

# Exodus

## May 27, 2007

### Chapter 14

#### I. Leaving Egypt

Ex 14:1-4

14:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, 2 "Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. They are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon. 3 Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.' 4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." So the Israelites did this. NIV

Verses 1-2 The exact route cannot be ascertained. Apparently, there is at least one reversal of direction indicated. Whether traveling in circles or zigzags, the Israelites would appear to be confused to anyone watching them. The above places are unknown, although like a lot of this book, there is no lack of conjecture as to where these places might be. Certainly, they are on the eastern part of Egypt.

Verse 3-4 Is the LORD right in hardening Pharaoh's heart? When anyone asks if the LORD is right in something, we should always answer that "Yes, He is." The question for us is whether we understand why it was right. What do you think is the LORD's purpose in hardening Pharaoh's heart?



## II. Egypt Pursues

Ex 14:5-9

**5** When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them and said, "What have we done? We have let the Israelites go and have lost their services!" **6** So he had his chariot made ready and took his army with him. **7** He took six hundred of the best chariots, along with all the other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them. **8** The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly. **9** The Egyptians — all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, horsemen and troops — pursued the Israelites and overtook them as they camped by the sea near Pi Hahiroth, opposite Baal Zephon. NIV

- Verse 5      With the intensity of the plagues gone and somewhat forgotten, the Egyptians would have thought about revenge and their own losses. Their wounded pride is beginning to drive them. Also, without the Israelites, their work was not getting done. With the destruction from the plagues, they could use all the slave laborers that they can get. So, the need for recovering workers might have been part of it as well.
- Verse 6      “Army” is really “people” in the Hebrew, implying that Pharaoh’s people agreed with his actions.
- Verse 7      600 choice chariots would imply that this was a large force ready to force two million citizens back into slavery by force if necessary.
- Verse 8      It is not clear if any foot soldiers accompanied the chariots. The word translated “troops” (or “army” as in other translations) is a word that really means a force, which could be foot soldiers or chariots or something else.

## III. Beginnings of Grumbling

Ex 14:10-12

**10** As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. **11** They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? **12** Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" NIV

The LORD had made promises at the beginning of this chapter, but they were general promises. Chances are that the Israelites thought they LORD would not allow the chariots to get near to them. They could not even imagine what the LORD has in mind and therefore despaired.

Discussion Point: How do we feel when all forces are aligned against us? Do we shriek in terror? Do we accuse the Lord of bringing us to a desert to die? How do we treat our leaders? Obviously we need to seek the Lord:

James 4:7-10

**7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. NASU**

#### **IV. Moses' and God's Responses**

**Ex 14:13-18**

**13 Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. 14 The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."**

**15 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. 16 Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. 17 I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. 18 The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen."**

**NIV**

Verse 13-14 The LORD had promised protection but had not said how. Moses seems to understand this and has the path forward partially correct. He has learned to trust in the LORD even when he does not know how the LORD will deliver, as in Isa 59:15-17:

**15 Yes, truth is lacking; And he who turns aside from evil makes himself a prey. Now the LORD saw, And it was displeasing in His sight that there was no justice.**

**16 And He saw that there was no man, And was astonished that there was no one to intercede; Then His own arm brought salvation to Him, And His righteousness upheld Him. 17 He put on righteousness like a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head; And He put on garments of vengeance for clothing And wrapped Himself with zeal as a mantle. NASU**

Verse 14 Moses makes a great point here. A mistake that the Christian makes, is to choose between bad choices and to think that they are the ones that will make the difference. We can pray, and we can obey God. Those are always the first steps; anything else will likely be going in the wrong direction when we take matters into our own hands.

Verse 15 Now the LORD gets Moses the rest of the path forward, telling him to lead the Israelites forward through the sea that will be parted. Moses obeys! His obedience shows faith and a willing to wait on the LORD.

#### **V. How Big is Your God?**

**Ex 14:19-25**

**19 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, 20 coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night**

long. 21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, 22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. 23 The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. 24 During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. 25 He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt." NIV

The “dry ground” shows that this is a true miracle of God. This is not only a miracle whereby the sea is parted, but the ground is made miraculously dry as well. Some try to explain this miracle on natural justification. Like the 10<sup>th</sup> plague, although we can certainly speculate, this is an impossible task. The fact that the Egyptian commander is willing to take the chariots into the seabed tells us how dry it was; the LORD miraculously has some wheels come off (or even jammed as some lesser texts state), but none are stated to be stuck in the mud!

## VI. Judgment and Salvation

Ex 14:26-31

26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen." 27 Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the LORD swept them into the sea. 28 The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen — the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.

29 But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. 30 That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. 31 And when the Israelites saw the great power the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant. NIV

Verse 29 This verse might be taken to mean that the Israelites were still between the two walls of the sea as these same walls behind began to fold over on the Egyptian army. If so, can you imagine what the Israelites were thinking?

Verse 31 Faith saves. Unfortunately the Israelites seem to have to keep learning this over and over again.

## VII. Why is this Miracle so Big?

In the OT after Genesis, the miracle of the parting of the sea is perhaps the most important miracle. What are the characteristics of this miracle that cause it to be referenced and restated so many times in the OT? What can we learn from it today?