

THE TEXT OF EXODUS  
TRANSLATION

**14** And Je-ho-vah spake unto Mo-ses, saying (2) Speak unto the children of Is-ra-el, that they turn back and encamp before Pi-ha-hi-roth, between Mig-dol and the sea, before Ba-al-ze-phon: over against it shall ye encamp by the sea. (3) And Pha-raoh will say of the children of Is-ra-el, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. (4) And I will harden Pha-raoh's heart, and he shall follow after them; and I will get me honor upon Pha-raoh, and upon all his host; and the E-gyp-tians shall know that I am Je-ho-vah. And they did so. (5) And it was told the king of E-gypt that the people were fled: and the heart of Pha-raoh and of his servants was changed towards the people, and they said, What is this we have done, that we have let Is-ra-el go from serving us? (6) And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: (7) and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of E-gypt, and captains over all of them. (8) And Je-ho-vah hardened the heart of Pha-raoh king of E-gypt, and he pursued after the children of Is-ra-el: for the children of Is-ra-el went out with a high hand. (9) And the E-gyp-tains pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pha-raoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-ha-hi-roth, before Ba-al-ze-phon.

(10) And when Pha-raoh drew nigh, the children of Is-ra-el lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the E-gyp-tains were marching after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Is-ra-el cried out unto Je-ho-vah. (11) And they said unto Mo-ses, Because there were no graves in E-gypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to bring us forth out of E-gypt? (12) Is not this the word that we spake unto thee in E-gypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the E-gyp-tains? For it were better for us to serve the E-gyp-tians, than that we should die in the wilderness. (13) And Mo-ses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Je-ho-vah, which he will work for you to-day:

for the E-gyp-tians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. (14) Je-ho-vah will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

(15) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Is-ra-el, that they go forward. (16) And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Is-ra-el shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground. (17) And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the E-gyp-tians, and they shall go in after them: and I will get me honor upon Pha-raoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. (18) And the E-gyp-tians shall know that I am Je-ho-vah, when I have gotten me honor upon Pha-raoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. (19) And the angel of God, who went before the camp of Is-ra-el, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud removed from before them, and stood behind them: (20) and it came between the camp of E-gypt and the camp of Is-ra-el; and there was the cloud and the darkness, yet gave it light by night: and the one came not near the other all the night.

(21) And Mo-ses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Je-ho-vah caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. (22) And the children of Is-ra-el went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. (23) And the E-gyp-tians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pha-raoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. (24) And it came to pass in the morning watch, that Je-ho-vah looked forth upon the host of the E-gyp-tians through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and discomfited the host of the E-gyp-tians. (25) And he took off their chariot wheels, and they drove them heavily; so that the E-gyp-tians said, Let us flee from the face of Is-ra-el; for Je-ho-vah fighteth for them against the E-gyp-tians.

(26) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Stretch out thy hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the E-gyp-tians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. (27) And Mo-ses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned

to its strength when the morning appeared; and the E-gyp-tians fled against it; and Je-ho-vah overthrew the E-gyp-tians in the midst of the sea. (28) And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pha-raoh that went in after them into the sea; there remained not so much as one of them. (29) But the children of Is-ra-el walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left. (30) Thus Je-ho-vah saved Is-ra-el that day out of the hand of the E-gyp-tians; and Is-ra-el saw the E-gyp-tians dead upon the sea-shore. (31) And Is-ra-el saw the great work which Je-ho-vah did upon the E-gyp-tians, and the people feared Je-ho-vah: and they believed in Je-ho-vah, and in his servant Mo-ses.

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EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER FOURTEEN  
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. Propose a theme or topic for chapter fourteen.
2. What change of directions did God have the Israelites make? (14:1-2)
3. What place were the Israelites to encamp in front of? (14:2)
4. Between what places were they to encamp? (14:2)
5. On which side of the sea was Baal-zephon? (14:2)
6. What would Pharaoh say when he heard where Israel had gone? (14:3)
7. What would cause Pharaoh to follow Israel? (14:4)
8. What would bring honor to God? (14:4, 18)
9. What would the Egyptians know after their host was destroyed? (14:4)
10. What was told to Pharaoh about the Israelites' activities? (14:5; Compare Num. 33:3-4)
11. What was changed within Pharaoh and his servants? (14:5)
12. What did Pharaoh take to pursue Israel? (14:6)
13. How many chariots did Pharaoh take? (14:7)

