

Exodus 14

God finally brought the final plague, the death of the firstborn, on Pharaoh and Egypt (12:29-30). He subsequently let Israel leave Egypt (12:31-32). Egyptians gave the Israelites armloads of supplies as they left (12:35-36). Israel set out from Rameses, near Goshen, to Succoth (12:37). God did not lead Israel through the most direct route to Canaan because Israel would have become discouraged at the prospect of war (13:17-18). He also formed a pillar of cloud to guide them in the daytime and a pillar of fire to guide them at night (13:21-22).

In this chapter, Pharaoh will regret softening his heart so that he hardens it once again. But when he sends out his armies to overtake and bring back the Israelites, his army will be finally defeated by the “Warrior” (Exo. 15:3).

TRANSLATION - 14:1-4:

1 And Jehovah spoke to Moses saying, **2** “Speak to the sons of Israel and they will turn and they must camp before the face of Pi-Hachiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before the face of Baal Zephon, opposite you all will camp at the sea. **3** And Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, ‘Confused they [are]; the wilderness has shut them in.’ **4** And I will harden the heart of Pharaoh and he will pursue after them and I will be honored by Pharaoh and by all his army and the Egyptians will know that I [am] Jehovah.” And thus they did.

HEBREW WORDS:

“To camp” (ver. 2) is used 143 times; it was used earlier at 13:20. The verb can mean “to lay siege.” It is found 9 times in Exodus but 74 times in Numbers. The verb translated “confused” (ver. 3) is only used three times: Exo. 14:3; Joel 1:18; Esther 3:15. “To shut in” is only used here in Exodus, out of 91 times. “Wilderness” was used earlier at 3:1, 18; 4:27; 5:1, 3; 7:16; 8:27-28; 13:18, 20. It should not be understood as a desert, but an uninhabited place. The idea of “hardening” (ver. 4) Pharaoh’s heart has been a constant theme since 4:21; see that passage for comments. “Heart” was used earlier at 4:14, 21. It can be spelled two ways: *lb* and *lbb*. It is spelled the former way in verse 4 and the latter way in verse 5. “To pursue” is used in this context (14:4, 8-9, 23) and 15:9 in Exodus. The verb is used 144 times; it can also mean “to persecute.” “To be honored” or “glorified” was used earlier at 5:9; 8:11, 28; 9:7, 34; 10:1. The word “army” might also be translated “wealth;” it is used at 14:4, 9, 17, 28; 15:4; 18:21, 25. The word is used 246 times. The verb “to know” is used frequently in these first 14 chapters of Exodus; it was used first at 1:8.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

The sites mentioned on the route between Goshen and Canaan are notoriously hard to locate. “Pi-Hachiroth” (ver. 2) is found at 14:2, 9; Num. 33:7. “Migdol” means a tower, perhaps a fortress. It is found at Exo. 14:2; Num. 33:7; Jer. 44:1; 46:14; Ezek. 29:10; 30:6. “Baal Zephon” is used in the same passages as Pi-Hachiroth. The fact that “Baal” is in the name shows that the god was worshipped in this area and at this point in time.

COMMENTARY:

As Israel was moving toward the wilderness, God spoke to Moses and told him to have Israel turn back and camp in the area of Pi-Hachiroth, between Migdol and the Red Sea, opposite Baal-Zephon. While we do not know where either of these three locations are found today, Moses’ specificity clearly shows the historical nature of the travel. A reader closer to the time of Moses would have recognized exactly where the Israelites traveled and where they camped.

Based on Israel’s movement, Pharaoh will think that the “sons of Israel” (count how many times this designation is used in this chapter; it shows the cohesion of the tribes as a nation) are confused, that the wilderness has blocked them from their escape. At that point in Pharaoh’s thinking, Jehovah God will “harden” his heart once again (see comments at 4:21-22).

relative to God “hardening” Pharaoh’s heart) and he will pursue Israel to restore them to their position of slaves in Egypt. Yet in the process of defeating the army of Pharaoh, God will be “honored” by the king of Egypt, as well as his army. Ultimately, the Egyptians will know that Jehovah is the God of heaven and earth (ver. 4). Moses and Aaron did as Jehovah God commanded.

