

I. Introduction

Have you ever asked someone "Are you a Christian?" and they responded with "I'm trying"?

Now, on one level, I get it. It sounds humble, right? It sounds like we're working at it, taking it seriously. But then I got to thinking—what if I asked, "Are you married?" Would they say, "Well, I'm trying"?

See, there's something about that phrase "I'm trying" that reveals how we often think about being a Christian. Like it's a performance we're auditioning for, a grade we're working toward, a club we're hoping to eventually qualify for.

But here's what I want to explore with you today from God's Word: What if salvation isn't about trying harder? What if it's about something that's already been done for us? What if the Christian life isn't about climbing up to God, but about realizing we've already been carried across?

We're going to spend some time in one of the most dramatic rescue stories in all of Scripture—the crossing of the Red Sea. And we're going to see how this ancient story points us directly to Jesus, who didn't just show us the way across the waters of judgment—he went through them for us.

II. The Red Sea as a Gospel Window

Exodus 14:10–14 ESV

¹⁰ When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. ¹¹ They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? ¹² Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." ¹³ And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he

will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again.¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

Can you hear it? The terror, the regret, and then this incredible promise: "The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

Now, let me tell you why this matters more than we might think. In the ancient world—and really throughout the Bible—water represents something specific. When you read about waters in Scripture, you're reading about chaos, about the forces that oppose God's good creation.

Go back to the very beginning. Genesis 1:2 tells us that "the earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep." That word "deep"—it's talking about these chaotic waters. But then what happens? "The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." God's Spirit brings order out of chaos, life out of what was formless.

The flood in Noah's day? Same thing. The waters represent God's judgment on a world that had turned away from him. The plagues that just fell on Egypt? They're like creation being undone—darkness covering the land, chaos breaking loose because Pharaoh has set himself against the Creator.

And now here are the Israelites, trapped between an army and the sea. The waters in front of them represent judgment, chaos, death. Behind them, the very slave masters they thought they'd escaped forever.

But here's the beautiful thing. When Moses tells them to "be silent" and watch God's salvation, that Hebrew word for salvation is *yeshua*. Sound familiar? It's the same root as the name Jesus. Moses is saying, "Be still and see the *yeshua* of the Lord."

This isn't just an ancient rescue story. This is a window into how God saves.

III. What we're saved from — Bondage with layers

Let's dig deeper into what's happening here. The text tells us something fascinating about the Israelites' condition. Look at verse 12: "Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.'"

But wait—is that really what they said back in Egypt? Let's check. Turn back to Exodus 4:29-31: "Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel.

Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped."

That's not quite the same story, is it? They're rewriting history, romanticizing their slavery. This reveals something profound about the nature of bondage—it operates on multiple levels simultaneously.

Layer 1: Legal bondage — The objective reality

The Israelites were literal slaves under Egyptian law. Exodus 1:13-14 tells us: "So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field." This wasn't just difficult employment—this was legal ownership of human beings.

Similarly, Scripture teaches that all humanity exists under legal condemnation before God's law. Romans 3:19-20 states: "Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin."

The word Paul uses for "accountable" here is *hypodikos*—it means "answerable to" or "liable to punishment." We weren't just spiritually unwell; we were legally guilty. Ephesians 2:3 confirms this: "we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind."

But here's the good news: Romans 8:1 declares, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." The word "condemnation" (*katakrima*) is a legal verdict. For those in Christ, the legal case has been settled. The objective guilt has been removed.

Layer 2: Psychological bondage — The subjective experience

But notice what happens in our text. Even after Pharaoh officially released them (Exodus 12:31-32: "Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, 'Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel'"), the Israelites are still thinking like slaves. They're terrified, they're second-guessing their freedom, they're longing for the "security" of bondage.

This psychological layer explains why Paul had to write the entire book of Galatians. These were Christians who had been justified by faith, yet they were "turning to a different gospel" (Galatians 1:6). In Galatians 4:8-9, Paul writes: "Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know

God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?"

Even justified believers can slip back into what we might call "psychological works-righteousness." We know intellectually that we're saved by grace, but emotionally we still feel the need to prove ourselves to God. This is why Paul had to remind the Romans: "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons" ([Romans 8:15](#)).

