

**Exodus 14**  
**August 3, 2014**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: Do you know anyone who has gone to war, i.e. boots on the ground? If yes, have they ever shared a strategy they used to overtake their enemy? [Let people share tidbits. I had a friend who served in the military, and they said one of their top strategies was to destroy the enemy's communication capabilities by destroying communication towers, electrical grids, etc.]

Not all battles are physical. In fact, the lion's share of battles we have experienced are spiritual. Eph 6:12 tells us "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." I bet every one of us have been involved in a spiritual battle either this morning, this weekend, last week, or last month, etc.

If you were here last week, you know that Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go. They gathered silver and gold, cattle, took off with unleavened bread, and learned the rules of Passover. They took off for the Promised Land. God had finally delivered them. The last thing they expected was to find themselves in a battle with Pharaoh and the Egyptians!

**Transition:** As we read today's passage, it's going to challenge each of us regarding how strong our faith is in our Commander in Chief. When the pressure is on, when the battle intensifies, when the enemy appears to be overtaking us, is our faith fully in God alone who has a plan to deliver us? If your faith is being tested, then this lesson should give you great hope. In fact, the focal verse for today's lesson is v.14 "The Lord will fight for you; all you need to be is still."

What I am suggesting this morning is that *every Christian can fully trust the Lord to fight our battles while being still by remembering some of the **strategies God likes to exercise.*** We have already read through multiple chapters that one of God's favorite strategies to put His enemies in their place was the use of plagues. In today's passage, I invite you to look for more strategies so that we can leave today remembering the ways God likes to defeat our enemies for us.

**BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read Ex 14:1-12]**

Observations/Process Qs-

V.1:

- Then the Lord said to Moses,

V.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. [Strategy: God is intentional about where He places us to lure the enemy.]

V.3:

- Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.' [Strategy: Bait the enemy to think he can capture the Israelites]

- Q: How does Pharaoh know that the Israelites turned back to camp near Pi Hahiroth? [He must have sent spies to follow them. This is how he must have known that Israelites were hemmed in.]

V.4:

- And 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. [Strategy: harden the heart so enemy makes bad decision.]
- Q: What if Pharaoh's heart had been allowed to stay soft. What kind of decision do you think he would have made? [A soft heart comes out of times when God humbles us. If his heart had remained soft, he would have recalled the ten plagues and said "no thanks."]

V.5:

- When 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!"

V.6:

- So he had his chariot made ready and took his army with him.

V.7:

- He took six hundred of the best chariots, along with all the other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them.

V.8:

- The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly.

V.9:

- The Egyptians—all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, horsemen and troops—pursued the Israelites and overtook them as they camped by the sea near Pi Hahiroth, opposite Baal Zephon.

V.10:

- As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD.
- Observation: The Israelites get a pass for feeling terrified in their situation. They also should get credit for crying out to the Lord. That is appropriate. What happens next isn't.

V.11:

- They 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?"
- Observation: The Israelites do not get a pass for criticizing Moses! C'mon. How many times have we been down this road?

V.12:

- Didn'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!"
- Q: What strategies did you observe in these first twelve verses? [See yellow highlights]
- Q: What assumptions were the Israelites making when they started accusing Moses for being put in these circumstances? [God was not with them; Pharaoh, the enemy, would defeat them because he and the army had overtaken them; death was upon them]

- Q: What is **our part** while the Lord fights the battle for us? [See green highlight – Go wherever God tells you to go.]

**[Read Ex 14:13-31]**

V.13:

- Moses 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.

V.14:

- The **LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.**” [Strategy: The Lord wants to do the battles for us. We need to stay out of His way.]

V.15:

- Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? **Tell the Israelites to move on.** [Again – Go wherever God tells you to go.]

V.16:

- Raise 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.

V.17:

- **I 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.

V.18:

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

V.19:

- 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,

V.20:

- **coming 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.

V.21:

- Then 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, [Strategy: The Lord supernaturally intervenes to deliver His children.]

V.22:

- and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

V.23:

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

V.24:

- During 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.** [Strategy: confuse the enemy]

V.25:

- He made the wheels of their chariots come off 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.” [Strategy: Disable the enemy to frustrate their pursuit of His children]
- [Observation: Even the enemy recognizes when the Lord is fighting against them!]

V.26:

- Then 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.”

V.27:

- Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the LORD swept them into the sea.

V.28:

- The 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.

V.29:

- But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

V.30:

- That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore.