14. What did Jehovah do to Pharaoh's heart? (14:8)
  15. In what manner had the Israelites gone out? (14:8)
  16. At what place did Pharaoh overtake Israel? (14:9)
  17. What was Israel's reaction upon seeing Pharaoh? (14:10)
  18. To whom did the Israelites first cry out? (14:10)
  19. What taunt did Israel make to Moses? (14:11)
  20. What was the feeling of the Israelites toward Moses? (14:11)
  21. What words had Israel previously spoken to Moses? (14:12)  
When?
  22. What heroic words did Moses utter? (14:13)
  23. What did Moses predict would be the fate of the Egyptians?  
(14:13)
  24. Who would fight for Israel? (14:14)
  25. What did God tell Israel to do? (14:15)
  26. What did God tell Moses to do? (14:16)
  27. What would Pharaoh do when Israel crossed the sea? (14:17)
  28. Who or what went before the Israelite camp? (14:19)
  29. What separated Israel from the Egyptians? (14:20)
  30. What gave light to the Israelites? (14:20)
  31. What did God use to divide the waters? (14:21)
  32. What was the sea like on the right and left sides? (14:22)
  33. Who followed Israel into the sea? (14:23)
  34. At what hour did the LORD look forth upon the Egyptians?  
(14:24)
  35. What did the LORD do to slow down the Egyptians? (14:25)
  36. What was the reaction of the Egyptians to their difficulties in  
crossing? (14:25)
  37. What was used to cause the waters to return to their usual  
position? (14:26)
  38. Did the Egyptians attempt to escape? (14:27)
  39. How many Egyptians survived? (14:28)
  40. What was Israel's last view of the Egyptians? (14:30)
  41. What was Israel's reaction when they saw all that had hap-  
pened to the Egyptians? (14:31)
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## EXODUS FOURTEEN: BAPTIZED UNTO MOSES

- I. *A point of transition.*
- II. *A place of triumph.*

## GOD'S PEOPLE IN TRYING SITUATIONS (14:2-4)

- I. Situations unexpected; (14:2.)
- II. Situations under enemy observation; (14:3)
- III. Situations where God gets honor; (14:4)

## FEELINGS OF WEAK SAINTS (14:10-12)

- I. Fear; 14:10.
- II. Suspicion of leaders; 14:11.
- III. Forgetting past misery; 14:12.
- IV. Choosing slavery over freedom; 14:12.

## MOSES' MARVELOUS FAITH (14:13-15)

- I. Held in the face of fearful multitudes; 14:10. 10.
- II. Publicly declared; 14:13.
- III. Pointed the people to God; 14:13-14.
- IV. Sought God in private prayer; 14:15.

## DIRECTIONS IN DILEMMA (14:13-16.)

1. Fear not; 14:13.
2. Stand still (be silent); 14:13-14.
3. See the salvation of Jehovah; 14:13.
4. Go forward! (14:15)

## GOD'S TROUBLING OF THE WICKED (14:23-28)

1. Done in the midst of their sin; 14:23.
2. Recognized too late; 14:25.
3. Precedes total destruction; 14:27-28.

## THE MIRACLE-CROSSING!!

1. Miraculous light and darkness; 14:20.
  2. Miraculous wind and storm; 14:21; Ps. 77:16-18.
  3. Miraculous wall of water; 14:22, 29.
  4. Miraculous safe crossing; 14:22, 30.
  5. Miraculous motivation upon the Egyptians; 14:4, 17.
  6. Miraculous hindrance of Egyptians; 14:25.
  7. Miraculous return of waters; 14:28.
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## EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. *What is in Exodus fourteen?*

The chapter tells of Israel's miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, and the destruction of the Egyptians who pursued them.

2. *What is the spiritual significance of this chapter?*

The chapter is an eternal illustration of the truth that God is able to deliver his people. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21).

The chapter makes the meaning of baptism clear. We are told in I Corinthians 10:2 that "Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all *baptized unto Moses* in the cloud and in the sea." By the same words we are said to be "*baptized into Christ*" (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3).

Up until the crossing of the Red Sea Israel was in Egyptian territory and in danger from Egypt. Similarly up until our baptism we are yet in sins. Though Saul of Tarsus came to believe in Jesus upon the road to Damascus, and had changed his mind (repented) toward Jesus, and though he had prayed for three days, yet the preacher sent by the Lord himself said to him, "Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins, calling on his name.*" (Acts 22:16)

When Israel crossed the sea, they were baptized unto Moses. They came completely under his authority and rule.

Egypt had no more dominion over them. Similarly, in Romans six, where Paul talks about our being baptized into Christ, he writes that "Sin shall not have dominion over you." (Rom. 6:11, 14)

By mighty works done by Moses, God made it possible for the Israelites to step forth in FAITH to forsake Egypt. By mighty works done through Christ (such as raising Him from the dead), God has made it possible for us to step forth in FAITH to escape sin. After that act of faith, we are *baptized into Christ*. It is at that point that we are saved (I Peter 3:21; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). It is the point of transition. Baptism must be preceded by faith; indeed it is an act of faith. God has called us "unto obedience of faith" (Rom. 2:5; 16:26). Noah and Abraham *by faith* obeyed God's commands (Heb. 11:7-8). We do not have Biblical faith if we take lightly God's commands, such as to be baptized.

3. *What unexpected directions did God give to Israel? (14:1-2)*

The Lord told Moses to tell Israel to TURN BACK toward the sea and camp in front of Pihahiroth, between Migdol (the tower) and the sea, in front of (east of) Baal-zephon.

Israel was to encamp in a vulnerable place, as if just waiting for Pharaoh to respond.

The identifications of Pihahiroth, Migdol, and Baal-zephon are as numerous as the commentaries on the subject! Every body of water along the east edge of Egypt has been identified by some interpreter as the *sea* spoken of. Identifications of the *sea* include Lake Sirbonis (Martin Noth, Aharoni), Lake Menzaleh (G. E. Wright), Lake Timsah (Naiville),<sup>1</sup> the Bitter Lakes (Cassuto, John Davis), and the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez) (S. C. Bartlett, J. W. McGarvey).