APPLICATION:

Moses’ contemporaries - God has not finished with Pharaoh just yet. He will be glorified and honored by this king.

NT writers - Jehovah God has promised that every single individual will one day confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10).

TRANSLATION - 14:5-10:

5 And it was announced to the king of Egypt that the people fled and the heart of Pharaoh changed and his servants against the people and they said, “What [is] this we have done that we have sent out Israel from serving us?” **6** And he bound his chariot and his people to take his people. **7** And he took six hundred chariots chosen and every chariot of the Egyptians and the third [one] on all.

8 And Jehovah hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued after the sons of Israel and the sons of Israel were going out by a high hand. **9** And the Egyptians pursued after them and overtook them camping at the sea. Every horse of the chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen and his army at Pi-Hachiroth, opposite Baal Zephon.

10 And Pharaoh drew near and the sons of Israel lifted up their eyes and behold the Egyptians were marching after them and they feared exceedingly and the sons of Israel cried out to Jehovah.

HEBREW WORDS:

“To flee” (ver. 5) was used earlier at 2:15. “To turn or change” was used earlier at 7:15, 17, 20. “To send out” is used earlier at 2:5; 3:10, 12-15, 20. The verb “to serve” is used frequently in Exodus; it was first used at 1:13-14. “To bind” (ver. 6) is used only here in Exodus. It might denote the idea of “harnessing horses.” The verb is used 73 times in the OT. “Chariots” is used 120 times; a different spelling is used 44 times. The word is related to the verb “to ride,” which is used 78 times. The noun is used in this chapter: 14:6-7, 9, 17-18, 23, 26, 28; 15:19 in Exodus. “Chosen” (ver. 7) is used 172 times; it is used only here in Exodus. “High (hand)” (ver. 8) is used only here in Exodus, out of 197 times. Here, it denotes either “bravery” or “defiance.”

“To overtake” (ver. 9) is used 50 times; it is used in this context in Exodus and 15:9. “Horse” was used earlier at 9:3. “Horseman” is used in this context (14:9, 17-18, 23, 26, 28; 15:19) in Exodus, out of 57 times. “To present” or “draw near” (ver. 10) was used earlier at 3:5; 12:48. “To lift up” was used earlier at 6:8. “Behold” is one of the most frequent words in the OT; it is used 1,061 times. It has already been used in Exodus two dozen times. It is used in Exodus 42 times. “To march” or “to break camp” was used earlier at 12:37; 13:20. “To cry out” was used earlier at 5:8, 15; 8:8. “To fear” was used earlier at 1:17, 21; 2:14; 3:6.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

“Chariots” (ver. 7) were a leading military weapon in ancient history; Egypt had them in Genesis 41:43; 46:29. The “third” one in the chariot perhaps was an officer. Egyptian chariots normally had only two men.

COMMENTARY:

After Pharaoh had mentally processed the news that his firstborn was dead, he decided he still wanted to force Israel to be his slaves. Servants reported that they had gone and they asked rhetorically what they had done in sending away their slave force! Verse 6 states that

Pharaoh “bound” his chariot, probably harnessing it to horses. The text states that Pharaoh did it; if that is the case, perhaps Pharaoh is so anxious to pursue the Israelites that he does not command a slave to do the task. On the other hand, it is also possible that Pharaoh “did the harnessing” through a slave. Either way, Pharaoh took his people, meaning his army, to pursue Israel. He took 600 chariots, choice chariots with his best soldiers including officers, denoted here (according to scholars) as “the third one”. Apparently in this case, each chariot had three soldiers, one of them an officer, in the chariot. Chariots were the “cutting edge” technology in warfare in that time.

However, Jehovah God is not sitting down and watching disinterested in what happens to His children. He hardened Pharaoh’s heart (ver. 8) to ensure that Pharaoh would pursue the Israelites and get the justice due to him. Consequently, Pharaoh did pursue Israel even as Israel left “with a high hand” (literally). Some interpret this phrase as “with bravery” or “in defiance.” It might even refer to the hand of God, found several times in this series of events (see below under 4:31 for all the verses up to this point in Exodus which use the word “hand”).