Layer 3: Habitual bondage — The power of sin patterns

The Puritan theologian W.G.T. Shedd made this observation: "Sin is the suicidal action of the human will against itself." What he meant was this: every act of sin makes the next act of sin easier and resistance harder. Sin creates neural pathways, emotional patterns, and spiritual strongholds.

This is why Paul, even after declaring our legal freedom, had to address ongoing sin patterns. [Romans 6:12-14](#): "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace."

Notice Paul's language: sin wants to "reign" and have "dominion." These are political terms—sin wants to rule like a king over territory it no longer legally owns. We're no longer slaves to sin positionally, but sin still battles for practical control over our daily choices.

Peter describes this ongoing struggle in [1 Peter 2:11](#): "Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul." The word "wage war" (*strateuomai*) is a military term—these aren't just temptations, they're organized campaigns against our spiritual freedom.

Layer 4: Covenantal bondage — The tyranny of false gods

This might be the most subtle layer, but look carefully at the Israelites' response to crisis. Their fear immediately turns to nostalgia: "It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians." They're not just afraid of dying—they're longing for the security of slavery.

This reveals what we might call "covenantal bondage"—when good things become ultimate things and start functioning as gods in our lives. These false gods make implicit promises

("Serve me and I'll give you security, significance, satisfaction") and implicit threats ("Fail to serve me and you'll have nothing").

The prophet Jeremiah diagnosed this pattern in his own generation: "Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit" ([Jeremiah 2:11](#)). [Isaiah 44:9-20](#) gives us an extended description of how people fashion idols from wood, worship them, and then say to them, "Deliver me, for you are my god!"

In our context, these might be career success, parental approval, romantic relationships, financial security, or even ministry effectiveness. You can often identify these functional gods by your emotional responses. When someone threatens your success, do you feel normal disappointment, or do you feel existential terror? When your children don't turn out as you hoped, do you feel parental concern, or does your identity crumble?

Paul describes this bondage in [Romans 1:25](#): "they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator." The word "served" (*latreuo*) is the same word used for religious worship—we don't just want these things, we serve them like gods.

The layered reality

Here's what makes this so complex: all four layers can operate simultaneously. You can be legally free in Christ (Layer 1) while still battling works-righteousness in your heart (Layer 2), struggling with habitual sin patterns (Layer 3), and being controlled by functional idols (Layer 4).

This is why the story of the Red Sea crossing is so rich. The Israelites experienced immediate legal liberation—Pharaoh had released them, they were officially free. But they still carried slave hearts, slave habits, and slave loyalties. Their journey to the Promised Land would be the story of learning to live as free people.

And this explains why the New Testament describes salvation in past, present, and future terms. We have been saved ([Ephesians 2:8](#)), we are being saved ([1 Corinthians 1:18](#)), and we will be saved ([Romans 13:11](#)). The crossing happens in a moment, but learning to live on the other side—that's the work of a lifetime.

IV. How we're saved — Crossing by grace

Now let's look at how salvation actually works in this passage. The moment of crisis has arrived—Pharaoh's army is bearing down, the sea is in front of them, and the people are panicking. But Moses gives them one of the most radical commands in all of Scripture.

Look at verses 13-14: "And Moses said to the people, 'Fear not, stand firm, and you will see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.'"

Three commands: Don't fear. Stand firm. Be silent.

And one promise: You will see God's salvation.

The principle of grace: God fights, we watch

The Hebrew word Moses uses for "be silent" is *hacharish*—it can mean "be still," "be quiet," or even "hold your peace." This is about ceasing from our own efforts. The Israelites are to contribute exactly nothing to their rescue except to watch it happen.

This runs counter to every human instinct. When we're in danger, we want to do something. When we're facing judgment, we want to make amends. When we're trapped, we want to find our own way out. But Moses says: Stop. Stand still. Let God work.

Compare this to the heart of Paul's gospel in [Romans 4:4-5](#): "Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness." The word "work" here (*ergazomai*) means to labor, to toil, to earn wages. Paul is saying that salvation comes to those who stop working and start trusting.

This is revolutionary. Every other religion is fundamentally about human effort—meditation, moral improvement, ritual performance, philosophical enlightenment. But the gospel says: "Stand still. God will fight for you."

The image of crossing: Status change, not gradual improvement

But the Red Sea story doesn't just give us the principle of grace—it gives us a powerful picture of how grace operates. Look at what happens next in verses 21-22: "Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the

midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left."