We feel that the *sea* referred to in 14:2 (and subsequently) is the Red Sea Gulf of Suez. See Introductory Study II of this book for our reasons for holding this view. Acceptance of this view certainly requires acceptance of miraculous features in the crossing! We assuredly regard the crossing as miraculous

<sup>1</sup> See J. H. Hertz, *Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (London: Soncino, 1969), p. 266.

in many respects.

When God told Israel to "Turn back," he probably meant for them to turn *west*. To the Hebrews the west side of anything was spoken of as the back side. See Ex. 3:1. In Genesis 14:7 we have the account of how the four kings from the east "turned *back*" from Mt. Seir (Edom) to Kadesh (presumably Kadesh-barnea). This was a generally *westward* turn, as a check of a map will show.

Israel had been travelling in the wilderness (13:18, 20), probably going southward in the area east and southeast of the Bitter Lakes. Now they are directed to *turn back*, meaning westward, toward the north tip of the Gulf of Suez.

The Hebrew verb translated "turn back" may simply mean "turn." It has both meanings. We mention this to show that "Turn back" does not necessarily have to mean a complete reversal of direction, as from south to north. A turn to the west would fulfill the command completely.

The exact locations of Pihahiroth, Migdol, and Baal-zephon are not known. We feel that all three were near the north tip of the Red Sea Gulf of Suez.

*Pihahiroth* is a name having a definite Egyptian sound.<sup>2</sup> Numbers 33:8 gives it as Hahiroth, omitting the *Pi*, which is the Egyptian article *the*.

Several places called *Migdol*, meaning watchtower, are known. We propose that a tower on one of the summits of Mt. Atakah, just west of the Gulf of Suez tip, would be a most probable location.<sup>3</sup>

*Baal-zephon*, meaning "Baal of the North," was the name of a Canaanite god that was evidently worshipped in Egypt. G. E. Wright tells of one site called Baal-zephon in later centuries, located on the south tip of Lake Menzaleh.<sup>4</sup> But

<sup>2</sup>Alan Cole (*op. cit.*, p. 119) says *Pihahiroth* means "region of salt marshes." We have seen no other authorities who confirm this meaning.

<sup>3</sup>*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, IV, p. 2396, concurs with this suggested location.

<sup>4</sup>*Biblical Archaeology*, p. 61. The same view is in *Broadman Bible Commentary*, (1969), 381.



another site named Baal-zephon must be referred to here, since Lake Menzaleh is far more than a three-days' journey from Marah ('Ain Hawwarah). See Num. 33:8; Ex. 15:22. U. Cassuto refers to an Egyptian papyrus which refers to a tower of Baal-zephon located near the Bitter Lakes.<sup>5</sup> The existence of this second site called Baal-zephon certainly shows us that we are not forced to accept Wright's location of Baal-zephon near Lake Menzaleh as the only possible one.

4. *What would Pharaoh think when he heard of Israel's detour? (14:3)*

He would think they were entrapped in the land. Our suggested location of the Israelite camp is in an area hemmed in by Mt. Atakah on the west and south and by the sea on the east. They were definitely shut in by the wilderness. (A *wilderness* is any desert, whether mountainous or level, sandy or rocky.)

5. *Why was God going to harden Pharaoh's heart again? (14:4)*

Three reasons are given: (1) so that Pharaoh would pursue the Israelites (a suicidal mission); (2) so God would get honor through what He did to Pharaoh and his host (compare 14:17; 9:16); (3) so that the Egyptians would know that God was the LORD (Jehovah). This third goal has been mentioned time and again in Exodus (7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; 14:18).

Concerning the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, see notes on 4:21; 7:3. See pp. 116-119.

The paragraph 14:1-4 closes with a picture of the people encamped near the Sea of Reeds (Red Sea) tranquil and trusting in the LORD and in Moses his servant.<sup>6</sup>

If it should seem to you harsh that God should again harden Pharaoh's heart, after having already slain all of Egypt's firstborn, observe the text carefully! We are first told that Pharaoh would take notice of Israel's detour, as if in exultant amazement (14:3). Obviously the Egyptians had spies, trackers, and runners reporting on the journey of

<sup>5</sup>*Commentary on Exodus*, p. 159.

<sup>6</sup>Cassuto, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

Israel. After telling of Pharaoh's own reaction to Israel's detour, God declared that He would harden Pharaoh's heart (14:4). This occurred just as God predicted. When Pharaoh heard of Israel's position, his heart was changed toward the people and he regretted having let them go (14:5). At that point, AFTER Pharaoh had already expressed his own real feelings, God hardened his heart, causing him to pursue Israel suicidally (14:8).

6. *What was Pharaoh's reaction when he heard that Israel had fled?* (14:5)

His heart was changed - maliciously changed - and so were the hearts of his servants, presumably his government officers. Previously they were very glad to get the Israelites out of the land (12:30-34). Now they regret it.

