

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 14

This chapter begins with directions of God to Moses, to be given to the children of Israel about the course they were to steer in their journey, with the reason thereof, (^{<1241>}Exodus 14:1-4), which they observing, a report was brought to Pharaoh that they were fled, and this determined him and his servants to get ready and pursue after them, as they did with a great army, (^{<1245>}Exodus 14:5-9), which when the Israelites saw, it put them in great fear, and set them to murmuring and complaining against Moses for bringing them out of Egypt, (^{<1240>}Exodus 14:10,11,12), who desired them to be still and quiet, and they should see the salvation of the Lord, (^{<1243>}Exodus 14:13,14), and he is bid to order the people to go on in their journey, and to take his rod and stretch it over the sea and divide it, that Israel might pass through it on dry ground, and the Egyptians follow them, whereby God would be honoured and glorified, (^{<1245>}Exodus 14:15-18), upon which the Angel of the Lord in a pillar of cloud removed from before there, and went behind them for their protection, (^{<1249>}Exodus 14:19,20), and Moses stretching out his hand over the sea, and a strong east wind blowing upon it, the waters divided and the Israelites went into it, and the Egyptians followed them, but their host being troubled by the Lord, and their chariot wheels taken off, they found themselves in great danger, and were thrown into a panic, (^{<1241>}Exodus 14:20-25) and upon Moses's stretching out his hand again over the sea, the waters returned, and Pharaoh and his host were drowned, but the Israelites passed through safely, as on dry land, (^{<1246>}Exodus 14:26-29), which great work of the Lord being observed by them, influenced their fear of him, their faith in him and his servant Moses, (^{<1243>}Exodus 14:30,31).

Ver. 1. *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] Out of the pillar of the cloud in which he went before them; either while they were at Etham, or when journeying from thence, and a little before they turned off to the right, as they were now directed:

saying; as follows:

Ver. 2. *Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn*, etc.] Not return to Egypt, or to the place, or towards the place from whence they came, but turn off, out of the road in which they were; for, as a late traveller says ^{f414},

“there were two roads, through which the Israelites might have been conducted from Cairo (which he supposes may be Rameses) to Pihahiroth. One of them lies through the valleys, as they are now called, of Jendily, Rumaleah, and Baideah, bounded on each side by the mountains of the lower Thebais; the other lies higher, having the northern range of these mountains (the mountains of Mocattee) running parallel with it on the right hand, and the desert of the Egyptian Arabia, which lies all the way open to the land of the Philistines, on the left, ((see ^{<0237>}Exodus 13:17)) about the middle of this range we may turn short on our right hand into the valley of Baideah, through a remarkable breach or discontinuation, in which we afterwards continued to the very banks of the Red sea; this road then, through the valley of Baideah, which is some hours longer than the other open road, which leads directly from Cairo to Suez, was in all probability the very road which the Israelites took to Pihahiroth, on the banks of the Red sea.”

And again he says ^{f415}, this valley ends at the sea in a small bay, made by the eastern extremities of the mountains, and is called “Tiah beni Israel”, i.e. the road of the Israelites, from a tradition of the Arabs, of their having passed through it; as it is also called Baideah from the new and unheard of miracle that was wrought near it, by dividing the Red sea, and destroying therein Pharaoh, his chariots and horsemen:

and encamp before Pihahiroth: which was sixteen miles from Etham ^{f416}, and by some ^{f417} thought to be the same with the city of Heroes (or Heroopolis), on the extreme part of the Arabic gulf, or the Phagroriopolis, placed by Strabo ^{f418} near the same place: according to the above traveller ^{f419}, Pihahiroth was the mouth, or the most advanced part of the valley of Baideah to the eastward toward the Red sea; with which Jarchi in some measure agrees, who says Pihahiroth is Pithom, now so called, because the Israelites became free: they (Hahiroth) are two rocks, and the valley between them is called (Pi) the mouth of the rocks: so Dr. Shaw observes ^{f420}; the word may be deduced from *rj*, “a hole” or “gullet”, and by a latitude common in those cases, be rendered a narrow “defile”, road or passage, such as the valley of Baideah has been described: but as the