The Egyptians pursued Israel and overtook them where God had them encamped (ver. 2). Moses wants to assure the reader that the whole army which Pharaoh had sent out was there: every horse, every chariot, every horseman. They were all encamped at Pi-Hachiroth opposite Baal Zephon very near Israel’s camp (ver. 9). They were so close to Israel that when Israel lifted up its eyes, “behold” the Egyptians were “marching after them.”

When Israel saw Pharaoh’s army, they “cried out to Jehovah.” This is the same phrase from 2:23. God heard them before and God will hear them again.

APPLICATION:

Moses’ contemporaries - God has already proven that He has the ability and the will to protect Israel and deliver them. Why were the Israelites so short-sighted as to cry to the Lord at this point?

NT writers - Why is our faith not stronger and more durable that we “cry” to the Lord shortly after He has blessed us in other ways?

TRANSLATION - 14:11-18:

11 And they said to Moses, “Because there were not graves in Egypt, to take us to die in the wilderness? What [is] this you did to us to bring us up from Egypt? **12** [Is] not this the word which we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, ‘Stop from us and let us serve the Egyptians because good [it is] to us serving the Egyptians, to die in the wilderness.’”

13 And Moses said to the people, “Do not fear! Stand firm and see the salvation of Jehovah which He does for you today because which you saw the Egyptians today. You will not again see them anymore forever! **14** Jehovah will fight for you and you, yourselves, will be silent.”

15 Then Jehovah said to Moses, “What are you crying to me? Speak to the sons of Israel and they will break camp. **16** And you yourself, raise your staff and extend your hand to the sea and it must divide and the sons of Israel will come in the midst of the sea, on dry land. **17** And I, behold I, am hardening the heart of the Egyptians and they will come after you and I will be honored by Pharaoh and by all his army and by his chariots and by his horsemen. **18** And the Egyptians will know that I [am] Jehovah when I am honored by Pharaoh and by his chariots and by his horsemen.”

HEBREW WORDS:

“Graves” (ver. 11) is used only here in Exodus, out 67 times. “Stop” (ver. 12) was used earlier at 9:29, 33-34. “To serve” was used earlier at 1:13-14. “To stand” (ver. 13) was used earlier at 8:20; 9:13. It will be used again at 19:17; 34:5. “Salvation” is used here and 15:2. It will be used 78 times in the OT. It does not always denote salvation from sins; it can mean “help” or “deliverance” as it does here. Isaiah uses the word 19 times; Psalms, 45 times. “Forever” is the word we often translate “indefinitely;” it was used earlier at 3:15; 12:14, 17, 24.

Here, it denotes permanency. "To fight" (ver. 14) was used earlier at 1:10. "To be silent" is used only here in Exodus, out of 38 uses.

"To cry" (ver. 15) was used earlier at 5:8, 15. "To break camp" was translated "to march" earlier at verse 10. "To raise" (ver. 16) was used earlier at 7:20. "Staff" was used earlier at 4:2, 4, 17, 20. "To divide" is used only here: 14:16, 21 in Exodus, out of 51 times. "Dry ground" was used earlier at 4:9. "To be honored" was used earlier at verse 4.

HEBREW GRAMMAR:

The negative in verse 11 ("No graves in Egypt") is a double negative which serves for emphasis. "To stand" (ver. 13) is an imperative *hithpael* in the Hebrew grammar, which means it suggests standing firm. The negative statement at the end of verse 13 is the strongest negative in the Hebrew language. Israel will not see nor fear Egypt ever again.

COMMENTARY:

When Israel cried to, or murmured against, Moses, they asked ironically if there weren't graves in Egypt in which they could be buried. Why were they brought into the wilderness to die there (ver. 11)? We wonder if they honestly believed that God would do all He did through the plagues to bring Israel out to the wilderness just to let them die there at the Red Sea? How fickle and capricious human nature is! They further state that they had told Moses this very thing (ver. 12); if so, it is not recorded in the Bible. They border on committing blasphemy in verse 12 when they state they had rather serve the Egyptians (than God? Or Moses? Whom are they blaspheming?) because it was "good" to serve the Egyptians, rather than dying in the wilderness. How quickly they had forgotten their cries and sighs from 2:23-24. We repeat ourselves, humans are fickle and capricious.