Here's what's remarkable: they don't wade through gradually deepening water. They don't swim across while hoping for the best. They walk across on dry ground with walls of water on both sides. One moment they're on the side of slavery and judgment; the next moment they're on the side of freedom and life.

This is what theologians call the "immediacy" of justification. The prophet Isaiah captured this same image in [Isaiah 51:10](#): "Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over?" The word "pass over" (*abar*) means to cross from one side to another—it's a complete change of location, not a gradual journey.

Jesus uses similar language in [John 5:24](#): "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." The Greek word "passed" (*metabebeken*) is in the perfect tense—it describes a completed action with ongoing results. The believer has already crossed over.

This is what makes Christianity unique among world religions. Most religions are like building a bridge—you lay one stone, then another, gradually making progress across the chasm. You're never quite sure if you've done enough, if your bridge is strong enough, if you'll make it all the way across.

But the gospel is different. It's not about building a bridge; it's about being carried across. One moment you're condemned; the next moment there's no condemnation ([Romans 8:1](#)). One moment you're an orphan; the next moment you're adopted ([Ephesians 1:5](#)). One moment you're an enemy; the next moment you're reconciled ([2 Corinthians 5:18-20](#)).

The object of faith, not the quality of faith

Here's something beautiful about this passage. Look at verses 22 and 29: "And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left... But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right and on their left."

Now, I can all but guarantee you that not everyone walked through with the same level of confidence. Some probably marched through thinking, "God is on our side! Look at this miraculous deliverance!" Others probably crept through trembling, thinking, "These walls of water are going to collapse and crush us any second!"

But here's the key: they all made it across. The bold ones and the fearful ones, the confident ones and the doubting ones—they all ended up on the same side because their safety didn't depend on the quality of their faith. It depended on the power and faithfulness of God.

Hebrews 11:29 captures this perfectly: "By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned." Notice what distinguishes the Israelites from the Egyptians—not superior courage, not better theology, not stronger faith. Just faith itself, however weak or strong.

This is crucial for assurance. We're not saved because we have great faith; we're saved because we have faith in a great God. The disciples had enough faith to follow Jesus, but they also constantly doubted, misunderstood, and failed. Yet Jesus never said, "Come back when your faith is stronger." He said, "Follow me," and their weak faith in the right object was enough.

Grace as God's fighting for us

Let's not miss the military language here. Verse 14: "The Lord will fight for you." Verse 25: "Let us flee from before Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians." The Hebrew word *lacham* means to wage war, to do battle as a warrior.

God isn't helping us fight our battles, He is fighting our battles while we stand still. The waters that should have drowned the Israelites instead drown their enemies. The judgment that should have fallen on them falls on their oppressors instead.

This points directly to the cross. Paul writes in Colossians 2:13-15: "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."

The language is military: disarming, triumphing, putting to shame. On the cross, Jesus didn't just absorb God's wrath—he defeated the powers that held us captive. The judgment that should have fallen on us fell on him instead. The enemies that pursued us were destroyed in the same waters that carried us to safety.

The danger of adding to grace

But here's where we need to be careful. Look at verse 15: "The Lord said to Moses, 'Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward.'" Some commentators see this as God

rebuking Moses for being passive when he should have been active. But I think that misses the point.

The Israelites needed to step into the sea, yes—but only after God had already divided it. They needed to walk forward, but on the dry ground God had prepared. Their action was a response to God's prior action, not a contribution to it.

This is why Paul can say in [Ephesians 2:8-9](#): "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." Even our faith isn't a work we perform—it's a gift we receive and a path we walk on the solid ground of God's finished work.

The Red Sea crossing teaches us that salvation is entirely God's work, received entirely by faith, resulting in a complete change of status. We don't gradually become Christians—we cross over. We don't earn our way to freedom—we're carried across the waters of judgment to the safety that God has prepared.

V. Why we can cross — The Mediator

Now we come to the heart of the matter. Why do the Israelites make it through the waters while the Egyptians are destroyed? If you read this story quickly, you might think it's because the Israelites were good people and the Egyptians were bad people. But if you know your Bible, you know that's not the answer.

The Israelites were not morally superior to the Egyptians. We've already seen their complaining, their faithlessness, their nostalgia for slavery. And if you keep reading Exodus, you'll see them worshiping a golden calf, grumbling about food, and repeatedly rebelling against God. In fact, just two chapters later in [Exodus 16:3](#), they're saying: "Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full."

