

Exodus 14 • The Final Sign of the Exodus

Introduction

At the end of all things awaits God's Final Judgment. For those that accept Him it will be the ultimate act of life and salvation; for those that reject Him the Second Death of eternal separation and darkness. The exodus of Israel from Egypt is a teaching of how the things of God work salvation for His people and destruction for His enemies. It's a process wherein **EVERYONE** on every side of the equation is faced with making a personal choice as to how to recognize God's authority and whether or not to join or reject Him. Just as baptism is a sign intended to announce to the world that one has permanently left the old life to pursue only the new in Christ, so Israel underwent a type of baptism at the Red Sea in the final sign of their exodus from the old life to the new.

¹Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
²“Tell the sons of Israel to turn back and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you shall camp in front of Baal-zephon, opposite it, by the sea. ³For Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, ‘They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’
⁴Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.” And they did so.

[Read v.1-4]

Q: Why does Pharaoh believe “they are wandering aimlessly in the land”?

A: Because they traveled out from the Land of Goshen but then turned back towards Egypt in coming back to Baal-zephon and set up camp. Not sticking to a straight path away from Egypt made them appear confused or lost.

Q: What is different in this instance from the encounters with Pharaoh during the 10 plagues as far as how God will be glorified through what is to come?

A: Whereas the judgments of the plagues on all Egyptians showed the Egyptian people that “*I am the LORD*”, in this case it will be what happens only to Pharaoh and his army that will testify of same.

Point: *The first few judgments were experienced by everyone. But then they were only experienced by the Egyptians as they were the only ones continuing in unbelief and disobedience. Now, finally, judgment comes on the specific person who led and continued in unbelief.*

Q: How do we know from the meanings of the names of these places that this is not just a physical place where the crossing of the sea took place, but represents a spiritual situation?

- “Pi-hahiroth” = “house of the Egyptian goddess Hiroth”
- “Migdol” = “watch tower”
- “Baal-zephon” = “Baal of the north”

On the one side were the false gods of Egypt, on the other the false gods of Canaan. Israel was going to have to pass through both to come exclusively to the One True God.

⁵When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people, and they said, “What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” ⁶So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him; ⁷and he took six hundred select chariots, and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. ⁸The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were going out boldly.

⁹Then the Egyptians chased after them with all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and they overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

¹⁰As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD. ¹¹Then they said to Moses, “Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? ¹²Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”

¹³But Moses said to the people, “Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. ¹⁴The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent.”

[Read v.5-9]

Q: During the judgments on Egypt, Pharaoh responded by either having his magicians duplicate to some extent some of the signs, or by bargaining with Moses and Aaron. What is therefore different about how Pharaoh takes action this time?

A: Whereas he previously relied on the strength and power of false gods and politics, he now invokes his own strength and power as commander-in-chief of his armed forces. He's gone from being a kind of “third party” to finally acting on his own.

Q: What is the difference between “select chariots” and “all the other chariots”?

A: The “other chariots” were the normally configured chariots that we might picture from movies that contain one or two men each, whereas the “select chariots” were Pharaoh's personal, elite bodyguard that were larger and contained 3 men each. It's evidence of Pharaoh not just ordering an army to go attack someone but of leading the attack himself.

Point: *Until this time, Pharaoh has been personally passive in his actions, presiding over the meetings with Moses and Aaron and Pharaoh's court and magicians. For the first time he is actively taking action against God, actually trying to change things himself. It is similar to the End Times when Satan himself goes from being an agitating 3^d party to himself coming to earth and leading the battle.*

[Read v.10-14]

Q: It doesn't state this specifically in the text, but what would you guess to be the very logical, earthly reason that Israel should not have reacted out of fear?

A: The nation Israel would have far outnumbered the Egyptian army, especially the elite force of 600 chariots leading the way. Numerically, Israel was vastly superior.

Q: In chapter 13, why did God lead them into the wilderness rather than directly to Canaan? How does this help explain Israel's reaction to the situation?

Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, “The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.”

Exodus 13:17

These were not a spiritually mature people, prepared to be immediately employed in God's service. They neither recognized their own numerical superiority, or the spiritual superiority that was theirs through God.

