

Exodus 14 - Thursday, October 23rd, 2008

- In chapter 13, the Israelites left Egypt for Succoth and take a longer and different route, which will now lead them to the Red Sea.
- In chapter 14, we will look at the famous Red Sea crossing of the Israelites, and how God deals with Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

14:1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea. 3 For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.' 4 Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD." And they did so.

- This is astonishing! God tells Moses which way to go because Pharaoh will harden his heart, change his mind, and come after them.
- After all that's happened, you would think that he would just let them go. Later, all nations will want Jews out of their land, not Pharaoh.
- Notice that God is sort of setting up an ambush by leading them in this "bewildering" way. It's like He's going to put a hook in their jaw.

- It's also important to note how that God is going to do it this way, and at this time, for the last time and show the Egyptians Who He is!
- This seems to indicate that Pharaoh and the Egyptians still didn't get it. They still don't know Who it is that they are coming against.

5 Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" 6 So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him.

- Interesting that Pharaoh would ask his servants; "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" Wait a minute!
- If my memory serves me correctly, God gave Pharaoh "10" very strongly convincing reasons why to let Israel go from serving them.
- Why would he now change his mind? Does he think that the Lord has done everything He can and now won't do anything else?

"God's plagues had not changed the King's rebellious nature. When he saw that he had lost his valuable slaves, his greed made him rush after them."

Charles Spurgeon

7 Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. 8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness. 9 So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon.

- Egypt having "six hundred choice chariots," leaves no doubt what-so-ever that they were the most sophisticated military in the world.
- Notice the contrast in verse eight. The Egyptians went out with 600 choice chariots, and the Israelites went out with; well, "boldness."
- At first, one may, in the natural, be inclined to want the 600 choice chariots instead of, well, "boldness." Actually, that's all they will need.

10 And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. 11 Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? 12 Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

- Suffice it to say, Israel is absolutely terrified. In all fairness, it's actually for good reason. As far as they're concerned, they're dead.
- I would have to say though; their reaction to Moses is a little bit over the top when they accuse him of leading them out of Egypt to die.
- Their anger is quite telling when they ask Moses if it was because there were not enough graves in Egypt that he brought them here.

"This unbelief was both unjust and cruel. Had they not seen the Lord's works in the great plagues? Could they not believe that he who had wrought such marvels could and would deliver them? They were smitten with panic, and were willing to return to bondage..."

Charles Spurgeon

- There's an interesting lesson here woven into the typology of the text. Pharaoh is a type of Satan, and his bondage like enslaving to sin.
- In other words, once God delivers us from Satan/Pharaoh, and the ways of the world/Egypt, Satan still goes after us to enslave us.

- There's something else that at first glance could be missed. To their credit, they actually cry out to the Lord first before going to Moses.

- Also, we need to look at something else in these three verses. Maybe Israel really thought that Moses was conspiring to kill them.
- If that's the case, then the only explanation for them thinking this way was that they had, in effect, judged the intentions of Moses' heart.

- Here's another thought before we move on. It's not even been a week, and Israel is already thinking they were better off in Egypt.
- They were in slavery in Egypt, and that's all they had known since they were born into it, but still they thought their past life was better.

- Before we move on to verse 13, there's one more interesting note here. In spite of everything, Israel is right in the middle of God's will.
- We tend to interpret the will of God as being easy, comfortable, and smooth, but sometimes in the face of peril, we can be in God's will.

13 And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. 14 The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

- This is perhaps one of the most, if not "the" most, remarkable demonstrations of a man who simply trusts in the Lord for salvation!
- There is nowhere, here-to-fore, where God had told Moses that He was going to part the Red Sea and save the Israelites from Egypt.
- I suppose you could say that perhaps while Moses didn't know "how" God was going to do it, he did know "that" God was going to do it.

- Moses knows that God is going to use him to deliver the Israelites out of the hands of the Egyptians, and he is taking Him at His Word.
- Now, be that as it may, it might stand to reason that their situation is so perilous in all of the enormity and intensity that God has to do it.
- Still, I do believe that Moses knew that he could trust in God's promises whether the situation seemed big or whether it seemed small.

- Also, notice what Moses says to the Israelites. "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today."
- This is the needed posture in order for God to have the elbow room, so-to-speak, to show them what He's going to accomplish for them.
- In other words, "stand," don't be cast down, "be still," don't run, see the salvation of the Lord, don't see only the perilous circumstances.

15 And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. 16 But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. 17 And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. 18 Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

- It seems to me that in verse 15, the Lord is sort of telling Moses to stop praying and start moving by having him tell the Israelites to go.
- God then says; "but lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it." If you really think about it this is really simple.
- God again says that the Egyptians will know He is the Lord. It seems that this was not only for the Israelites, but the Egyptians as well.

- Also, I think we would be grossly remiss were we to miss the prophetic picture Moses paints in pointing to the person of Jesus Christ.
- Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind as we'll see in verse 21.
- When the disciples were afraid in Matthew 8:27 they said of Jesus; "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

19 And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. 20 So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all that night.

- This pillar of fire provided a protective barrier for the Israelites when it was between them and the Egyptians saving them from attack.
- Also, notice verse 20 where it says that this same fire was a cloud of darkness to the Egyptians, but it gave light by night to Israel.
- Oddly enough everyone could see this, however, there are many times when Israel is protected from attack but doesn't see it.

21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. 22 So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

- While we're not 100% certain of the exact geographical location of the Red Sea crossing, we can be certain of what actually took place.
- Skeptics have tried to disprove this miracle by suggesting that the water was only 18 inches deep where the Israelites actually crossed.
- The problem is that it would create an even greater miracle because now God would have to drown the Egyptians in 18 inches of water.