Israelites were properly delivered at this place from their captivity and fear of the Egyptians, (^{<0143>}Exodus 14:13) we may rather suppose that Hhiroth denotes the place where they were restored to their liberty; as Hhorar and Hhiroth are words of the like sort in the Chaldee: but another very learned man ^{f421} says, that in the Egyptian language Pihahiroth signifies a place where grew great plenty of grass and herbs, and was contiguous to the Red sea, and was like that on the other shore of the sea, the Arabian, which Diodorus Siculus ^{f422} speaks of as a pleasant green field:

between Migdol and the sea; which signifies a tower, and might be one: there was a city of this name in Egypt, and in those parts, but whether the same with this is not certain, (^{<2401>}Jeremiah 44:1)

over against Baalzephon; which the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem take to be an “idol”: and so does Jarchi, and say it was the only one left of the idols of Egypt; (see ^{<0212>}Exodus 12:12) and so some Christian as well as Jewish writers suppose it to be; and that it was as a watch, or guard, or amulet, to keep fugitives from going out of the land: but by Ezekiel the tragedian ^{f423} it is called a city; and so by Josephus ^{f424}, who says they came to Baalzephon the third day, a place situated by the Red sea; which is most likely, and it is highly probable that this and Migdol were two fortified places, which guarded the mouth of the valley, or the straits which led to the Red sea: Artapanus ^{f425} the Heathen historian agrees with Josephus in saying it was the third day when they came to the Red sea:

before it shall ye encamp by the sea; and there wait till Pharaoh came up to them.

Ver. 3. *For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel*, etc.] The Septuagint version adds, “to his people”, his ministers and courtiers, when he hears where they are:

they are entangled in the land; have lost their way, and got into places they cannot easily get out of, and are perplexed in their minds, and do not know what way to take or course to steer:

the wilderness hath shut them in; or, “shut up the way to them”, ^{f426}; the wilderness between the mountains the above mentioned traveller speaks of ^{f427} the mountains of Gewoubee; these would stop their flight or progress to the southward, as those of the Attackah would do the same towards the land of the Philistines; the Red sea likewise lay before them to the east, while Pharaoh (could) close up the valley behind them, with his chariots

and his horsemen; and which, no doubt, appeared very advantageous and encouraging to him, as it must be very distressing to the Israelites.

Ver. 4. *And I will harden Pharaoh's heart*, etc.] Once more, as he had often done:

that he shall follow after them: to Pihahiroth, and even into the sea after them:

and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; in his wisdom, faithfulness, power, and justice, by the destruction of them:

that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord; the only Jehovah, the Lord God omnipotent; even those that feel the weight of his hand while troubling their host, and bringing the waters upon them; especially those that shall remain in the land, and will not be involved in the catastrophe:

and they did so: the Israelites turned to the right to Pihahiroth, instead of going by Bishbesh and Tinah (Bubastis and Pelusium), and so along the sea coast towards Gaza and Ascalon, and encamped there between Migdol and the sea over against Baalzephon, as they were ordered and directed.

Ver. 5. *And it was told the king of Egypt*, etc.] By some of the Egyptians, or mixed multitude that went out with Israel, but returned upon their encampment at the Red sea, or by some spies Pharaoh sent with them to observe their motions: the Targums of Jonathan and Jarchi make use of a word which Buxtorf translates military officers: and the latter says, they went out with them the three days' journey, but the Israelites not returning to Egypt (as expected), they tell Pharaoh of it the fourth day; and on the fifth and sixth he pursued them, and in the night of the seventh went into the sea after them, and on the morning they (the Israelites) sung the song, which was the seventh of the passover: these reported to Pharaoh:

that the people fled; that under a pretence of going three days' journey into the wilderness, to serve and sacrifice to the Lord, they were about to make their escape out of the land:

and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants were turned against the people; who had so much favour in their sight, not only to give them leave to go, and to hasten their departure, but to lend and give them things of great value; but now their hearts were filled with hatred of them, and with malice and revenge:

and they said, why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? not Pharaoh only, but his servants said so, even those who had entreated him to let them go, (^{<2017>}Exodus 10:7) yet now repent of it, and cannot think what reason they had to do it, when at that time they saw reason, and gave a very sufficient one, namely, the destruction of Egypt; but now the judgments and plagues of God being no more upon them, they recollect the great service of the Israelites to them and the benefits and advantages they had reaped by it, and the loss they had sustained by parting with them, and therefore reflect upon themselves for such a piece of conduct.

Ver. 6. *And he made ready his chariot*, etc.] Which he usually rode in when he went forth to war; for this seems to be a military chariot, and not for show or grandeur; and this was got ready not by himself, as Jarchi, but rather by his orders, as Aben Ezra:

and took his people with him; the Greek version reads, “all his people”; not all his subjects, but his soldiers; at least a great number, and especially his cavalry.