The upper classes of Egypt had depended on the manual labor of Israel to do the physical labor that made their comforts possible. Many nations even now have peasant, or working, classes, whose toils enable the "upper crust" to live grandly. The Egyptians now see Goshen empty, the brickyards deserted, the fields forsaken (1:14). This loss was socially and economically paralyzing.

Besides the pain of the economic loss, the Egyptians had a spiritual and emotional fury in them, a frustration born of defeat in the ten plagues, a desire for revenge, a religious resentment and hatred. The Egyptians said, "I will pursue; I will overtake; I will divide the spoil!" (15:9)

"Fled" does not suggest that Israel left surreptitiously, without Pharaoh's being aware of it.<sup>7</sup> Far from it! They left in full view of the Egyptians, with a high hand, defiantly (Ex. 14:8; Num. 33:3-4). The word *fled* here probably is intended to give the idea that they had utterly left the country. Moses had previously proposed to Pharaoh that Israel should go a

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<sup>7</sup>Martin Noth, *Exodus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), p. 111, argues that "fled" is a fragment from an *E* tradition, that Israel fled without Pharaoh's notice; and that this contradicts the other descriptions of Israel's escape as given in Exodus. This dissection of the text is unnecessary and unproven. "Fled" does not always imply "to flee secretly." Compare Gen. 16:16; Num. 24:11.

three-days' journey into the wilderness to worship the LORD (5:3). Probably when Israel left, Pharaoh supposed that they would only go a short ways, stop, worship, and return. Now he learns that they have FLED the country! Indeed they had. By this time Israel had almost certainly been travelling four days and probably more, and had gone about sixty miles and were still going. But suddenly news comes to Pharaoh that the Israelites are entrapped in the wilderness as the result of an unexpected detour.

7. *What Egyptian forces were sent after the Israelites?* (14:6-7, 9)

Pharaoh prepared his *chariot*, and took his *people* with him. He took six hundred chosen (or tested and selected) chariots of Egypt, and all the chariots of Egypt, with captains (warriors) over all of them. Besides these, there were horses and horsemen (15:1), and an army (footmen) (14:7, 9, 17).

The word *chariot* in 14:6 is singular in Hebrew. But so also is the obviously plural *chariots* in 14:7, 9. The Hebrew *rekeb* often means chariotry, or chariots, in a collective sense. Compare Judges 4:3. Thus here it probably refers to Pharaoh's chariots generally, rather than to Pharaoh's own personal chariot.

*Chosen* chariots refers to those specially tested, or proved, chariots, selected because of their proven effectiveness in battle. Such chariots won many victories for the Egyptian eighteenth dynasty kings in battles in Canaan and Syria.

The *captains* in the chariots were "chariot warriors." The Hebrew word for captains (*shalishim*) resembles the word for *three*, suggesting three men were in each chariot. Since pictures of ancient Egyptian chariots show only two men in each chariot, this led Martin Noth<sup>8</sup> to assert that the Biblical record is here in error. However, the significance of a related word in the Ugaritic texts<sup>9</sup> means only "chariot warriors,"

<sup>8</sup>*Op. Cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>9</sup>Ugaritic is a Semitic language related to Hebrew, and written by the Canaanites at the ancient city of Ugarit (now called Ras Shamra).

without reference to the number of them.<sup>10</sup> It is a joy to believers to see again and again how false accusations against God's book are always refuted when all the facts are known.

During the ten plagues the military forces of Egypt were never mentioned. They were the "sleeper," the silent threat in the shadows. Now the chariots are a terribly present danger. The memory of this pursuit by the Egyptians was vivid to the Israelites in later centuries (Josh. 24:6).

8. *Where did the Egyptians overtake Israel?* (14:9)

By the sea, by Pihahiroth, before (in front of, east of) Baal-zephon. See notes on 14:2. *Overtake* means only that they drew near enough to see Israel. The time required for preparation of this military force and its pursuit was surely several days in length.

9. *What was Israel's reaction upon seeing the Egyptian host?* (14:10)

They were in great fear and cried out to the LORD. However, their cry seems to have been a cry to dismay and terror, rather than a prayer for deliverance. The Israelites had been enslaved so long that they were not yet emotionally and spiritually conditioned to respond to danger with faith. Nonetheless, God heard their cry and hearkened to them.

10. *What bitter words did Israel say to Moses?* (14:11-12)

"Are there no graves in Egypt, so that you have brought us to die in the desert?"

Probably the Israelites were too frightened to sense the almost humorous sarcasm in these words. No people in the world have ever been more preoccupied with the making of tombs and regular attention to the dead than the Egyptians. There are millions of tombs in Egypt. Even the pyramids were just tombs. Many tombs had an adjoining room where rituals were conducted daily for the feeding and care of the dead in their after-life.

We have no record that the Israelites had spoken the exact words quoted in 14:11-12 in Egypt. However, the fearful

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<sup>10</sup>Cassuto, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

spirit expressed by these words is quite similar to that expressed in Ex. 5:21. Possibly they had indeed uttered these words, even though we have no record of it.

Psalm 106:7-8: "Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy loving-kindnesses, but were rebellious at the sea, even at the Red Sea. Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known."