- We're told that the strong east wind kept the sea back all that night in order to get that many Israelites safely across, even on dry land.
- Not only do we know this happened exactly as Exodus says it happened, but even modern research says that it actually happened.

"Research Supports Bible's Account of Red Sea Parting" - "Sophisticated computer calculations indicate that the biblical parting of the Red Sea, said to have allowed Moses and the Israelites to escape from bondage in Egypt, could have occurred precisely as the Bible describes it. Because of the peculiar geography of the northern end of the Red Sea, researchers report Sunday in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, a wind blowing constantly for about 10 hours could have caused the sea to recede about a mile and the water level to drop, ...leaving dry land in the area where many biblical scholars believe the crossing occurred."

Los Angeles Times, article by Thomas H. Maugh, March 14th, 1992

- We even have other references in the scriptures that refer to this Red Sea crossing in more detail. One of them is found in the Psalms.

Psalms 77:16-20 16 The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and writhed; the very depths were convulsed. 17 The clouds poured down water, the skies resounded with thunder; your arrows flashed back and forth. 18 Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, your lightning lit up the world; the earth trembled and quaked. 19 Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen. 20 You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. NIV

- The Apostle Paul likened the Israelites going into the Red Sea and coming out the other side to a "water baptism" of sorts.

1 Corinthians 10:1-2 1 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. NIV

- It's also interesting to note that this was entered in to the "Hall of Fame of Faith," as it has been called, found in Hebrews chapter 11.

Hebrews 11:29 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned. NIV

23 And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24 Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians. 25 And He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians." 26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen." 27 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.

- God finally destroys the Egyptians troubling them and bring chariot troubles upon them as they pursue the Israelites into the parted sea.
- This would prove to be a fatal mistake as God has Moses stretch out his hand over the sea so the waters come crashing in on them.
- It's interesting to note that God had Moses stretch out his hand to do this. He didn't need Moses to do this, He wanted Moses to do this.

- One thought is that this is God's way of sort of vindicating Moses before the Israelites who had just judged the intent of his heart.
- This was God's way of showing the Israelites that Moses is His man, and that He has appointed him and anointed him to lead them.

29 But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. 30 So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 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.

- Notice that the Israelites actually saw the dead bodies of the Egyptians on the seashore. Why do we have that detail recorded for us?
- One thought is that God is vindicating the Israelites for when they saw the dead bodies of their firstborn on the shores of the Nile.
- This is sort of gnarly. Can you imagine what a sight this must have been? No wonder the Israelites felt the way they did in response.

- There's no question in their minds that God had saved them and delivered them, and the Egyptians would never again enslave them.
- God isn't just doing this for the Israelites, He is also doing this for His own namesake, because this is Who He is and this is how He is.

The story is told of an elderly saint who lay on her death bed and declared that Jesus would never forsake her, because He had promised so. Someone asked, "But suppose that He did not keep His promise, and you were to be lost?" She answered, "Then He would be the greater loser than I. It is true I would lose my soul, but God would lose all His honor and glory if He were not true."

"Brethren, if we have trusted in God, and have come out of the Egypt of the world through his grace, and have left all its sins behind us, if we were left to die in the wilderness, the Lord Jesus Christ would lose his glory as a Savior, the divine Father would lose his name for immutable faithfulness, and the Holy Ghost would lose his honor for perseverance in completing every work which he undertakes."

Charles Spurgeon.

Lessons I can learn from Exodus chapter 14:

1. Like with God leading Israel in a “bewildering” way, so too may God lead us in a “bewildering” way so as to protect us from the enemy.

"This seemed a strange direction, but Moses obeyed it without question. Let us go where the Lord bids us though the way be perilous."

Charles Spurgeon.

2. Like with God telling Moses that He will gain honor over Pharaoh this way, so too may God's way of leading be for His glory alone.
3. Like with the Egyptians thinking they were coming against the Israelites, so too do our enemies not realize they're against the Lord.
4. Like with Pharaoh asking why he had let Israel go, so too are we prone to forget the mighty ways God has shown Himself in our lives.
5. Like with Egypt going out with 600 chariots and the Israelites with boldness, so too is that all we need when the world is against us.
6. Like with the Israelites being afraid when they saw the Egyptians, so too will we become fearful when all we see is our circumstances.
7. Like with the Israelites lashing out at Moses for leading them there, so too are we prone to blame our leaders when we're afraid.
8. Like with the Israelites crying out to the Lord before going to Moses, so too would we do well to always go to the Lord before others.
9. Like with the Israelites forgetting how God miraculously delivered them in Egypt, so too are we prone to forget God's proven record.
10. Like with the Israelites judging the intent of Moses' heart, so too do we err when we think we can read a man's heart. Only God can.
11. Like with the Israelites thinking that their past life was better, so too does Satan want us to think it was better before we were saved.
12. Like with Moses not knowing “how” but knowing “that” God would save them, so too can we trust God even when it looks perilous.
13. Like with Moses knowing that the situation was so huge that God would have to do it, so too is nothing too big or small for the Lord.
14. Like with Moses telling the Israelites to stand still and behold the Lord, so too is this a needed posture for us in the face of peril.
15. Like with God telling Moses to stop crying out to Him and get moving, so too are we prone to use prayer as an excuse for inaction.
16. Like with God telling Moses to simply lift up his rod, so too may God tell us something simple to accomplish something complicated.
17. Like with God saying that the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord, so too may He deliver us in a way that others will know Him too.
18. Like with the same pillar of fire being dark to one and light to the other, so too can the gospel be light to one but dark to the other.
19. Like with the Israelites being protected from attack, how often have we been protected by the Lord without ever seeing or realizing it.
20. Like with God vindicating and even validating Moses, so too may God do the same for us for the sake of those under our leadership.