

Introduction

1. In the previous passage, we saw how Yahweh led Israel out of Egypt not by the shortest, most efficient northern route along the Mediterranean Sea but a much longer southern route toward the Red Sea:
 - a. The northern route would have taken them through the land of the Philistines who were known for their brutality, savagery, and powerful army
 - b. Exodus 13:17 says that Yahweh wanted to avoid the Philistines “**lest they people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.**”
 - c. So, instead He led them south toward the Red Sea
2. We also learned that He went before them in a visible display of His presence--a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (13:21)
3. For all practical purposes, it appeared Yahweh had delivered them from Pharaoh and the Egyptians, but we learn in our passage today that Israel hadn't seen the last of them
4. Rather, we see that Yahweh orchestrated one last confrontation with Pharaoh and his army so that Egypt and Israel would know that He is Yahweh, and it all started by setting a trap and drawing Pharaoh and his army into pursuing Israel

A. Yahweh's PURPOSE in the Army's PURSUIT (14:1-9)

1. The passage begins with Yahweh doing something unexpected—setting a trap for Pharaoh and his army (READ 14:1-4):
 - a. He told Moses to have Israel “**turn back**” (e.g. return) (1-2):
 - 1) Prior to this, Yahweh led them to the edge of the wilderness and told them to camp at Etham
 - 2) However, now He told them to turn around, head back the way they came, and camp at a place called Pi-Hahiroth which was on the northern edge of the Red Sea
 - 3) This begs the question, Why would God send them one direction and then have them turn around?
 - b. This diversion was intended to make Pharaoh think that Israel had gotten lost in the wilderness (14:3):
 - 1) Israel was still within the borders of Egypt and it's likely that Pharaoh had his officials monitoring Israel's movement—after all, he wanted them gone!
 - 2) The plan was for word to get back to Pharaoh so he would think Israel was “**wandering in confusion**” (3) and now “**shut in**” or trapped from escaping by the Red Sea

- c. Yahweh's plan was to then **"harden Pharaoh's heart"** once again so he would chase after them (4a)
- 2. Vs. 5-9 tell us that Pharaoh and his officials took the bait and set out to pursue and recapture Israel (READ):
 - a. When Pharaoh and his officials were made aware of Israel's seeming predicament, they regretted letting Israel go (14:5)
 - b. So, Pharaoh got his chariot and assembled not just his 600 best chariots but all the chariots of Egypt with their officers
 - c. And, after Yahweh hardened his heart, he and his army pursued Israel and caught up to them by the sea (14:6-9)
- 3. What stands out about this passage is that Yahweh had a PURPOSE in Pharaoh's PURSUIT of Israel (14:4b): **"and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh."**
 - a. His two-fold purpose was to receive the honor (glory) He was due, and through this all of Egypt to know that He is Yahweh
 - b. He stated this as his purpose before executing His signs and wonders on Egypt (READ 7:3-5)
 - c. We see this repeated in 14:17-18 (READ)
 - d. Egypt was a polytheistic nation with 1000s of gods and Yahweh was intent on humiliating these so-called gods and revealing Himself as the One True God, Yahweh, not just to Egypt but to Israel
- 4. Takeaway: everything God does has a purpose, and often that purpose includes revealing Himself or something about Himself to us
 - a. God had a purpose in telling Israel to turn back, making it look like they were lost and confused in the wilderness, and in hardening the Pharaoh's heart so he would pursue Israel
 - b. One purpose was so all of Egypt would know their gods were nothing and that He was the One True God, Yahweh
 - c. We may not always know God's specific purpose in every particular situation or circumstance unless He reveals it to us, but we can know that He will reveal Himself or something about Himself to us through whatever we experience

B. Yahweh's PROMISE in Israel's PANIC (14:10-19)
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- 1. Back in 14:17 we saw that Yahweh led them south instead of through Philistine territory so they wouldn't be afraid and seek to return to Egypt, but that's exactly what happens then they see Pharaoh and his army (READ 14:10-12):
 - d. They became afraid and cried out to Yahweh (14:10)
 - e. They also confronted and rebuked Moses claiming he led them out into the wilderness to die (14:11)