The Israelites had been slaves too long to realize that death in freedom is preferable to existence in slavery. Young Christians facing tests soon after accepting Christ, may, like the Israelites, long for the lack of responsibility in the old life.

11. *With what words did Moses reassure Israel? (14:13-14)*

"Fear not; stand firm, and see the salvation of JEHOVAH!"

Moses' faith is truly remarkable. He urged them to be quiet, for the LORD would fight for them. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15). They were to stop their outcries.

The word *salvation* here means deliverance and victory. Compare I Samuel 14:45. However, we must not interpret it as if it referred exclusively to physical and material deliverance. Its use in Psalm 51:12 suggests that it bore a spiritual connotation as well. Their deliverance at the Red Sea was a faith-producing salvation experience. Observe how it produced courage to face future battles. (Deut. 1:30)

Moses said, "You will *see* the salvation of the LORD; but never *see* the Egyptians again."

The concept of the LORD fighting for his people is a common one in the Old Testament. See Josh. 10:14; Ps. 35:1; Neh. 4:20; Isa. 30:22; 63:3-5. Even the Egyptians soon sensed that God was fighting against them and for the Israelites (14:25).

12. *What did God tell Moses and Israel to do? (14:15-16)*

"Go forward!" "Lift up your rod!" "Divide the sea!" "Go across!"

When God's people have learned to trust God and stand still, then they are prepared to go forward.

From 14:15 we learn that Moses had cried (prayed) unto God. Moses prayed a great deal. See 5:22; 8:12; 8:29-30.)

Moses' use of the rod again probably brought back memories to the Israelites of what that rod had done in Egypt. See 4:17; 7:15, 19. Moses stretched out his hand and rod both to open and to close the waters. See 14:21, 26.

13. *What would cause the Egyptians to pursue Israel?* (14:17)

God would harden their hearts. See notes on 14:4. This was to be the final fatal hardening. The words of 14:17 give the first specific clue as to the exact means by which Egypt would be defeated.

The word *I* in 14:17 comes first for emphasis, as *You* was stressed at the start of 14:16. "YOU lift up your rod; I will harden their hearts."

14. *What would the Egyptians know by their defeat?* (14:18)

They would know that the Israelites' God was the LORD Jehovah! (At least their surviving relatives would know it!) This thought has been stated repeatedly in Exodus. See notes on 7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; 14:4.

Dear reader, I pray that you also know that God is the LORD!

15. *What shielded the Israelites from the Egyptians?* (14:19-20)

The angel of God and the pillar of cloud went between the Israelites and the Egyptians, and separated them all the night.

The *angel of God* is almost certainly the same person as the *angel of the LORD* who appeared to Moses at the burning bush (3:2). "The angel of his presence saved them" (Isa. 63:9.). (The Hebrew word for *angel* means *messenger*.) This "angel" was no one other than Jehovah himself (see 14:24), specifically Jehovah the WORD, the one who was later sent to earth by God the Father, and is known to us as Jesus of Nazareth. Many passages in the Old Testament tell of the angel of Jehovah who appeared unto men, and had all the qualities of God. See Gen. 22:15-16; 32:24, 30; Judges

6:22-23; 13:21-22. No man has ever seen God the father (John 1:18). But God the WORD (Jesus) was indeed seen many times in the world, even before He emptied Himself of His divine glory and was conceived in Mary. Note John 12:41; Isaiah 6:1.

This divine angel of the LORD travelled before Israel in the pillar of cloud (13:21; compare 23:20-23). Thus, when the cloud moved behind the camp of Israel, GOD himself was separating Israel from the Egyptians. Certainly we believe that God's presence is universal (Jer. 23:23-24). But God has often condescended to make His presence perceivable to men by manifesting Himself in limited places, like the cloud. Compare Ex. 25:22.

Ex. 14:20 clearly indicates that during that night it was dark on the Egyptians' side of the cloud. Probably so utterly dark that it stopped movement and reminded them of the plague of darkness. However, the cloud gave light on the Israelites' side of it. They did not walk in darkness.

The Greek Bible (LXX) has a different wording in 14:20: "There was . . . darkness, and the night passed." It does not mention the light. The Revised Standard Version follows this reading. But the Hebrew reading is very definite about the cloud lighting up the night. This was indeed a miracle to top all miracles! We accept the scriptural record of this event with joyful faith.

#### 16. *What divided the sea?* (14:21)

Three things: (1) Moses' rod;<sup>11</sup> (2) the LORD; (3) a strong east wind. The dividing of the sea was fundamentally a miracle by God. No other explanation can fully account for it.

Nonetheless, the east wind played a big part in the dividing of the sea. The strong east wind blew all night, and made the

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<sup>11</sup>Josephus (*Ant.* II, xvi, 2) tells the fanciful story that Moses smote the sea with his rod, and it parted asunder at the stroke. Josephus consistently tries to glorify Moses by unnecessary exaggerations.

sea before the Israelites to be dry land. Undoubtedly this wind was unique and miraculous in its strength, its precise points of applying pressure, and its timing. Nevertheless, it had certain "natural" characteristics.

