

Introduction: Life in this fallen world is complicated. Even those given grace to grow in the knowledge of God, through His Word and the guidance of The Holy Spirit, will never fully understand Him and His ways. Every person is a mixture of good and bad; and, every nation and culture is also mixed. Many people living under evil and oppressive governments have a desire to know and please God; and, there are many among God's people who are still selfish, spoiled children. *** Despite all this, the good news is The God who created everything, and has made a covenant with people in which He has paid the price for our disobedience to Him, is The Father who perfectly disciplines His children in love so they will be more like Him (*Hebrews 12:7-11*). He perfectly balances justice and mercy, love of people and hatred of sin, forgiveness and consequences, light and darkness, life and death. *** All this and more is brought out in our passage this morning. The parted waters of the sea are a picture of what Jesus did on The Cross. *** Just as God's people took the way God provided to cross the sea on dry ground, even though it made no sense at all, ALL who receive by faith the work Jesus did for them on The Cross, having never seen The Resurrected Savior (*1 Peter 1:1-7*), will receive the same salvation from sure death that the Israelites received. *** Conversely, those who see The Cross as a way exploit weak and gullible people will find, just as the Egyptians did, that they will be drowned by their own selfish desires as The Cross crushes them, rather than saving them. *** Let us dig into our passage to learn from this historical event God has preserved for our edification:

I. The Israelites feared when Egypt overtook them, Moses said, 'Fear not and see Yahweh's salvation'. (Verses 8-14)

A. As Israel left Egypt with a 'high hand', the Egyptians overtook them by the sea, causing them to fear, cry out to Yahweh and accuse Moses. (*Verses 8-12*)

1. Then Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart and he pursued the sons of Israel as they were going out defiantly. (*Verse 8*)
'High hand': The figure of speech is 'with hand being uplifted'. For those who remember the 1968 Olympics, think of Tommy Smith and John Carlos and their Black Power salute.

2. The Egyptians pursued with people and powerful weapons, then overtook them camping by the sea; and, when the Israelites beheld them, they were in great fear and cried out to Yahweh. (*Verses 9-10*)

Place names: Pi-hahiroth means place of the sedge (papyrus) grass, Baal-Zaphon is lord of the north.

Cry out: The word means to cry out for help, usually to God. (*Psalms 32:17; 77:1; 107:6, 28*)

3. Then they said to Moses, 'Was it because of no graves in Egypt you took us here to die, what have you done to bring us out of Egypt; didn't we say stop and let us serve the Egyptians rather than die in the wilderness?' (*Verses 11-12*)

Murmur: They are directing sarcasm at God's chosen leader and lying to themselves. Things were horrible in Egypt, but now fear is speaking. They are acting in a typically human way.

B. Moses said to the people, 'Fear not, station yourselves and see the salvation Yahweh will work: He will fight for you, and you will be silent'. (*Verses 13-14*)

1. Then Moses said, 'Fear not! Station yourselves and see the salvation Yahweh will work, because you will never see the Egyptians again, ever!' (*Verse 13*)

Three commands: The first and strongest command is that they will not be afraid. Then they must set themselves immovable. Finally they must see the salvation of Yahweh.

Yahweh will work: He will work it for them.

3. 'Yahweh will fight for you, and you yourselves will be quiet'. (*Verse 14*)

Quiet: Yahweh is saying He will fight for them; so, instead of complaining, keep quiet! Good advice.

Application: Let's be humbled that even God's chosen people can become self-deceived complainers who must stand and be quiet so they will see Him work salvation for them. May we never grumble against God when we have been given His Word.

II. Yahweh told Moses what to do, then the pillar of cloud moved to protect Israel; after Yahweh divided the waters they went through on dry land, and when Egypt pursued, Yahweh fought them. (Verses 15-25)

A. Yahweh told Moses to have Israel journey, stretch his hand over the water and divide it so He will receive glory and Egypt will know Him; then the pillar of cloud moved behind Israel to give darkness and light. (*Verses 15-20*)

1. Yahweh told Moses, 'Why are crying out to Me, tell the sons of Israel to pull out (journey); and you yourself must raise your staff, stretch your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel will go in the middle of the sea on dry ground. (*Verses 15-16*)

Emphatic: Yahweh is emphatically charging Moses to do this.

2. As for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, then they will go after them; then, I will get glory through Pharaoh and the Egyptians know I (am) Yahweh when I get glory. (*Verses 17-18*)

Glory: Glory is heavy, weighty. In the 1960s 'heavy' became slang for awesome. God is awesome!

