The credibility of the Bible rests on the events of History.