S. C. Bartlett,<sup>12</sup> who was an eyewitness traveller over the route of the Israelites, refers to the words of M. de Lesseps, who told of the effects on the Red Sea waters by severe storms, such as occur only at intervals of fifteen or twenty years. De Lesseps had seen the northern end of the sea in places blown almost dry. Bartlett refers also to the map of the Maritime Canal Co., which reported that the ordinary difference between high and low tide in a calm sea was only eight-tenths of a meter (about thirty-one inches). However, the difference between the highest and lowest known seas during a storm was 3:24 meters (over ten feet). This is a remarkable confirmation of the Biblical information about the effect of the powerful winds on this part of the sea.

If it should seem irreverent that we state that the wind was such a basic force in making the path dry across the sea, we reply that the greater irreverence lies in a refusal to accept the plain statement of the narrative, which clearly indicates that the result was in a great measure brought about by use of the wind.

#### 17. *Did the waters form a WALL? (14:21-22)*

They surely did - a wall on the right and on the left. "The waters were piled up, the floods stood upright as a heap; the deeps were congealed in the midst of the sea." (Ex. 15:8)

According to the official Israel survey map, the waters at the north end of the Gulf of Suez have a depth of at least five meters (15-20 feet). This would be the height of the wall of water on either side of the Israelites' path.

The views of various interpreters that the "wall" was a figure of speech, or an "exaggeration" simply do not agree with the wording of the text.

From both sides of the sea the sea bottom gently slopes

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<sup>12</sup>*From Egypt to Palestine* (New York: Harper, 1879), pp. 180-181.



down into the water. There are no sudden drop-offs. The crossing place would be about four miles across.

We should not picture in our minds Israel's crossing path as narrow; it was probably more than a mile wide.

18. *What was the sea bottom like where Israel crossed? (14:22,29)*

They walked across on *dry ground*, through the sea!

Dr. Edward Robinson<sup>13</sup> argued very plausibly that the Israelites probably could not have entered the passage much before midnight, because the blowing of the wind would require some time for its full effect. Their march was completed (or nearly so) by the time of the morning watch, about two o'clock. They must have marched slowly because of encumbrances. If the column moved one thousand abreast, it would occupy a space more than half a mile wide, and being at least 2000 people in depth, would extend for not less than two miles from front to rear. It would require an hour for all to enter the sea, and two hours more for the column to traverse a space of four miles across. The whole body of Israelites could have passed over the distance of four miles before the morning watch time, when the Egyptians were troubled as they tried to pursue Israel.

Heb. 11:29: "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as on dry land, which the Egyptians attempting to do were drowned."

Isaiah 63:12-13: He "divided the waters before them to make himself an everlasting name, (and) led them through the depths, as a horse in the wilderness, so that they stumbled not." Compare Ps. 77:19-20; 66:6.

19. *What was the weather like when Israel crossed?*

Psalms 77:16-18 refers to a terrible storm that occurred as the Israelites crossed. There was rain and thunder. "The lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and shook. Josephus (*Ant.* II, xvi, 3) also tells of this storm. He says that it struck when the Egyptians tried to cross. (Of course this is uncertain.)

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<sup>13</sup>Cited in Bartlett, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

Inasmuch as the "wind blew all night" (14:21), we might wonder if the Israelites had to buck the east wind in their faces as they crossed eastward. We do not know, but we suspect that God directed the main force of the wind at the walls of water on either side, leaving the center of the path relatively calm.

20. *When did the Egyptians follow the Israelites? (14:23-24)*

They followed after the Israelites when they were mostly all across, if not indeed all completely across. They started across some time before the morning watch, about 2:00 a.m.

We doubt that the Egyptians even noticed the walls of water on either side. A fifteen-foot wall of water a half-mile away might not appear too threatening, especially at night when it was the dark, and more especially if your attention was diverted by lightning flashes and howling wind.

The Egyptian host surely had to be aware that the whole experience had very unusual features! First the dark cloud utterly blocked out their view for hours. Then the cloud moved from before them. And in the middle of the night they see the Israelites several miles away, almost all far across the sea. They surely recalled how the Israelites had been blocked by the sea a few hours before. They probably wondered how in the world the sea had been cleared before them! Then there was that light from the cloud, lighting up the path, even though it was two o'clock in the morning! Besides that, a storm overhead began to flash lightning, and to boom thunder, and pour rain, while the wind blew violently. All of this was so unusual, even eerie, that we feel that if the LORD had not hardened their hearts, they would never have gone in after the Israelites.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Skeptical critics have outdone themselves in seeking to dissect and discredit this passage (14:22-28). For example, Noth (*op. cit.*, p. 119) says the Priestly writer simply thought the Israelites passed through the sea and the Egyptians wanted to follow. The Jehovist writer, or source, is mysterious, and indicates that the Egyptians were driven into the sea by the fear of God. The Elohist writer suggests that they were engulfed by the return of the sea that had been driven back. What such critics seem unwilling to acknowledge is that all of these facts are true, and they all easily harmonize into the one story. There is simply no solid evidence for proposing that such contradictory "sources" ever existed.

21. *What hindered the pursuit by the Egyptians? (14:24-25)*

The LORD *looked* down upon them through the pillar of cloud and fire and “discomfited” the Egyptians. *Discomfit* means to perplex, confound, trouble, confuse, agitate, make to panic, thwart.