Know: People must know who God is in order to have life IN Him. (*Jeremiah 9:23-24; John 17:1-3; Philippians 3:8-11*)

3. Then The Angel of God moved from the front to the back of Israel's camp, as did the pillar of cloud; then it came between the two camps, and the cloud was darkness and brought light to night, and the one did not draw near the other all night. (*Verses 19-20*)

Angel of God: The Angel of God is The Angel of Yahweh, the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ.

Darkness AND Light: The cloud that protected Israel before Yahweh worked their salvation at the sea, caused darkness to God's enemies and light to His people. Salvation brings both darkness and light.

Yahweh saved His people with a cloud of darkness and light

- B. The waters were divided, Israel went through on dry ground, and when Pharaoh's army pursued, Yahweh brought heavy confusion. (*Verses 21-25*)
1. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and Yahweh made the sea go back in a strong east wind all night, He made the sea dry and the waters were divided; and the sons of Israel went in the middle of the sea on dry ground, and the waters were a wall on their right and left. (*Verses 21-22*)
Miracle: Dividing the waters of a sea is a major miracle. It makes no sense at all that a raised staff would cause deep water to divide. It takes great faith to walk along a pathway through a sea with walls of water over fifty feet high on either side. (*Hebrews 11:29*) Will God keep the waters divided?
 2. Then the Egyptians pursued and went after them: Pharaoh's horses, chariots and horsemen into the midst of the sea. (*Verse 23*)
Pursue: The word is also used for persecution. It rarely means follow, but the English translation of *Psalms 23* uses it about Yahweh's goodness and loving-kindness. Pursue is a more powerful statement about how Yahweh cares for His wandering sheep! His pursuit of His sheep has the exact opposite intention of Pharaoh's pursuit of Israel.
 3. And it was, in the morning watch, Yahweh looked down on the Egyptian camp in the pillar of fire and cloud and discomfited the Egyptians; He turned the wheels of their chariots and they drove heavily, and they said let's flee from Israel because Yahweh fights for them. (*Verses 24-25*)
Too late: The Egyptians under Pharaoh finally understand Yahweh, but it is too late for them.

III. Yahweh commanded Moses to stretch out his hand and the waters returned, then Yahweh shook Egypt off and none remained; Israel was saved by Yahweh, feared Him and believed in Him. (*Verses 26-31*)

- A. Yahweh commanded Moses to stretch his hand over the sea and the waters would come back over the Egyptians, Moses did and the waters covered the chariots, the horseman, the whole army. (*Verses 26-28*)
1. Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Stretch your hand over the sea so the waters will return on the Egyptians, chariots and horsemen. (*Verse 26*)
Return: The timing of allowing gravity to again affect the waters of the sea is itself a miracle.
 2. Then Moses stretched his hand over the sea and it returned to its perpetual state at daybreak, the Egyptians fleeing into it, Yahweh shaking off the Egyptians; the waters covered them all, not so much as one of them was left. (*Verses 27-28*)
Perpetual: The natural state of the water of a sea is to be level, not parted and piled up.
All drowned: Every one of the enemies of God's people who sought their harm was overcome in the darkness of night.

God's Light overcomes the darkness

- B. Israel had walked through on dry land in the midst of the sea, waters a wall to the left and right, and He saved them; when Israel saw His Hand, they feared and believed Him. (*Verses 29-31*)
1. And the sons of Israel had walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters a wall to them on their right and left, and Yahweh saved Israel from the hand of the Egyptians. (*Verses 29-30b*)
Wall: This recap drives home the wonderful miracle Yahweh did for His people. He saved them by His hand and the cloud (of His Presence) of darkness and light.

Yahweh saved His people with a cloud of darkness and light

2. Then Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore; and, having seen the great hand which Yahweh worked in Egypt, the sons of Israel feared Yahweh and believed in Yahweh and His servant Moses. (*Verses 30c-31*)
Mighty power: 'Great hand' is a Hebrew figure of speech that would be 'mighty power' in English.
Fear and faith: The fear of God must precede faith in God. The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom (*Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10*). The awesome Yahweh is a fitting object of faith.
Trust God's servant: By extension, they recognize Moses is Yahweh's chosen servant to be trusted. Their murmuring accusations of him have been turned to trust.

Yahweh saved His people with a cloud of darkness and light.

Conclusion: As Israel defiantly leaves Egypt, Yahweh causes Pharaoh to pursue them, and they are fearful when overtaken. So they cry out to Yahweh and grumble to Moses who responds, 'Fear not, Yahweh will work for you: be silent'. Then Yahweh tells Moses what He will do so He will get glory and the Egyptians will know Him, and the pillar of cloud moves to be darkness and light, separating the camps. Finally, Yahweh divides the waters so Israel goes through on dry ground, but as Egypt pursues them, Yahweh brings chaos before restoring the waters. At this salvation, Israel fears and believes in Yahweh.

Yahweh saved His people with a cloud of darkness and light