So in verse 13, Moses tells Israel they need to control their fear. They need to "see the salvation of Jehovah." God would work that very day, before their eyes. They see the Egyptian army at that moment in time, but they will "not again see them anymore forever!" Pharaoh had told Moses he would not see his face again (10:28-29). Here, Jehovah agrees. For "Jehovah will fight for you and you, yourselves, will be silent" (ver. 14). There are times when man needs to keep his mouth closed and wait for God to work. "The Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him" (Habakkuk 2:20).

Subsequently, Jehovah asks Moses (ver. 15), "Why are you crying to me?" This is a singular verb, suggesting that the Israelites are complaining *through* Moses as their representative. Jehovah tells Moses to instruct Israel to "break camp." Jehovah God tells Moses to raise his staff and extend it over the Red Sea which will then divide and the sons of Israel will walk across the middle of the sea on dry land (ver. 16). What another wonderful miracle, God has done to distinguish between Egypt and Israel! Many "scholars" doubt the authenticity of this miracle but if Jehovah God exists, then separating the waters of the Red Sea into walls is a simple task.

In verse 17, God states that He is hardening the heart of Pharaoh (cf. ver. 4, 8) so that Pharaoh's army will pursue Israel into the Red Sea and they will receive their "reward" for their inhumane behavior. In that case, God will be honored by Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots and his horsemen (cf. ver. 4). At that point of deliverance (or "salvation;" see ver. 13), the Egyptians will know that God is Jehovah, the Maker of heaven and earth. For emphasis, God states that He will be honored by Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.

APPLICATION:

Moses' contemporaries - Consider these passages which state that God will fight for His people: Deut. 1:30; 3:22; 20:4. Israel will continue to complain and murmur against Moses' leadership (and, therefore, God's wisdom): 15:23-26; 16:2-3; 17:2-3.

Later Jewish writers - Other biblical writers emphasize that God will fight for His people: Josh. 10:14; 10:14, 42; 2 Chron. 20:29. See also these examples: Josh. 6:1-21; Judges 6:13-16; 1 Sam. 17:45-47; 2 Kings 6:16-17; 19:32-37.

NT writers - Jesus will forbid His people from complaining: Phil. 2:14; 1 Peter 4:9; 1 Timothy 2:8. God continues to fight for His people; in this age, He conquers the will of man through the Gospel of Jesus Christ: Romans 16:20.

TRANSLATION - 14:19-22:

19 And the Angel of God broke camp, going before the camp of Israel and He went after them and the pillar of cloud broke camp from before them and stood after them. **20** And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel and it was the cloud and the darkness and it enlightened the night and it did not approach this to this all the night. **21** And Moses extended his hand over the sea and Jehovah moved the sea by a strong wind of the east all the night and He made the sea to [be] dry land and the waters divided. **22** And the sons of Israel came in the midst of the sea on the dry land and the waters to them [were] a wall on their right and on their left.

HEBREW WORDS:

The verb “to break camp” (ver. 19) has been used twice earlier: 14:10, 15. It is used again here for the Angel of God as well as the pillar of cloud. “Camp” or “army” is used 215 times in the OT; it is used 19 times in Exodus. This is its first use. “To approach” (ver. 20) was used earlier at verse 10. “Darkness” was used in the plague in 10:21-22. “Dry land” (ver. 21) is only used 7 times in the OT; only here in Exodus. It was used at Genesis 7:22. “Wall” (ver. 22) is used only here in Exodus (14:22, 29); it is used 133 times in the OT. “Right” is used here (14:22, 29); 15:6, 12; 29:22. It is used 141 times; it can also mean the “south.” “Left” is used only here (14:22, 29), out of 54 times. It can also mean “north.”