V.31:

- And 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.
- Q: What strategies did the Lord use to defeat the enemy in these last eighteen verses? [See yellow highlights]
- Q: What is our part while the Lord fights the battle for us? [See green highlights]

### **LOOK:**

[Dry Erase Board] – Ask class to summarize the strategies God used to defeat the enemy and list on the DEB.

Some of you may be in a spiritual battle right now, and you feel drained. Perhaps you’re wondering where God is in the midst of your battle. As you look at the list on the board, imagine the ways the Lord might choose to defeat your enemy and deliver you in a supernatural way:

- He might harden your enemy’s heart to bait them to come against you (not to harm you, but as part of the plan to deliver you).
- He might throw your enemy into confusion.
- He might disable them in some way to hinder their pursuit of you.
- He may supernaturally take care of the enemy.

### **Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (Ex 14:1–31)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

#### **I. Israel Crying Out in Fear (14:1–12)**

God specifically directed Israel to their place of encampment by the Red Sea, and He told Moses that the Egyptians would pursue them. Similarly, God has explained the Christian life to us in His Word so that we know what to expect. Satan is not pleased when sinners are set free from his grasp, and he pursues the Christian to try to get him back into bondage. New Christians in particular must be warned that their adversary is coming!

Sad to say, the Jews were walking by sight, not by faith; for when they saw the Egyptian army coming, they gave up in despair and cried out in fear. Fear and faith cannot dwell in the same heart; if we trust God, we need not be afraid. As is often the case, the Children of Israel criticized their spiritual leader instead of praying and seeking to encourage one another. They were actually complaining to God, for Moses had led them to the very place God had appointed. Instead of looking up to God in faith, they looked back to Egypt and said, “We were better off in bondage to Pharaoh!” What poor memories they had! God had smitten Egypt with His judgments and delivered Israel with great power, yet they did not believe that He could see them through. Undoubtedly, the “mixed multitude” that went with them (12:38) led in this chorus of complaint, just as they were to lead in later years (Num. 11:4). The “mixed multitude” represents unconverted and worldly people among the children of God.

#### **II. Israel Walking in Faith (14:13–31)**

Moses knew that the way of victory was through trusting the Lord (Heb. 11:29). Note his three commands: “Fear not” for God is on your side; “stand still,” for you cannot win this battle in your own strength; “see the salvation of the Lord,” for He will fight for you. It is important that we stand still before we “go forward” (v. 15), for unless we are standing by faith, we can never walk by faith. Moses lifted his rod, and God began to work.

God protected His people by coming between Israel and the Egyptian armies (vv. 19–20). The workings of the Lord are darkness to the world, but light to God's people. God kept the army at a distance that whole night. Then, God opened the way forward by sending a strong wind. No doubt the Jews were fearful as they heard the wind blow, but the very wind that frightened them was the means of their salvation. The entire nation walked through the Red Sea on dry land! Yet the same sea that was salvation to Israel was condemnation to Egypt, for God used the waters to drown the Egyptians and to separate Israel from Egypt permanently. Pharaoh reaped what he had sown, for he had drowned the Jewish infant boys, and now his own army was drowned.

We must grasp the spiritual meaning of this event (1 Cor. 10:1–2). The crossing of the Red Sea is a type of the believer's union with Christ in death to the old life and resurrection to a whole new life. Israel was “baptized unto Moses” (identified with Moses) in going through the waters, and we are identified with Christ and therefore separated from the world (Egypt). The Egyptians could not pass through the sea because they had never been sheltered by the blood.

Passover illustrates Christ's death for us, while the crossing of the Red Sea pictures His resurrection. The blood has delivered us from the penalty of sin and the resurrection, from the

power of sin. The first experience is substitution, for the lamb died in the place of the firstborn. This is Romans 4–5. The second experience is identification, for we are identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection; and this is explained in Romans 6–8. The crossing of Israel through Jordan into Canaan in Josh. 3–4 is a type of believer entering into his spiritual inheritance by faith and claiming it for his own. In each case, it is by faith that the Christian claims the victory.

**Toussaint, S. D. (1985). Acts. (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Eds.)The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures. (Vol. 2, pp. 131–132). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

## 2. THE CROSSING OF THE RED (REED) SEA (CHAP. 14)

### a. *The encampment by the Red (Reed) Sea (14:1–4)*

14:1–4. After the Israelites had traveled for some days in a southeasterly path and camped awhile at Etham, **the LORD** told **Moses** to **tell** the people to **turn back** to **Pi Hahiroth between Migdol and the sea** and **opposite Baal Zephon** (cf. Num. 33:7). These cities were east of Rameses. This change in direction would have led **Pharaoh** to **think the Israelites** were confused. As a result of God’s hardening of his **heart** (cf. comments on Ex. 4:21) Pharaoh would attempt to enslave the people again and then God would demonstrate His awesome power through another great judgment.