So why do they cross safely while their enemies perish? The answer is found in one person: Moses, the mediator.

Moses as the man in the middle

Look carefully at the role Moses plays in this story. In verse 15, something remarkable happens: "The Lord said to Moses, 'Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward.'"

Wait—when did Moses cry out? The text tells us the people cried out in verse 10, but there's no mention of Moses crying out. Yet God rebukes Moses as if he had been doing exactly what the people were doing. Why?

Here's what I think is happening: Moses is so close with the people that their guilt becomes his guilt. He stands before God not just as their leader, but as their representative. When they sin, he bears the burden of their sin. When they cry out in unbelief, God treats it as if Moses himself had done it.

But then look at verse 21: "Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided." Moses stretches out his hand, but it's the Lord who drives back the sea. Moses is so close with God that God's power flows through him.

This is what makes Moses a mediator—he's the man in the middle. He's identified with the people in their guilt and with God in his power. He bears their burden and channels God's blessing.

The Old Testament uses specific language for this role. In Exodus 32:30-32, after the golden calf incident, Moses says to God: "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written."

Moses is willing to be condemned in their place. He's offering to bear their punishment so they can go free. The Hebrew word for "blot out" (*machah*) means to wipe away completely, to erase from existence. Moses is offering to be destroyed so Israel can be saved.

God doesn't accept Moses' offer—not because it's wrong in principle, but because Moses isn't sufficient for the task. One finite man cannot bear infinite guilt. One sinner cannot atone for other sinners. Moses can represent the people before God, but he cannot substitute for them completely.

The greater mediator

This is where the New Testament connects directly to our story. Hebrews 3:1-3 says: "Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself."

Jesus is the greater Moses, the better mediator. But unlike Moses, Jesus is not just identified with humanity—he is fully human. And unlike Moses, Jesus is not just a channel for God's power—he is fully God.

In 1 Timothy 2:5-6, Paul writes: "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all." The word "mediator" (*mesites*) means "one who stands between" or "one who brings together." Jesus doesn't just represent us before God; he reconciles us to God.

But here's what makes Jesus infinitely greater than Moses: Jesus actually went through the waters of judgment. Moses stood on the shore and stretched out his staff. Jesus plunged into the depths.

The waters of judgment

Remember what these waters represent. Throughout Scripture, chaotic waters symbolize God's judgment on sin. In Genesis 7:11, "all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened" to bring the flood of judgment on a sinful world.

In our passage, the waters represent the judgment that should fall on rebellious humanity. The Egyptians experience this judgment and are destroyed. But the Israelites pass through safely because they have a mediator.

Jesus took this imagery and applied it to himself. When the disciples asked to sit at his right and left in glory, Jesus responded in Mark 10:38-39: "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" He was speaking of his death as a baptism—a plunging into the waters of God's wrath.

The prophet Jonah gives us another picture. When God's storm of judgment threatens to destroy the ship, Jonah says to the sailors in Jonah 1:12: "Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you."

Jonah is thrown into the waters of judgment and the storm ceases. But Jonah cries out from the belly of the fish in Jonah 2:3: "For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me."

Jesus said in Matthew 12:40: "For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." But then he added in verse 41: "The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this

generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."

What's greater about Jesus? Jonah was thrown into the sea and rescued. Jesus was thrown into the ocean of God's wrath and drowned in our place. Jonah's experience was temporary and symbolic. Jesus' experience was final and substitutionary.

The cross as the ultimate Red Sea

On the cross, Jesus experienced what theologians call "de-creation." All the plagues that fell on Egypt fell on him. Darkness covered the land for three hours ([Matthew 27:45](#)). He was experiencing the reality that all these Old Testament pictures pointed toward.

[Isaiah 53:4-6](#) prophesied this: "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

The Hebrew word for "laid on" (*paga*) means "to cause to meet" or "to make intercession." God caused our sin and guilt to meet with his Son. The judgment that should have fallen on us met Jesus instead.

This is why Paul can write in [2 Corinthians 5:21](#): "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Jesus became what we were (sinful, condemned, under wrath) so that we could become what he is (righteous, justified, beloved).