COMMENTARY:

Then the “Angel of God” broke camp (ver. 19), going before Israel to lead the way. The “Angel of Jehovah” was mentioned at 3:2. “Angel” will be mentioned again in 23:20, 23; 32:34; 33:2. This angel is either a manifestation of Jehovah God or he has the authority to speak on Jehovah God’s behalf. Apparently the angel was within the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire. We do not believe He was the pillar, only that He was working from within it. That pillar of cloud came between Israel and the Egyptians’ camp (ver. 20) so as to hide Israel from the Egyptians. The expression the cloud “enlightened the night” is hard to understand. Perhaps it uses “light” as a metaphor so that the cloud enveloped the night as light would, were it daytime. However, most scholars interpret the phrase to suggest that there was light on the *Israelite* side of the cloud and darkness on the *Egyptian* side of the cloud. God is certainly capable of creating such a phenomenon. In either case, Egypt did not try to approach Israel all the night.

Verse 21 notes that Moses did just as Jehovah God commanded him. He extended his hand over the Red Sea and Jehovah God caused a strong wind from the east to “move” the sea all night. In that way, God caused the waters to divide and the Israelites walked across the sea floor on dry land. As if to clarify exactly what happened - it was a marvelous miracle after all - Moses writes again in verse 22 that the nation of Israel came into the middle of the Red Sea, on dry land, with the waters piled on each side of them as if they were walls (the word usually refers to the defensive walls around cities) on their right side and left side. In that way, the Egyptian army would have absolutely no access to the nation of Israel.

APPLICATION:

Moses’ contemporaries - When Moses sings a song in the next chapter, he will call this wind the “breath of God’s nostrils” (15:8).

Later Jewish writers - The psalmist (105:39) mentions protection by the pillar of cloud. In fact, the exodus is mentioned frequently in later writers: Josh. 4:22-24; 24:6-7; Ps. 66:5-6; 77:15-20; 78:13, 52-53; 106:9-12, 22; 114:3, 5; 136:13-15; Isa. 43:16ff; 51:9-10; 63:11-13; Hosea 11:1; Zech. 10:10-11.

NT writers - The NT writers will also make reference to the exodus and the salvation at the Red Sea: Acts 7:36; 13:16-17; Heb. 11:29. Paul will tell us as Christians to stand firm in the Lord and God will deliver us (Eph. 6:10-20).

TRANSLATION - 14:23-31:

23 And the Egyptians pursed and came after them, every horse of Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen, to the middle of the sea. **24** And it was in the watch of the morning that Jehovah looked down to the camp of the Egyptians by the pillar of fire and cloud and He confused the camp of the Egyptians.

25 And He caused to swerve the wheel of their chariots and He made them drive with heaviness. And the Egyptians said, "I will flee from the face of Israel because Jehovah is fighting for them against the Egyptians."

26 And Jehovah said to Moses, "Extend your hand over the sea and let the waters return over the Egyptians, over their chariots and over their horsemen." **27** And Moses extended his hand over the sea and the waters returned at the break of the morning to its depth and the Egyptians were fleeing from it and Jehovah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. **28** And the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen against all the army of Pharaoh coming after them in the sea. There did not remain among them even one.

29 And the sons of Israel went on dry ground in the midst of the sea and the waters to them [were] a wall on their right and on their left. **30** And Jehovah saved in that day Israel from the hand of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the bank of the sea. **31** And Israel saw the great hand which Jehovah did against Egypt and the people feared Jehovah and believed in Jehovah and in Moses His servant.

HEBREW WORDS:

"Watch of the morning" (ver. 24) is used three times: Exo. 14:24; Judges 7:19; 1 Sam. 11:11. "To look down" is not a common verb; it is used only here in Exodus, out of 22 times. "To confuse" is used only here and 23:27 in Exodus, out of 13 occasions. "To swerve" (ver. 25) was used earlier at 3:3-4; 8:8, 11, 29, 31. "Wheel" is only used here in Exodus; it is used 35 times, especially in Ezekiel (25 times). "To drive" was used earlier at 3:1; 10:13. "With heaviness" or "with difficulty" is related to the word "heavy" or "honor." This is its only use in the OT. "To flee" was used earlier at 4:3; 9:20. "To fight" was used earlier at 1:10; 4:14. "To its depth" (ver. 27) is one word in Hebrew; it is used only here in Exodus, out of 14 times. "To overthrow" is used only here in Exodus, out of 10 uses.

