

People will oppose God and the people of God - to no avail - and those who set themselves against God will suffer the consequences of their actions. Turn to Exodus **Ch. 14 [52]** This is . . / 4 D's: The Lord directs, the Lord's desire, the Lord delivers, and the Lord destroys.

I. The Lord Directs (1-14) 1-4 The Lord directs – but not always in a way we'd expect. It seems like he is setting his people up for an ambush. They could've gone an easier path **13:17**. God knows best what his people need. He kept them from seeing the Philistines and being filled with fear. How much has the Lord kept you from, saint? How many times has he protected you without you even knowing it? Maybe you never missed a meal, never experienced parents screaming at one another, never found a stash of your Dad's magazine, never wondered if your parents would go to church, never tried drugs, never never never. Oh how the Lord is kind to lead us and keep us from trouble. As that great theologian Garth Brooks put it, some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers. Trust him. Even when you can't discern his hand, trust his heart. / So God makes them go the long way. He has other plans. He has them hemmed in by the water. Water on one side and an army on the other. Encamped like a sitting duck.

5-12 Pharaoh thinks twice and changes his mind and God hardens his heart so he takes his whole elite army to go capture or kill the Israelites. You would think the Egyptians would have had enough, but sin is irrational. It makes you dumb. A dog returns to its vomit / And the Israelites fear! Of course they do. You have 600 chariots on one side and the sea on the other side. Seemingly doomed.

So, they cry out to God once again. What short memories, huh? It was precisely their slavery in Egypt that caused them to call out to the Lord before. They did. He heard. He worked miracle after miracle. You'd think they might trust the Lord by now. Ps 106:6-7: "Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedness. Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works; they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea." They are captive to immediate circumstances.

But look – we are no different. We have seen the Lord work all through history and all through our lives – and yet all too often we fall into the same rut and of worry, unbelief, and complaint. They gripe to their leader Moses. Ultimately, they are mad at God. How could God do this? But when people are mad at God, they look for people to blame. Horizontal anger is often rooted in vertical anger. So they ask, "Why did you bring us out just to die? Let us go back to slavery." Notice what they think the options are: slavery or death. They are missing something. They are missing God. They are missing God's power and God's promises. There is a third option.

13-14 Four commands: fear not, stand firm, see his salvation, be silent. Later, in 2 Chron 20:15-17, Jahaziel would say, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's. Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness

of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you." / Fear not, stand firm, see his salvation, be silent. Don't be afraid, be still, don't fret, watch the Lord work. Notice that his people will not take part in the battle. They will be spectators. "So when I fight, I'll fight on my knees, With my hands lifted high, Oh, God, the battle belongs to You." "This is how I fight my battles. It may look like I'm surrounded but I'm surrounded by you."

II. The Lord's Desire (15-18) 15-16 – The Lord speaks to Moses, as the leader and representative of the people. Tell them to go through the water. Just raise your hand and staff and the sea will split and your people can cross on dry ground.

17-18 The Lord will harden the hearts of the army. Why? Zoom out further. What is the point of the Exodus? The salvation of his people? Yes. But there is a deeper desire in the heart of God. Remember, Israel could have gone scot free had they taken an easier route. God basically sent them into a trap rather than along the shorter, easier, coastal route. But he didn't. Why? He wants to display his power. He arranges history so that he will receive maximum glory. JE: The end for which God created the world. We saw that back in **14:4, 7:3-5**.

Ps 106:6-10: "Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedness. Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works; they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea. Yet he saved them *for his name's sake, that he might make known his mighty power*. He rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry, and he led them through the deep as through a desert. So he saved them from the hand of the foe and redeemed them from the power of the enemy."

Neh 9:9-10: "And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and heard their cry at the Red Sea, and performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted arrogantly against our fathers. *And you made a name for yourself*, as it is to this day." Isa 63:11-14: "Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit, who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them *to make for himself an everlasting name*, who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble. Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. So you led your people, *to make for yourself a glorious name*." / God's desire is that his glory be known

It may be difficult for us moderns to understand how God is glorified by judging his enemies . . .

III. The Lord Delivers 19-25. The Lord is with them and he sends a strong East wind and made the sea dry land. This word means exceedingly dry – think Abilene ground with cracks your kid may fall in. God divides the waters once again. This is creation language. Listen to Gen 1:9: "And

God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so.” At the Red Sea, God once again separates the waters to create dry land.

And this word for wind in verse 21 is *ruach*, the same word used in the creation narrative. Gen 1:1-2: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit (*ruach*) of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” Then, after the flood narrative, Genesis 8:1 says, “But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind (*ruach*) blow over the earth, and the waters subsided.” So, in creation God divides the waters and his Spirit blows, then Noah is put in an ark and saved through the water while the wicked are drowned, then Moses is put in an ark and saved from drowning in the water, found in the reeds, and now the people of God are saved as the spirit blows and the waters part, while the wicked are drowned. New creation. A new nation is being formed. God again rescues his people from judgment by sending his Spirit to repeat creation. / Notice the birth imagery here all through this story. The passage through waters, led by a man who was saved from water, after the Egyptian decree to use water to kill the babies, is the beginning of the birth of the nation.¹

And they pass through two walls of water. Kids, you know what you and I would be doing? Punching and kicking through that wall of water. Little girls would be writing their names in cursive in the water wall. / The Egyptian chariots were their greatest military asset and the Lord clogs them up. Their peak military technology becomes a death trap. Ps 20:7-8: “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright.” / Egypt finally realizes – the God of Israel is fighting for them. Took long enough. They know they are about to be over their heads. The battle belongs to God. What did Moses say in **14**?