**The sea** is called the Red Sea in 10:19; 13:18; 15:4, 22. “Red Sea” (*yām sūp*) is literally, “Sea of [Papyrus] Reeds.” Several reasons indicate that this is farther north than the northern tip of the Gulf of Suez (the northwestern “finger” of the Red Sea between Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula): (1) The Gulf of Suez has no reeds. (2) The northern tip of the Gulf of Suez is much farther south than Pi Hahiroth and Migdol. (3) The area where the Israelites camped was marshy but this is not true of the land west of the Gulf of Suez. (4) From “the sea” the Israelites went east or southeast into the Desert of Shur (15:22), also called the Desert of Etham (Num. 33:8), in the northwestern part of the Sinai Peninsula. Possibly, then, the sea that the Lord dried up for the Israelites was Lake Balah (see the map “Possible Route of the Exodus,” near Num. 33:1–5).

### b. *The pursuit by the Egyptians (14:5–9)*

14:5–9. Realizing the implications of the release of the Hebrews (**we ... have lost their services**; cf. 1:14) **Pharaoh and his** officers were determined to prevent the escape. Though the Israelite men numbered over 600,000, Pharaoh was apparently encouraged by their seeming indecisiveness and by his own superior military prowess. Pharaoh was probably informed immediately of the Israelites’ departure from Rameses on the 15th day of the month. But no doubt he did not react immediately because the Egyptians were involved in burying and bemoaning their dead (cf. Num. 33:3–4) and because Moses had repeatedly referred to “a three-day journey” (Ex. 3:18; 5:3; 8:27). Later, realizing the Israelites’ departure was not temporary, he got together **600 ... chariots**, charioteers, **and troops** and caught up with the Israelites **near Pi Hahiroth**.

### c. *The cry of the people and the faith of Moses (14:10–14)*

**14:10–14.** As Pharaoh’s charioteers and armed troops **approached**, fear struck the encampment. They were trapped between the Red Sea (lit., “Sea of [Papyrus] Reeds”; see comments on v. 2) before them and a vicious foe behind them. The reaction of the Israelites here was much the same throughout the book (cf. 5:21) in times of duress and fright. Though they **cried out to the LORD**, they had no confidence He could help. Quickly forgetting the past, they bitterly accused **Moses** of deceiving them by leading them into **the desert to die... Didn’t we say ... in Egypt, Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians?** Moses, recognizing that fear was distorting their memories and arousing their passions against him, sought to reassure them that **the LORD** would deliver them by fighting **for** them (cf. 15:3; Neh. 4:20; Ps. 35:1) as they remained firm in confidence. Surprisingly, as they came to their greatest moment of deliverance, the people of God were full of distrust and fear.

*d. The parting of the Red (Reed) Sea (14:15–22)*

God communicated His intentions to Moses (vv. 15–18), the angel of God protected the Israelites (vv. 19–20), and they crossed on dry land (vv. 21–22).

14:15–18. God told **Moses** He would miraculously deliver the people **through the sea**. Moses only needed to **raise his staff ... over the sea** and **the water** would **divide** and the floor of **the sea** would be **dry ground**. Pharaoh’s charioteers would foolishly pursue the Israelites into the sea. There, as with the plagues, God would demonstrate His power and **glory** in the destruction of the Egyptian military. **The Egyptians**, God said, **will know that I am the LORD**.

14:19–22. **Then the angel of God**, perhaps a theophany (cf. comments on Gen. 16:9) or an angelic messenger, moved **from the front** of the Israelites to the rear to protect them from the charging Egyptians. The angel shifted from guide to guardian! All through that night **the pillar of cloud**, which **also** had **moved** to the rear to be between the two camps, brought such darkness that military advance was impossible for the Egyptians. **That night** God was performing another miracle: splitting **the sea** (cf. Ps. 74:13) by a **strong east wind** and drying the sea floor (cf. Pss. 66:6; 106:9). The sea was deep enough (cf. Ex. 15:5) that later it drowned the Egyptians (14:28). While the wind kept the sea floor dry and the sea split, the Israelites walked **through the sea** (cf. v. 16; Ps. 78:13). The passageway may have been wide in order to allow about 2 million people and their flocks and herds to walk through. This was a miraculous wind!

God’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt pictures His mercy in delivering all His people from bondage. In a mighty display of His power He freed Israel.