Q: How does Israel's statement reveal it's spiritual condition? How does that relate to their physical location being an indication of their spiritual location as discussed previously?

A: The issue comes down to whom they will serve. Since they are caught between the gods of Egypt (“Pi-hahiroth”) and the gods of Canaan (“Baal-zephon”), they must choose whether or not they will serve God. This is as much a battle of spiritual warfare as it is a physical one. It's a question of who will be their ultimate master.

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¹⁵Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶As for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land. ¹⁷As for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. ¹⁸Then the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen.”

¹⁹The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. ²⁰So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night.

²¹Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided. ²²The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ²³Then the Egyptians took up the pursuit, and all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots and his horsemen went in after them into the midst of the sea.

²⁴At the morning watch, the LORD looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion. ²⁵He caused their chariot wheels to swerve, and He made them drive with difficulty; so the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from Israel, for the LORD is fighting for them against the Egyptians.”

Q: What is the good news in this example that applies to our own spiritual warfare struggles?

A: When we cry to and cling to the Lord, He fights the battle and overcomes the enemy for us.

[Read v.15-18]

Q: If Israel represents us as Believers, how would you characterize our role and responsibilities in times of spiritual warfare?

1. Our faith has to go beyond just “crying out” or praying to God to taking action according to His direction regardless of the external appearances of the circumstances.
2. We have to seek and cling to God's solutions and not fall prey to our own fears and feelings.
3. We need to see that the goal is always God's glory, even at the expense of our comfort or desires for self.
4. Others?

[Read v.19-25]

Q: What is the contrast of the pillar of the cloud? How does it work differently for Israel rather than Egypt?

A: This same cloud produced light and guidance for the people of God and darkness for their enemies. The very thing of God that benefits God's people is a hindrance to those that reject Him.

But Jesus looked at them and said, “What then is this that is written: ‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone’? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.”

Luke 20:17-18

For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

2 Corinthians 2:15-16

Point: *The very same things that lead to life and light in Christ for those that accept Him are the things that bring death and darkness for those that reject Him.*

Q: What were all the opportunities that God provided Pharaoh and his followers to repent and turn back?

1. The message that accompanied each of the signs and wonders back in Egypt.
2. The interdiction of the cloud.
3. God interfering with the operation of their chariots.

Point: *God provided repeated opportunities for repentance before rendering final judgment.*

²⁶Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen.” ²⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak, while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it; then the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. ²⁸The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even Pharaoh’s entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained. ²⁹But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

³⁰Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹When Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses.

[Read v.26-31]

Q: How do we know that the crossing of the Red Sea is a type or example of salvation?

*Thus He rebuked the Red Sea and it dried up,
And He led them through the deeps, as through the wilderness
So He saved them from the hand of the one who hated them,
And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.*

Psalm 106:9-10

Q: How is the crossing of the Red Sea a teaching or example of baptism?

A: Going under the water symbolizes death; coming up out of the water symbolizes coming back to life, or new life, in God.

Q: How do both of these examples speak of the true intent and purpose of the things of God? How is this shown in the differing results for the Hebrews than the Egyptians?

A: To those that accept God and the message accompanying such things, they lead to life; for those that reject them, they lead to death. Whereas the Egyptians rejected God and died, the Hebrews “feared the LORD, and they believed” and “thus the LORD saved Israel”.

Point: Why was the Egyptians’ acknowledgment in the end that it was God defeating them not enough to save them? It came as a result of **fighting** Him, not **submitting** to Him.

Overall Application

- *If someone asks us why God is, has, or will perform a sign, what should our response be? What is the greater thing to which all signs and wonders point? [Hint: The message of salvation.]*
- *If the same things of God work for good in His followers but for harm for His enemies, how should we teach others to properly interpret and apply those signs? [Hint: The message of salvation for non-believers, the act of faith in trusting Him for believers.]*
- *What was the decision that Israel actually came to at this time?*
 1. To not just exchange one set of false gods for another, but to embrace the One True God.
 2. To completely leave behind the old life for a new one in God.
 3. To trust Him, regardless of the circumstances, for the final results.
 4. To be baptized into a new life devoted exclusively to God.