The *look*, or glance, of the Lord, which discomfited the Egyptians, often overwhelms evil doers: “Pour forth the overflowings of thine anger, And *look* on every one that is proud, and abase him” (Job 40:11).

This discomfiture came as a result of the thunderstorm (Ps. 77:16-18), and their chariots breaking down. The LORD “took off” their chariot wheels. Wagon wheels can most certainly come off their axles. And the axles can break, leaving the wheels in useless positions. The “chosen chariots” did not prove to be equal to the test. Any effort to move a one-wheeled chariot, or a wheelless chariot, would panic and frustrate both horses and charioteers.

The Egyptians correctly diagnosed the problem: “The LORD fighteth for them.” These were the Egyptians’ last recorded words. They decided to turn and flee, but it was too late. See notes on 14:14.

The Greek Bible says the Lord “clogged” their chariot wheels. This reading is followed in the R.S.V. Possibly the sand may have balled up in their chariot wheels, jamming and immobilizing them, and even producing the breakoff of the wheels. But the Hebrew verb (*sur*) means to “turn aside, turn away, depart, be removed, cease, disappear.” These meanings make good sense without adopting the Greek reading as a substitute.

## THE WORKS OF THE LORD

Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people,

The sons of Jacob and Joseph.

The waters saw thee, O God;

The waters saw thee, they were afraid:

The depths also trembled.

The clouds poured out water;

The skies sent out a sound:  
 Thine arrows also went abroad.  
 The voice of thy thunder was in the whirlwind;  
 The lightnings lightened the world:  
 The earth trembled and shook.

Thy way was in the sea,  
 And thy paths in the great waters,  
 And thy footsteps were not known.  
 Thou leddest thy people like a flock,  
 By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

(Psalm 77:15-20)

22. *How were the Egyptians destroyed?* (14:26-28)

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The waters that had been walled up were released, and returned to their "strength," to their usual position of overflowing the sea bed.

The word *strength* (Heb. *'ethan*) in 14:27 is rendered "wonted flow" in R.S.V. In Gen. 49:24 it refers to the *strength* of weapons (a bow). Parallels in other Semitic languages suggest it means a stream that never dries up.

The text here in Exodus seems to say that the sea at that place always covered the sea-bed with *strong* waters. They were too powerful for swimmers; the Egyptians were no match for this water.

The Egyptians fled "against it" (R.S.V., "into it"). This expression carries the idea of an encounter, or meeting.<sup>15</sup> Thus, it appears that when the wall of water was released it first filled up along the west shore, making sort of an "end run." As the Egyptians began to retreat they ran right into (or against) this water. Then it rapidly swept eastward, filling all the seabed in a rushing tide. What horror the Egyptians felt as they saw themselves trapped and unavoidably confronted by this water. Their bodies and chariots were swept

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<sup>15</sup>This Hebrew expression (*leqeratho*) is used to tell of meeting people (Gen. 29:13; Ex. 18:7), and to describe the position of things like armies opposite (or against) one another (Gen. 15:10; I Sam. 17:21).

eastward by the waters and dumped on the seashore (15:29). Not so many as one escaped. All there covered - chariots, horsemen, and all the army. See Neh. 9:11; Psalm 106:11; 78:53; Ex. 15:1, 7.

Jehovah *overthrew* the Egyptians. This literally says that he "shook off" the Egyptians. (The same word is in Neh. 5:13 and Ps. 136:15.) We cannot press this figure of speech too literally, but in a very real way God did "shake off" the Egyptians from the Israelites; and he shook them off from himself. They would no longer stick to him as an annoying, persecuting, hard-hearted people. He shook them off as we might shake off a crawling bug from our hand.

23. *Did Pharaoh himself perish in the sea?*

We believe that he did. Absolutely all of those going into the sea perished (14:28). Seemingly Pharaoh went with the host. "*He shall follow after them*" (14:4). "*I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host*" (14:4). The king "*took his people with him*" (14:6). "*When Pharaoh drew nigh. . .*" (14:10). God "*overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea*" (Psalm 136:15).

This poses a big question for us: Who then was this Pharaoh? We have been suggesting in this book that he was Amenhotep II, and we still hold this view. However, the mummy of Amenhotep II (with his great bow alongside it) is preserved to this day, something that would not be true if he perished in the Red Sea. It is most unlikely that his body would have been retrieved from the east shore of the Red Sea (or even be identifiable).

Possibly the verses quoted above that refer to the destruction of Pharaoh mean that he was overthrown representatively when his army was overthrown in the sea, as he beheld from the west shore. Admittedly the text does not convey this impression.

Dr. Donovan Courville<sup>16</sup> proposes that the drowned

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<sup>16</sup>*The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications*, Vol. 1 (Loma Linda, Calif.: Challenge, 1971), p. 122.

Pharaoh was *Koncharis*, a king listed in the Sothis list of Egyptian kings. Courville dates the exodus about the same time as we do, but maintains that the usually-accepted dates for the kings of Egypt are several hundred years too far back. Some of Courville's ideas could prove correct, but they surely are not held by most Egyptologists.