"To cover" (ver. 28) was used earlier at 8:6; 10:5, 15. "To remain" was used earlier at 8:9, 11, 31; 10:5, 12, 19, 26. This verb "to save" (ver. 30) is the related word to "salvation" (ver. 13). It is also related to the name "Joshua." The noun was used at 2:17. This is its last use in Exodus. It is used 205 times in the OT. "To fear" (ver. 31) was used earlier at 1:17, 21; 2:14. "To believe" or "to trust" was used earlier at 4:8, 31. This is its last use in Exodus. "Servant" is used extensively in Exodus, after 4:10. The phrase "Moses, the servant of the Lord" is used 18 times throughout the OT.

REFERENCES AND ALLUSIONS TO GENESIS:

Twice in Genesis, God uses the expression "Behold, I" (ver. 17): Genesis 6:17; 9:9.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

The "middle watch of the morning" (ver. 24) would be between two and six AM. During the time frame we believe the exodus occurred (1500s B. C.), Egypt was well known for their use of horses.

COMMENTARY:

This final paragraph in chapter 14 is the culmination of the preceding thirteen chapters: the freedom of Israel from Egyptian slavery so they could serve and worship Jehovah God.

The Egyptian army, with its 600 chariots, horsemen, and officers pursued Egypt right into the middle of the sea (ver. 23). We wonder if any of them stopped and asked themselves if they should follow Israel into the Red Sea! It was, after all, their God who had brought all those plagues on Egypt! In the “watch of the morning,” which would be between 2 and 6 AM, Jehovah God “looked down” (using an anthropomorphism to show God’s knowledge) and saw the camp of the Egyptians separated from Israel by the pillar of fire (at night) and pillar of cloud (by day; see 13:21-22) and He confused the camp of the Egyptians (ver. 24). God also causes confusion against the Philistines in 1 Samuel 7:10.

Verse 25 notes how Jehovah God “confused” the camp of the Egyptians. As they went into the Red Sea in pursuit of Israel, God caused the chariot wheels to “swerve” and He made the chariots to drive “with heaviness” or “with difficulty.” There is a word play between God’s action in verse 25 and Pharaoh’s “binding” the horses at verse 6. We do not know exactly what God did to the chariots; some scholars believe God caused their wheels to get stuck in the mud of the sea bed. If that is the case, God miraculously turned the “dry ground” back into muddy ground. Others suggest God caused the wheels to fall off. Either way, Egypt was not able to pursue Israel further. Subsequently, Egypt cried out (ver. 25): “I will flee from the face of Israel because Jehovah is fighting for them against the Egyptians” (a fulfillment of Moses’ statement in verse 14). Earlier Pharaoh had said he did not know “Jehovah” (5:2). Now, his army is acknowledging both Jehovah’s power and His power on behalf of Israel.

But God is not finished with Pharaoh, his army, or Egypt (ver. 26). Jehovah God tells Moses to undo the miracle He had just done. Moses is to extend his hand with his staff over the sea once again and the waters which were a wall on each side of Israel will come crashing down upon the Egyptians, their chariots and their horsemen.

Moses did exactly as Jehovah God had commanded (ver. 27). Remember that Pharaoh had tried to control Israel by drowning their sons in the Nile River (1:22-2:10). In retaliation, Jehovah God drowns Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea! It was at the “break of morning” to its normal depth and the Egyptians tried to flee from the rushing waters but could not! “Ra,” the Egyptian god of the sun, would rise at daybreak. Here, he finds his people dead, unprotected by their god. Jehovah “overthrew” the Egyptians in the middle of the Red Sea (ver. 28)! Moses is clear that not one of the 600 chariots with their horsemen and officers was left from those who pursued Israel!

Consequently, the “sons of Israel” walked across the floor of the Red Sea on dry ground, in the middle of the sea, while the waters formed a “wall” on either side of them (ver. 29). So, in that day, Jehovah God “saved” (a related word to “salvation” from verse 13) Israel from the “hand of the Egyptians” through His own powerful “hand” (see comments at verse 31). The Egyptians whom Israel will “never see again” (ver. 13) are lying dead on the shore of the Red Sea (ver. 30)!