- f. They even claimed it would have been better for them to have stayed in Egypt as slaves (14:12)
 - g. They were in full panic mode—having forgotten the incredible suffering and brutality they had endured for 100s of years at the hands of the Egyptians, as well as all the amazing signs and wonder Yahweh performed to deliver them from Egypt
2. Moses responded to their accusations by reminding them of Yahweh’s PROMISE in their PANIC (READ 14:13-14):
 - a. Instead of fearing Pharaoh and his army, he called on them to **“Stand by (or stand firm) and see the salvation of Yahweh which He will accomplish for you today”** (13a)
 - b. They would never see the Egyptian army again because Yahweh would fight for them while they kept **“silent”** (e.g. still)
 - c. The prophet Jahaziel told King Jehoshaphat something similar when Judah was being attacked by the massive armies of the Moabites and Ammonites (2 Chronicles 20:17): **“You need not fight in this battle, take your stand—stand and see the salvation of Yahweh on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.’ Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for Yahweh is with you.”**
3. In vs. 15-18 Yahweh revealed exactly how He would accomplish the salvation He promised:
 - a. Moses was to stop crying out to God and instead speak to the people so that they would **“go forward”** toward the Red Sea (15)
 - b. As he raised his staff and stretched out his hand to split the sea so that Israel could walk through the midst of the sea on dry ground
 - c. As for Yahweh, He would harden the hearts of the Egyptians so they would go into the sea after Israel and all Egypt would know that He was Yahweh as He glorified Himself through Pharaoh, his chariots, and all his horsemen
4. Takeaway: the best antidote for panic is remembering God’s promises and what He’s already done for us
 - a. It’s amazing how quickly we forget not only God’s promises to us, but what He’s already done for us
 - b. Israel had just seen God deliver them from bondage in Egypt through a series of ten supernatural and miraculous signs and wonders, but as soon as they faced their first obstacle they panicked, feared the worst, and wanted to go back to their bondage!
 - c. Sometimes we’re no different; we face a difficulty and our first response is to worry or panic even though Jesus told us not to worry and God has proven over and over again that He cares for our every need

C. Yahweh's POWER in Israel's PREDICAMENTS (14:19-29)

1. There's an interesting shift in Yahweh's presence among Israel:
 - a. In 13:21 it says that He went "**before**" (in front of) them in a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night "**go guide them**"—so the primary purpose was to lead them through the wilderness
 - b. However, His presence changed from leading them to protecting them (READ 14:19-20):
 - 1) We have the first mention of the pillar of cloud and fire as the Angel of God (pre-incarnate Christ?)
 - 2) We are also told not once but twice that the Angel of God moved from in front of them to behind them
 - 3) The purpose was to place Himself between the Egyptian army and Israel in order to prevent the army from advancing on Israel during the night, and possibly prevent some of the Israelites from trying to turn back: "**thus the one did not come near the other all night.**"
2. What we see next is Yahweh's POWER in Israel's PREDICAMENTS:
 - a. A predicament is a difficult, perplexing, or dangerous situation that is hard to escape or resolve, and Israel faced two
 - b. First PREDICAMENT: Israel was trapped between Pharaoh's army and the Red Sea with no apparent way of escape (READ 14:21-22):
 - 1) As instructed, Moses stretched his hand out over the sea and Yahweh brought a "**strong east wind**" all night long which not only divided the water but dried the ground
 - 2) Israel then went out into the sea on the dry ground, with walls of water heaped up on both their left and right
 - 3) This must have been some sight, and walking along that dried out sea bed with water towering over them must have been terrifying, especially at night with only the light from the pillar of fire and cloud
 - 4) This gives some perspective to what Hebrews 11:29 says, "**By FAITH they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land...**"
 - c. Second PREDICAMENT: Pharaoh's army pursued Israel into the sea (READ 14:23-29):
 - 1) Even though Yahweh had supernaturally provided a means of escape, Israel wasn't out of danger quite yet because Pharaoh's army followed them into the sea
 - 2) But, Yahweh wasn't finished:
 - a) He looked down upon the Egyptians from the pillar of fire and cloud and "**brought the Egyptians into confusion**":
 - Can also refer to trouble, disarray and even panic

- He caused their chariot wheels to swerve and made it difficult for them to drive
- b) The chaos and difficulty were so severe that they panicked and tried to retreat, but Yahweh drown them in the sea:
- The Egyptians recognized it was Yahweh who was fighting **FOR** Israel and **AGAINST** Egypt—they even used His name (25)
 - As they were trying to flee, Moses stretched out his hand over the sea a second time, the walls of water came crashing down, and the sea returned to its normal state
 - Yahweh overthrew the Egyptians in the middle of the sea, covering the chariots, horses, and the entire army with water
 - **“not one of them remained”** and the dead bodies washed up on shore (v. 28)
 - NOTE: debate over whether Pharaoh died in the Red Sea
3. Takeaway: we often see God’s power the most when we find ourselves in difficult or challenging situations and circumstances
- a. It’s at times like these that we can do what Moses encouraged the Israelites to do: **“Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today...”**
 - b. We can remember the words of Isaiah 41:10: **“Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not be dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”**
 - c. The Apostle Paul recognized this when he wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 that he would much rather boast in his weaknesses because Christ’s power was made perfect in those weaknesses

D. Yahweh’s PRAISE from His PEOPLE (READ 14:30-31)
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1. These two verses tell us that Israel saw two things as a result of this event: the bodies of the soldiers dead on the seashore and **“the great hand which Yahweh had used against the Egyptians”** (a reference to his awesome power)
2. When they saw these things, they had two responses and they go hand in hand:
 - a. The first is that they **“feared Yahweh”** which Biblically refers to a healthy mix of fear and reverence
 - b. The second is that they **“believed in Yahweh and in His servant Moses”** which means they trusted them
 - c. This combination of fearing Yahweh and believing in Him indicates this wasn’t simply an acknowledgment but an expression of trust in Yahweh and Moses
3. Takeaway: When we witness what God does and see His power, we should grow in our reverence, faith and trust in Him