24. *Why is the record of Israel's crossing repeated in 14:29?*

Probably it is repeated for emphasis. What a marvelous event! What a cause for exultation! Even with repetition the story cannot do justice to the event.

Possibly the repetition is made to stress the contrasting fates of Egypt and Israel. Note 14:28, 29.

Concerning the *wall* of water, see notes on 14:21-22.

25. *Where did Israel last see the Egyptians? (14:30)*

Dead upon the seashore! Obviously this was the east shore. They could not have seen them four miles away on the west shore. This was final retribution, measure for measure. For casting the infant sons of Israelites into the water (1:12), Egypt had perished in the water.

The Egyptians considered that being exposed in death and fed to the vultures, was the greatest of all misfortunes. According to their beliefs the soul could not find rest till the body was properly interred. One is reminded of Rev. 19: 17-18.

Josephus (*Ant.* II, xvi, 6) says that Moses the next day gathered the weapons of the Egyptians, which were brought to the camp of the Hebrews by the current of the sea and the force of the winds. And Moses conjectured that this also happened by divine providence, that they might not be destitute of weapons. This is a possibility, but not a certainty.

The death of these enemies suggests to OUR minds the death of our "old man," the sinful nature. In being baptized unto Moses, the Israelites beheld the death of their old enemies. In being baptized into Christ, our old man (our old nature and life) was crucified with Christ. We are *dead* unto sin (Rom. 6:3-6, 11).

26. *What effects did the crossing of the Red Sea have upon the*

*Israelites? (14:31)*

(1) They feared the LORD.

(2) They believed the Lord and his servant Moses. Israel had once before believed (Ex. 4:31). Now their faith is renewed and enlarged.

Israel had been saved from the *hand* of the Egyptians (4:30). They had now seen the power (literally, *hand*) of the LORD. Compare 15:6.

27. *Did the crossing of the Red Sea involve a battle between spiritual powers?*

It surely seems to have done so. At its root, the crossing of the sea was a triumph over the old Devil, Satan, who has always opposed God and His people, even more than it was a triumph over Pharaoh. "He hath sent redemption unto His people" (Psalm 111:9).

Some interpreters have attempted to link the story of the Red Sea crossing with ancient legends, such as the Babylonian "creation" story. This story (called *Enuma Elish*) interprets creation as the consequence of a battle between Marduk, the god of the city of Babylon, and Tiamat, a goddess who was the personification of the deep, the sea waters.<sup>17</sup> After this battle Tiamat's body was cut in half, and the halves made into the heavens and earth.

Even Cassuto,<sup>18</sup> a usually careful interpreter, links the crossing of the Red Sea with ancient mythological legends about the rebellion of the Sea against the Lord. He thinks the Song in Ex. 15 is an adaptation of a lost ancient epic Poem on "The Lord's Triumph Over the Rebellious Sea."

Several scripture verses are thought to allude to this legendary battle between the Lord and the Sea. These include (1) Isaiah 51:9-10; (2) Ezek. 29:3; (3) Ps. 74:13-14; (4) Ps. 93:3-4; (5) Hab. 3:13-15.

A check of all of these passages (all of which are poetic) will show that they do not positively teach such a view.

<sup>17</sup>As an example, see *Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1 (1969), p. 385.

<sup>18</sup>*Op. cit.*, pp. 178-181.

(1) Isaiah 51:9-10 refers to Rahab, a *monster*, that was destroyed, apparently when the Red Sea dried up. *Rahab* seems here to be a poetic name for Egypt. See Ps. 87:4; 89:10. (2) Ezek. 29:3 figuratively refers to Egypt as "the great *monster*." (3) Psalm 74:13-14 pictures the division of the Red Sea waters as killing numerous sea-monsters (which it surely did). These monsters became "food for the people, for inhabitants<sup>19</sup> of the desert," probably referring to wild beasts that ate their carcasses. (4) Ps. 93:3-4 says that the floods have lifted up their voices (roaring waves), but God is high above even these. There is no clear indication here that the sea was in conflict with God. It says only that God's voice was greater than the sound of the roaring sea. (5) Habakkuk 3:13-15 alludes to God's acts in punishing the enemies of His people, without any reference to a mythological battle: At the sea "Thou didst tread the sea with thy horses" (probably angelic horses; Compare II Kings 6:17).

In none of the references suggested is there clear and certain statement about an ancient battle between the LORD and the sea. It seems to us that this idea has little or no support from the holy scriptures.

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THE TEXT OF EXODUS  
TRANSLATION

- 15** Then sang Mo-ses and the children of Is-ra-el this song unto Je-ho-vah, and spake, saying,  
I will sing unto Je-ho-vah, for he hath triumphed gloriously:  
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.
- (2) Je-ho-vah is my strength and song, And he is become my salvation: This is my God, and I will praise him; My father's God, and I will exalt him.

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<sup>19</sup>The Hebrew words in Ps. 74:14 translated "people inhabiting the wilderness" (*tsiyim*) refer to wild beasts in Isa. 13:21; 34:14. Probably they also do so in Ps. 74:14. The RSV translation "creatures of the wilderness" probably gives the correct meaning.