

Salvation Often Comes Through Unexpected Paths Don't Turn Back
When You Don't Understand

If God has delivered you from the bondage of sin today if you've been saved remember this: the path He leads you on next might be completely unexpected, and it might not look appealing at all. It's important to understand God's ways so that when you encounter them, you won't become discouraged, complaining or asking, "Why this?" or "Why that?"

The Unpredictable Way of God's Deliverance

When God led the Israelites out of Egypt, they expected to take the most direct, well-traveled route the Philistine road (Exodus 13:17-18, NIV). This route was the quickest way to the Promised Land and would have gotten them there in weeks. But God deliberately avoided this path. Why?

Exodus 13:17-18 (NIV)

"When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, 'If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.' So God led the people around the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt ready for battle."

God's choice here is deeply theological: He knew that if the Israelites faced immediate conflict, their faith might falter, causing them to return to slavery (bondage to sin is like Egypt). Instead, God leads them through a longer, more difficult path a "wilderness" experience to shape their faith, reliance on Him, and identity as His covenant people.

The wilderness is often symbolic in Scripture for a place of testing and preparation (Deuteronomy 8:2, ESV), where God teaches dependence on Him alone.

Facing the Impossible and God's Faithfulness

The path God chose led the Israelites to the edge of the Red Sea, trapped between Pharaoh's army and the sea a situation that looked like certain defeat.

Exodus 14:1-6 (ESV)

"The Lord said to Moses, 'Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal-zephon; you shall encamp before it, by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, "They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in." And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.'"

Here, God's sovereign plan is in motion: He hardens Pharaoh's heart (a difficult doctrine, but seen as God exercising His justice and power), allowing Pharaoh to pursue Israel so that God can demonstrate His glory through a miraculous deliverance. This teaches us that God's ways are not always straightforward, but His purposes are perfect.

Why Do We Turn Back?

Today, many new believers expect salvation to mean immediate peace, prosperity, and ease. When difficulties arise persecution, hardship, unmet expectations some turn back, saying, "This isn't the God I signed up for."

But Scripture calls us to a different mindset:

Luke 9:23 (NIV): "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."

Hebrews 12:1-2 (ESV): "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith."

Following Christ often means walking a hard, narrow path (Matthew 7:13-14), full of tests and trials that refine faith and character.

The Long Journey to the Promised Land

Remember, it took the Israelites 40 years to enter Canaan the land God promised them. This period was necessary to prepare a generation to inherit God's promises. Similarly, God's timing for us might be longer than we expect, but His plan is perfect.

God's Ways Are Higher Than Ours

As Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV) reminds us:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

God's ways often involve mysterious, difficult paths that lead to ultimate blessing.

If you have truly repented and committed to following Christ, don't turn back just because the road is hard. Keep moving forward, trusting God daily. Miracles often accompany these difficult journeys, confirming that you are on God's path.

If you endure, God promises not only eternal life but blessings in this life as well (James 1:12, NIV):

"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him."

May the Lord bless you abundantly as you walk the path He has set before you.

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