*e. The destruction of the Egyptians (14:23–31)*

14:23–28. As **the Egyptians pursued** the Israelites into the dry sea bed, **in the morning watch** (sometime between 3 A.M. and dawn) **the LORD** slowed their progress and they were panic-stricken. According to Psalm 77:16–19 God caused a rainstorm, lightning, thunder, and an earthquake. Perhaps the rain quickly soaked the sea floor, which caused **the wheels of their chariots** to **swerve**. There was also the noise and buffeting of the wind that was banking the waters. **The Egyptians** sought to escape, realizing that the God of the Hebrews (**the LORD**) was **fighting for** Israel (cf. Ex. 14:14). **At daybreak the sea** water **went** together again and **the Egyptians** were **swept ... into the sea** (lit., “thrown downward”). The crashing walls of **water** crushed the Egyptians in the sea so that **not** a single soldier **survived**.

14:29–31. God delivered His people **through ... dry land**, while He destroyed **the Egyptians** in the sea; their dead bodies floating ashore were a grim reminder of the awesome

**power** of God in judgment. As a result **the Israelites ... feared** and trusted **the LORD**. The people often fluctuated between trust and complaining, between belief and unbelief (4:31; 5:21; 14:10–12, 31; 15:24; 16:2–4; 17:2–3).

**Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (pp. 107 – 108). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.**

**14:4** For a discussion of the Lord's hardening Pharaoh's heart, see note on 4:21.

**14:9** For a discussion of how the Egyptians could have horses even after a plague killed their livestock, see note on 9:6.

**14:16** Did the Israelites pass through a marsh—a “sea of reeds”—and not the Red Sea? Many scholars have accepted this suggestion, but a full consideration of the biblical evidence leads to the conclusion that Israel escaped the armies of Pharaoh by passing through a large and dangerous body of water. The biblical text states that the waters were deep (Is 63:13), but that God split them and made them stand “like a wall” (Ps 78:13) on either side of the fleeing Israelites (Ex 14:22, 29). When the waters returned to their original position they covered the Egyptians' chariots, horses, and soldiers (v. 27; 15:1; Dt 11:4; Jos 24:7; Ne 9:11; Ps 78:53), thereby killing all the enemy (Ex 14:27–28, 30; Ps 106:11). In the NT, Stephen, the apostle Paul, and the writer of Hebrews referred to the body of water as a sea (Acts 7:36; 1 Co 10:1; Heb 11:29).

Commentators have noted that the Hebrew phrase *yam suph*, traditionally translated as “Red Sea,” can also mean “sea of reed.” While that translation is possible, the OT always employs this phrase to refer to a deep body of water east of Egypt and adjacent to the Sinai Peninsula. In 1 Kg 9:26–28 Solomon is said to have built a fleet of trading ships that sailed on the Red Sea to the land of Ophir. Both the NT and the Septuagint translate *yam suph* as “Red Sea” (see Acts 7:36; Heb 11:29) and not “sea of reeds,” or a marsh.

**14:21** How could a dry path be created through the middle of the Red Sea? God performed a miracle, using, at least in part, the forces of nature. The biblical writer mentions the role of wind in this event, but that does not preclude the possibility that God used other aspects of nature of which we have no knowledge. The suggestion that a tsunami was responsible for the temporary displacement of water in the Red Sea area is interesting, but does not account for the description of a “wall” of water on either side of the fleeing Israelites (vv. 22, 29). Possibly God augmented the forces of nature with supernatural activity to create a safe passage for Israel through the body of water.

**14:25** Some scholars have suggested that most of the exodus narrative is fabricated, though it may contain kernels of historical truth. They reject the Bible's claim that the Red Sea actually parted, but accept the possibility that Egyptian chariots became mired in the muddy marshlands in pursuit of escaping Asiatic slaves, allowing them to escape.

Certainly the Bible indicates that the Egyptians had trouble with their chariots, but this is not portrayed as the primary reason the Israelites' escape succeeded. Nine different books in the Bible (Ex, Dt, Jos, Ps, Is, Ac, 1 Co, Heb) explicitly affirm, or clearly assume, that the Red Sea split apart, saving Israel but destroying their pursuers. Any approach to the Bible that selectively



rejects the straightforward narrative in Exodus in order to produce a naturalistic explanation of events will create more problems than it solves. Such an approach requires one to assume that the writers of eight other books in the Bible got it wrong. It reflects unwarranted pride, crediting modern readers of the Bible with a better grasp of biblical events than those who witnessed and wrote about those events.

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