

TEXTUAL ISSUES EXODUS 14 (NAMES 14)

CONTEXT...

Exodus 14:1-9. *Let's show the king of Egypt who is really King.* After leaving Egypt triumphantly, a new threat emerged: the faith in the Lord God Yahweh wanes with the encroaching armies of Pharaoh. So, Yahweh tells Moses—

To turn back and camp, yes, camp directly by the sea. Then Pharaoh will think the Israelites are wandering in confusion, hemmed in by the desert. Now I will make Pharaoh even more obstinate, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for Myself by means of Pharaoh and his armies—the Egyptians will know that I am the I AM.

They did as they were told.

When Pharaoh was told the believers had fled, he and his officials kvetched—“What have we done! We’ve let them go and have lost their services!” So, he made his chariot ready, along with his army he took 600 of his best chariots, along with other chariots—with an officer over all of them. Again, the Lord God Yahweh made Pharaoh even more obstinate—he did indeed pursue the believers who had boldly marched out. Sure enough, he pursued us as we encamped by the sea.

- Q Why did the Lord God put the believers in such a bad spot militarily; i.e., hemmed against the sea, camped on the beach?
- Q About what did Egypt have second thoughts after the Israelites left?
- Q Why did the Lord God permit such a vast army be put up against a group of 600,000+ civilians?

EXODUS 14:1-9

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

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



Exodus 14:10-18. *Marching orders—camp where it is militarily indefensible*. Pharaoh got closer—we looked, and there they were—Egyptians by the thousands, armed to the teeth. We freaked and cried out to Yahweh. Turning to Moses, they kvetched:

Were there no graves in Egypt so you brought us here to be buried, to die in the desert? What have you done dude? Didn't we tell you back there—leave us alone, let us serve the Egyptians? It would've been better to serve than to die!

Moses rebutted—

Stand firm. Get over yourself. Stand firm and you'll see the Lord God Yahweh deliver. Those Egyptians you see over there? Take a long look—it's the last you'll see of any of them. Yahweh will fight for you—you need only to be still!

Yahweh was not happy with Moses. He turned to Moses and said—

Why are you crabby with Me with your crying out? Tell them to move on. As for you, raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea. It will divide the water and the Israelites can cross through the sea, on dry land. I'll keep the knucklehead Egyptians obstinate—they'll follow you into the sea. And, yes, I will gain glory, for all of Pharaoh's armies and chariots will be defeated. The Egyptians will know that I am the I AM!

- Q Why did the Israelites “cry out to the LORD,” but complain to Moses?
- Q What was the deliverance the believers were to see on faith, faith alone, from Moses' entreaty?
- Q In order to keep the Egyptians of our time away, what are we to do? What has caused you to miss the slavery of your life before deliverance?
- Q Why couldn't the Lord God simply inculcate the Egyptians' brains/minds/souls with His majesty, superiority, and holiness?

EXODUS 14:10-18

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

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

¹⁵Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.

¹⁶Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen.

¹⁸The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen."

Exodus 14:19-31. *Christ positions Himself as the rear guard*. Christ, who had been leading Israel's army, withdrew to the rear. The pillar of cloud also withdrew to form a rear guard. The Christ and the pillar of cloud stood between the armies of Egypt and Israel.

Through the night, the cloud brought darkness to the Egyptians, and light to the armies of Israel. Neither broached either's territory, all night long.

Moses then did as he was instructed—stretching out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord God Almighty Yahweh caused a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. Yes, the waters were divided, and we went through the sea on dry ground. There was a wall of water on both sides!

Just as God predicted, the Egyptians pursued, and all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. During the last watch, Yahweh looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian and threw them into confusion. He made their wheels come off, He jammed their wheels— they could hardly drive their chariots!

Crying out, the Egyptians said let's get away from the Israelites—Yahweh is fighting for them against Egypt!

Yahweh then gave the order—

Moses, stretch out your hand over the sea, and then at daybreak, the sea will flow back over the Egyptians.

Moses did as he was told, and sure enough the sea came back, and the Egyptians even though they tried to flee, could not overcome being swept up into the sea. Not one survived.

But, the Israelites? On dry ground. Water to the left; water to the right. On that day, Yahweh saved Israel, and when they saw the dead Egyptians on the beach, we respected the power of Yahweh, putting their trust in Him and His servant, Moses.

- Q Who prevented a premature battle with the Egyptians? Why?
- Q What was stretched out over the sea when Yahweh divided the sea for safe departure?
- Q Why did the Lord God have the Egyptians all killed?
- Q Do you believe this story? Why? Why not? To what extent is it a fairy tale? History or story?

EXODUS 14:19-31

Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, ²⁰coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel.

Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.

²¹Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, ²²and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

²³The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.

²⁴During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. ²⁵He made the wheels of their chariots come off [or jammed them] so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."

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

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

14:2 *turn back*. Northward, in the general direction from which they had come. *Pi Hahiroth*. Located "east of Baal Zephon" (Numbers 33:7).