Luke's gospel and the ultimate exodus

Luke's Gospel makes this connection explicit. In [Luke 9:30-31](#), at the Transfiguration, "behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem."

But here's what's remarkable: the Greek word translated "departure" is *exodus*. Moses and Elijah weren't just talking about Jesus leaving Jerusalem—they were talking about the ultimate Exodus that Jesus would accomplish through his death and resurrection.

Just as Moses led Israel through the waters of judgment to freedom, Jesus would lead his people through the ultimate waters of judgment to eternal life. But unlike the first exodus,

where the mediator stood on the shore, in this exodus the mediator himself would go through the waters.

Our participation in Christ's exodus

Paul makes the connection even more explicit in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2: "For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

Paul says the Israelites were "baptized into Moses"—they were united with their mediator in his passage through the waters. But then he connects this to our experience in Romans 6:3-4: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

When we place our faith in Christ, we're united with him in his death and resurrection. We pass through the waters of judgment not because we're good enough, but because we're hidden in the one who went through those waters for us.

This is why the Israelites could cross safely while the Egyptians perished. It wasn't about moral superiority—it was about having a mediator. And this is why we can cross from death to life, from condemnation to justification, from slavery to freedom. Not because we're worthy, but because we have a Mediator who is both fully God and fully man, who bore our judgment and shares his righteousness.

The Red Sea crossing points us to the cross, where the greater Moses accomplished the ultimate exodus, leading his people safely through the waters of judgment into the new creation life of the resurrection.

VI. Grace before law, presence before performance

The Israelites aren't crossing the Red Sea to earn their freedom—they're crossing because they've already been freed.

Look at the sequence. Back in Exodus 12:31-32, Pharaoh had already released them: "Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, 'Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; go, serve the Lord, as you have said. Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!'"

They were legally free before they ever reached the sea. The Red Sea crossing isn't about earning liberation—it's about experiencing the full reality of a liberation already declared.

Where are they headed after crossing? Mount Sinai, where God will give them the law. The order matters: first freedom, then commandments. First grace, then guidelines for living as free people.

This is why Leviticus 11:45 begins with these words: "For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God." God doesn't say, "Obey my laws and I'll bring you out." He says, "I brought you out—now be holy."

The better covenant

Hebrews 3-4 shows us that Jesus inaugurates something even better than what Moses offered. The Israelites had a great mediator, but he was still finite and flawed. They had a real exodus, but it led to wilderness wandering and eventual death for that generation.

Jesus offers better promises through a better covenant (Hebrews 8:6). Where Moses led them to temporary rest in Canaan, Jesus leads us to eternal rest in God himself (Hebrews 4:9-11). Where Moses' mediation was partial and temporary, Jesus' mediation is complete and eternal.

Grace fueling obedience

This sequence—grace before law—doesn't lead to lawlessness. It leads to true obedience. When you understand that God has already fought your biggest battle, carried you through judgment, and secured your freedom, smaller acts of obedience become responses of gratitude rather than desperate attempts to earn approval.

We're saved by faith alone, but never by a faith that remains alone. The faith that saves is the faith that transforms. Not because we're trying to pay God back, but because grace creates the very thing it calls for—a heart that wants to please the one who rescued us.

VII. Conclusion

So where does this leave us? Let me bring this back to where we started. If someone asks you, "Are you a Christian?" the gospel answer isn't "I'm trying." It's "I've crossed over."

The core movements

We've seen three movements in this ancient story that point directly to Jesus:

What we're saved from: Bondage with layers—legal guilt before God, psychological works-righteousness, habitual sin patterns, and the tyranny of functional idols. These don't disappear instantly, but they no longer define us.

How we're saved: By grace through crossing over. Not a bridge we build through effort, but a path God opens through judgment. We contribute nothing except walking on the dry ground he's prepared.

Why we can be saved: Because of the Mediator. Moses stood between Israel and judgment, but Jesus went through the judgment. He was thrown into the storm of God's wrath so we could cross safely to the other side.

The Red Sea wasn't just an ancient miracle—it was a preview of the ultimate rescue. Jesus is our better Moses who didn't just point the way through judgment, but walked through it himself. He didn't just stand on the shore while we crossed—he went under the waters so we could emerge on dry ground.

You're not trying to become a Christian. If you've placed your faith in Christ, you've already crossed over. Now we learn to live like the free people we already are.