

## Joel Osteen Book

Joel Osteen is a very popular religious speaker. He reportedly has the largest church in America. To accommodate the large audiences, he bought an old sports arena that seats upward of 16,000; and I think they still have more than one service. My nickname for him is “smiley.” If you have ever seen him on TV, you know what I mean. My wife gets a kick out of my impersonation of him.

I recently decided to get his latest book and see what type of material he publishes and what he teaches in it since so many people are reading his stuff. I could not get past the second chapter. Why? Reading Joel Osteen’s book is like trying to eat a Twinkie soaked in syrup, dipped in chocolate, rolled in sugar, topped with whipped cream—and washing it down with hyper-sweetened Kool Aid. Some may like this, but it makes me want to vomit. No substance whatsoever.

My advice is to find something with more “meat and potatoes” in it. Better yet, delve into the milk and meat of the Word (1 Pet. 2:1, 2; Heb. 5:11-14).

- Steven F. Deaton



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### Closing of The Sea

In Exodus 14 we read where Moses and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry land. The Lord blessed them with an escape route from Egypt. No doubt, this was a frightening, yet exhilarating, time. Part of the fearfulness was that the Egyptians pursued them into the sea.

The Bible tells us that when Pharaoh’s army entered the sea, God took their chariot wheels off (Ex. 14:25). God then instructed Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen” (Ex. 14:26). We then learn that the sea returned to its “full depth” and every Egyptian perished (Ex. 14:27, 28). What a sight to see!

The closing of the Red Sea was evidence of God’s power as much as its parting. It was a miracle that the sea parted and the land was dry for Israel to walk on. The culmination of that miracle was the timing of the release of the water. It was after the Israelites had all safely passed to the other side and while all of Pharaoh’s men were in the sea.

The Bible says “Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore” (Ex. 14:30). This was great evidence of God’s judgment against the Egyptians. It was great evidence of God’s care for Israel. “Thus Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done in Egypt; so the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses” (Ex. 14:31).

After this word spread. The people of Jericho knew about it 40 years later (Josh.

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2:10). You have to know that families in Egypt never saw their husbands, fathers, brothers, sons again. They went out one day to bring back those rebellious Hebrews and never returned. They knew what happened; as with the plagues Jehovah judged Egypt.

In the closing of the sea, we also see God's mercy. He had mercy on Israel. They escaped without having to fight. No Israelite lifted a sword or spear. Not one man was cut down by Pharaoh's cavalry. They gained their independence without going to war and suffering great bloodshed on their side. They still had to follow God's commands, specifically being baptized with Moses' baptism (1 Cor. 10:1, 2). Yet, the deliverance was of God; a merciful God.

The same God that delivered Israel is the God we serve today. He is just as merciful. He seeks to lead us out of "Egypt" and to the "Promised Land." It is quite a journey from one to the other, but with God's help we can do it. He will do His part and we must do ours. By faith in Him we can cross the sea and escape the enemy (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:26, 27; Col. 2:11, 12). We must then trust God to lead us home.

- Steven F. Deaton

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### **Things That Perish In Hell**

**Hope**

**Happiness**

**Light**

**Time**

Matthew 25:30, 46

### **Things That Do Not Perish In Hell**

**Body**

**Soul**

**Conscience**

**Consciousness**

Matthew 10:28; Mark 9:42-48

## **Doctrine of Christ VS. Doctrine of Men**

There are many contrasts that can be made between what the Bible teaches and what man teaches. The Bible teaches we can fall from grace, many men say that is not possible (1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 5:4). The Bible says Jesus will end His rule when He returns, most of our neighbors teach He will begin His rule when He returns (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Another area where men contradict God is what it takes to become a Christian.

The doctrine of Christ gives us very plain words in explaining the plan of salvation. We must believe and confess (Acts 8:36, 37). We must repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). This latter requirement is where men object. They say to be baptized for salvation is working for it. The reasoning generally goes: salvation comes at the point of belief and you "should" be baptized to follow Jesus' example.

In Romans 6:3, 4, it says, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Here's the imagery.

Jesus: died – buried – resurrected.

Man: dead in sin – buried in baptism – resurrected to a new life.

Denominations make a different claim.

Man: dead in sin – resurrected in belief – buried in baptism.

### **Death, burial, resurrection (truth) VS. Death, resurrection, burial (error).**

Though what men say may be appealing, we must stick with the doctrine of Christ. When we abide in it, we have fellowship with the Father and Son; outside of it we do not (2 Jn. 9).

- Steven F. Deaton