Migdol. Location unknown. The name means "watchtower."

sea. The sea that the NIV, in accordance with established tradition, calls the Red Sea--in Hebrew *Yam Suph*, i.e., Sea of Reeds (see 13:18). Reference can hardly be to the northern end of the Gulf of Suez since reeds do not grow in salt water. Moreover, an Egyptian papyrus locates Baal Zephon in the vicinity of Tahpanhes (see Jeremiah 2:16), a site near Lake Menzaleh about 20 miles east of Rameses. The crossing of the "Red Sea" thus probably occurred at the southern end of Lake Menzaleh (see 13:18).

Baal Zephon. Means "Baal of the north" or "Baal of North (Mountain)"—also the name of a Canaanite god.

The exodus and conquest narratives form the classic historical and spiritual drama of Hebrew Scripture times. Subsequent ages looked back to this period as one of obedient and victorious living under divine guidance. Close examination of the environment and circumstances also reveals the strenuous exertions, human sin, and bloody conflicts of the era. In historical terms, the exodus from Egypt was ignored by Egyptian scribes and recorders. No definitive monuments mention the event itself, but a stele of Pharaoh Merneptah (circa 1225BC) claims that a people called Israel were encountered by Egyptian troops somewhere in northern Canaan.

Finding precise geographical and chronological details of the period is problematic, but new information has emerged from vast amounts of fragmentary archaeological and inscriptional evidence. Hittite cuneiform documents parallel the ancient covenant formula governing Israel's "national contract" with God at Mount Sinai. The Late Bronze Age (c. 1550-1200 B.C.) was a time of major social migrations. Egyptian control over the Semites in the eastern Nile delta was harsh, with a system of brickmaking quotas imposed on the labor force, often the landless, low-class "Apiru." Numerous Canaanite towns were violently destroyed. New populations, including the "Sea Peoples," made their presence felt in Anatolia, Egypt, Palestine, Transjordan, and elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean.

Correspondence from Canaanite town rulers to the Egyptian court in the time of Akhenaten (c. 1375 B.C.) reveals a weak structure of alliances, with an intermittent Egyptian military presence and an ominous fear of people called "Habiru" (= "Apiru").

The Israelite tribes fled past the Egyptian system of border posts, through the Red Sea and into the desert, where they avoided the main military and trade routes leading across northern Sinai. The less frequently traveled "Way of the Sea" led to the remote turquoise and copper mining region northwest of Mt. Sinai. It was necessary for Moses to take refuge in Midian where the Egyptian authorities could not reach him. The decades spent on "the far side of the desert" were an important formative part of his life.

14:7 *officers*. The Hebrew for the singular of this word means "third man," perhaps referring to his place in a chariot crew.

⁸Adapted, corrected, and revised by D. Thomas Porter from Compton's Interactive NIV © 1996.

14:14 *The LORD will fight for you.* A necessary reminder that although Israel was "armed for battle" (13:18) and "marching out boldly" (v. 8), the victory would be won by God alone.

14:19 *angel of God.* See notes regarding Genesis 16:7—

“ Since the angel of the Lord speaks for God in the first person (Genesis 16:10) and Hagar is said to name "the LORD who spoke to her: `You are the God who sees me' " (Genesis 16:13), the angel appears to be both distinguished from the Lord (in that he is called "messenger"--the Hebrew for "angel" means "messenger") and identified with him. Similar distinction and identification can be found in Genesis 19:1,21; Genesis 31:11,13; Exodus 3:2,4; Judges 2:1-5; 6:11-12,14; 13:3,6,8-11,13,15-17,20-23; Zec 3:1-6; 12:8.

Traditional Christian interpretation has held that this "angel" was a preincarnate manifestation of Christ as God's Messenger-Servant. It may be, however, that, as the Lord's personal messenger who represented him and bore his credentials, the angel could speak on behalf of (and so be identified with) the One who sent him (see especially Genesis 19:21; cf. Genesis 18:2,22; Genesis 19:2). Whether this "angel" was the second person of the Trinity remains therefore uncertain. \

Here “the messenger of God” is associated with the cloud (see Exodus 13:21).

14:20 *coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel.* See this protective nature exalted in Psalm 105:39—

He spread out a cloud as a covering,
and a fire to give light at night.

14:21 *strong east wind.* See 10:13. In 15:8 the poet praises the Lord and calls the wind the "blast of your nostrils," affirming (as here) that the miracle occurred in accordance with God's timing and under his direction (see 15:10).

14:22 *through the sea on dry ground.* In later times, psalmists and prophets reminded Israel of what God had done for them (see Ps 66:6; 106:9; 136:13-14; Isa 51:10; 63:11-13). *wall of water.* See v. 29. The waters were "piled up" (15:8) on both sides.

14:24 *last watch of the night.* Often the time for surprise attack (see Jos 10:9; 1Sa 11:11).

14:27 *The LORD swept them into the sea.* As he had done with the locusts of the eighth plague (see 10:19).

14:31 *put their trust in Him and in Moses.* Faith in God's mighty power and confidence in Moses' leadership.

his servant. Here refers to one who has the status of a high official in the Lord's kingly administration (see Nu 12:8; Dt 34:5). See also the same title applied to Joshua (Jos 24:29), Samuel (1Sa 3:10), David (2Sa 3:18) and Elijah (2Ki 9:36).