IV. The Lord Destroys 26-31. Not one of them remained. Our God is a God who makes distinctions. Not one of the soldiers lived. On the other hand, not one Israelite died. He made a distinction then and he will do the same at the end of history. Don’t think the “god of the OT” is harsh but the “god of the NT is nice.” Jesus himself says, “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . .’” “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’” (25:31-34, 41, 46). / Back at the Red Sea, those who tried to drown every Hebrew boy met

¹ Alter, 394.

a fate of death by drowning. Vengeance is the Lord's. Justice will be executed. The world will be made right.

And this is all thoroughly supernatural. If you are anti-supernatural, you'll have trouble with lots of Bible, namely the centerpiece of the Christian faith: that God became a man, died on a cross, and was raised from the dead. That is no more unbelievable than seeing all this: love, beauty, meaning, and morality as nothing more than a product of a big bang: something coming from nothing.

The story is told of a young girl being taught about the Exodus by a theologically liberal Sunday School teacher. After the reading, the girl exclaimed, Praise the Lord! He saved his people and destroyed his enemies in the Red Sea." The smug teacher said, "Actually, the Israelites were more likely just in a marshland with an ebbing tide, so they were simply wading through around 6" of water." The girls shouted, "Praise the Lord, he drowned the whole Egyptian army in 6" of water." Another L for Egypt. Economy shattered. Firstborn sons gone. Now many of those families would hear the news that their husbands went to war with Yahweh and lost. / 30: God saves from the *hand* (yad = power) of Egypt; 31: Israel saw the power (*yad*) of Yahweh.²

If you are not a Christian or not sure, friend, don't set yourself against God. You may say, I am not against God I just don't care. What you need to know is that in doing so, you are opposing God. There is no middle ground. You are either for him or against him. As Rom 1 puts it, we either submit to the truth or suppress the truth. You do not want to suffer the eternal consequences of opposing God's will. And you don't have to. Surrender to him through faith in Jesus. Escape judgment and receive life everlasting.

Verse 30: Thus the Lord *saved* Israel. Just like he said: **13.** / They saw the power of God and feared the Lord. Look at **10.** The wrong kind of fear was transformed into the right kind of fear. The fear of man turned into the fear of the Lord. Young people, the fear of man is a snare for your age in particular. Don't worry about the opinions of people, worry about the glory of the Lord. Fear him, meaning fear displeasing him.

The Exodus is the foundational event of the OT. And it sets a pattern for the way God works. The whole Bible is full of the echoes of the Exodus.³ The prophets are full of promises of a new and better Exodus. Isa 43:15-21: "I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King." Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings forth chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches,

² Enns 278.

³ [NE: pattern Josh 3-4 crossing Jordan, 2 King 2:7-14 Jordan. Isa 43:15-21 (4:5-6, 11:15-16, 35:6-10, 40:3-5, 43:14-19, 48:20-21, 50:2, 51:9-11, 63:11-14, Jer 16:14-15, 23:7-8, Hos 2:14-23 Jer 30-31).

for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.” And the Lord does come and do a new thing and he makes a way where there was no way and he redeems us, delivers us, frees us – not from Egypt or Babylon but Satan, sin, death, and hell.

Israel is saved by passing through the waters. What happened to them at the Red Sea happened to us at baptism. Baptism is our own Exodus. God has a habit of using water to divide his people from the world and protecting them from judgment.⁴ 1 Cor 10:1-2: “For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers [*this is our story*] were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” They went from bondage to a new lifestyle through God’s saving act. Rom 6:1-4: “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 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.” He goes on to say that the old self is dead and is now set free from sin. 6:17-18: “But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.” On the W side of the Red Sea, the Hebrews were runaway slaves, but once they pass through the water to the Eastern side, they are a redeemed people.⁵

Like Israel of old, you are free! You’re a new people! The old self is dead. We have been judged in Christ and saved in Christ. The baptistry is a watery tomb. Buried with Christ, raised through the water to walk in newness of life. / Luther was a very introspective man. Constantly worried about his standing as a sinner before a holy God. And that angst followed him through conversion so he was constantly preaching the gospel to himself, he said he pounded it into the head. And he would remember his baptism. In his LC, “Thus we must regard Baptism and make it profitable to ourselves, that when our sins and conscience oppress us, we strengthen ourselves and take comfort and say: Nevertheless, I am baptized; but if I am baptized, it is promised me that I shall be saved and have eternal life, both in body and soul.”

Friend, when you are on that struggle bus yet again – my seat is well worn, the imprint of my cheeks visible, when you feel the weight of your own sin, guilt, shame, you can say “I’m baptized.” Meaning: by faith I have grabbed the promises of God and I have received the promise that I am forgiven, God is for me. He has the power to control the wind and the water, he has the power to preserve his people. **Rom 8:31-39**. I will not be afraid. I will stand firm. I will

⁴ *Echoes*, 63.

⁵ Chester, 106.

be still.⁶ That's the call beloved: **13-14**. Four commands: fear not, stand firm, see his salvation, be silent.

⁶ Chester 110.