That was the day that Israel saw the “great hand” of Jehovah God working on their behalf against Egypt. The word “hand” is found 7 times in this chapter; it has been a recurring theme throughout the whole scenario, beginning at 2:5. See also: 2:19; 3:8, 19-20; 4:2, 4, 6-7, 13, 17, 20-21; 5:21; 6:1, 8; 7:4-5, 15, 19; 8:5-6, 17; 9:3, 15, 22, 35; 10:12, 21-22, 25; 12:11; 13:3, 9, 14, 16; 14:8, 16, 21, 26, 27, 30-31. It will also be found extensively throughout the rest of Exodus, a total of 109 times in 40 chapters! This reference to God’s “hand” delivering Israel (ver. 30) is a fulfillment of God’s promise in 6:1 (the word “hand” is found in the Hebrew text).

After seeing the miracle, the people feared Jehovah God, meaning they held Him in deep awe and respect, and they believed and trusted Jehovah God and trusted in Moses, His servant. This illustrates the purpose of miracles throughout the history of the Bible: to confirm the message of God’s messenger. A man performs a miracle so that the audience will know that the man’s message is given by God. See below for further evidence of the purpose of miracles.

APPLICATION:

Moses' contemporaries - The most immediate reflection on the salvation of Israel through the Red Sea will be Moses' song recorded in the next chapter: 15:1-18. This defeat of Pharaoh and Egypt is so decisive that Egypt will not be a significant factor in Israel's history again until the time of King Solomon, who marries the Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kings 11:1). Moses will be designated a servant of Jehovah some 30 times in the OT. Also relative to God's view of Moses, see: Num. 12:7-8 and Deut. 34:10.

Later Jewish writers - Other men who are designated "servant of Jehovah" are: Joshua (24:29), Samuel (1 Sam. 3:10), David (2 Sam. 3:18), and Elijah (2 Kings 9:36). In 1 Kings 17:17-24, Elijah raises a dead man to life. After seeing the miracle, the mother responded: "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of Jehovah in your mouth is truth" (ver. 24). A man performs a miracle so that the audience will know that the man's message is given by God.

NT writers - Jesus uses the Greek equivalent of the expression "Behold, I" three times: Matt. 10:16; 28:20; Luke 24:49. The prophecy by Zechariah will utilize language reminiscent of the exodus: Luke 1:67-80. In Luke's account of the transfiguration, Jesus famously talks to Moses and Elijah and His approaching "exodus" (Luke 9:31), which is a transliteration of the Greek word which means "departure" or "death." We have noted previously how John uses various plagues brought against Egypt as symbols of God's destruction of the Roman Empire. John also uses "exodus language" in Revelation: 15:1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8.

The purpose of miracles is illustrated again in the NT: John 20:30-31. Again, in Acts 13:12, the apostle Paul struck a false teacher blind. When a student of Paul saw what had happened, he "believed, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord." A man performs a miracle so that the audience will know that the man's message is given by God. Because faith is created today through the word of God (Rom. 10:17), there is no longer any purpose for miracles (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

Christian ministers have often used the slavery in Egypt and Israel's exodus to serve as a picture (metaphor) of the path to salvation in Christ:

Egyptian slavery is a picture of a sinful life (Rom. 6).

Pharaoh is a picture of our "slavemaster:" Satan.

Moses is a picture of Christ. Indeed Matthew seems to picture Jesus as a "new" Moses. In Matthew 2:15, Joseph and Mary bring Jesus out of Egypt, having stayed there until the death of King Herod. Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1, applying it as a picture to Jesus who was God's Son "called out of Egypt."

The crossing of the Red Sea is a picture of a non-Christian being immersed (baptized) into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (1 Cor. 10:1-4; Acts 2:38).

Israel's wandering in the wilderness is a picture of the church's life in a sinful world. Sometimes we stay faithful; sometimes we stumble.

Canaan is a picture of heaven, our destination which makes the wanderings worthwhile.

The Jordan River is a picture of death.

The life in Canaan is a picture of one's rest in Christ, fulfilled in heaven.