Ver. 7. *And he took six hundred chosen chariots*, etc.] The chief and best he had, war chariots, chariots of iron; perhaps such as had iron scythes to them, to cut down men as they drove along; these were taken partly for quickness of dispatch, that they might be able the sooner to overtake the Israelites, who had got several days’ marches before them; and partly for their strength and the annoyance of their enemies with them:

and all the chariots of Egypt: as many as could in so short a time be got together: for the words are not to be taken in the utmost latitude, but to signify a great number, and all that could be conveniently come at: the Greek version is, “all the horse”, the cavalry, which better distinguishes them from the former:

and captains over everyone of them: over everyone of the chariots, so that they must each of them have many in them, to have captains over them: and perhaps the infantry, or foot soldiers, for, quickness of expedition, were put into them; for, besides these, there were horsemen: Josephus ^{f428} makes the whole number of his army to be 50,000 horse, and 200,000 foot, and the same number is given by a Jewish chronologer ^{f429}: but Patricides, an Arabic writer, says ^{f430} it consisted of 600,000, and Ezekiel ^{f431}, the tragic poet, has made it amount to a million of horse and foot: should it be

asked where horses could be had to draw the chariots, and horses for the horsemen after mentioned, when all were destroyed by the hail, (⁽¹⁰²⁵⁾Exodus 9:25) it may be replied, that only those in the field were killed, not such as were in stables, where chariot horses and horses for war may be supposed to be: besides, as the Targum of Jonathan intimates, these might belong to these servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord, and took their cattle home, (⁽¹⁰⁰⁰⁾Exodus 9:20).

Ver. 8. *And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, etc.]* As he said he would, (⁽¹⁰⁴⁰⁾Exodus 14:4),

and he pursued after the children of Israel; took their rout in pursuit of them:

and the children of Israel went out with an high hand: not once dreaming they should be pursued by Pharaoh as an enemy, when they went out with his full consent, and with such pressing solicitations to be gone, and with so much favour shown them by the Egyptians; wherefore they set out, and went on with great boldness, courage, and intrepidity; “with an uncovered head”, as the Targum of Onkelos, without any fear, and with great alacrity and cheerfulness; they carried both their heads and their hands high, were fearless and thoughtless of any danger when this mighty preparation was making against them.

Ver. 9. *But the Egyptians pursued after them, etc.]* When they thought nothing of it, and had no fears about it:

all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army; by the latter Aben Ezra understands the foot, as distinguished from the cavalry, the horses and horsemen; and perhaps these, as before observed, might be carried in the chariots for quicker dispatch:

and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon; where they had pitched their camp by divine appointment, (⁽¹⁰⁴⁰⁾Exodus 14:2).

Ver. 10. *And when Pharaoh drew nigh, etc.]* Or “caused to draw nigh”^{f432}; that is, his army, brought it very near to the camp of the Israelites:

the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; in great numbers, with full speed, threatening them with utter destruction:

and they were sore afraid; being an unarmed people, though numerous, and so unable to defend themselves against armed and disciplined troops; and besides, through their long time of slavery their spirits were broken, and were a mean, abject, dispirited people; and especially were so on the sight of the Egyptians, whom they had so many years looked upon and served as their lords and masters:

and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord: had they prayed unto him in this their distress for help and assistance, protection and preservation, with an holy and humble confidence in him for it, they had acted a right and laudable part; but their crying out to him seems to be only an outcry of the troubles they were in, and rather the effect of despair than of faith and hope; and was by way of complaint and lamentation of their miserable condition and circumstances, as appears by what follows, which shows what temper of mind they were in.

Ver. 11. *And they said unto Moses*, etc.] The Targum of Jonathan is,

“the ungodly of that generation said unto Moses;”

but it seems rather to be understood of the body of the people in general, and is not to be limited to some particular persons of the worse characters among them:

because there were no graves in Egypt; as if there had been none, when there were so many; the Egyptians being more solicitous about their graves than their houses, as Diodorus Siculus reports ^{f433}; thus upbraiding Moses in a sarcastic way for what he had done:

hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? that so there might be room and graves enough to bury them in, for nothing but death was before their eyes:

wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? which was very ungrateful and disingenuous.

Ver. 12. *Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt*, etc.] The thing they suggested to him, and talked with him about while they were in the land of Egypt, before they came out of it, particularly after their service and bondage were made more severe and cruel upon Moses and Aaron’s demanding their dismissal, (see ~~10:21~~ Exodus 5:21 6:9):

saying, let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? peaceably and quietly, as we have been used to do, since there is no likelihood of being freed, and since we are more evilly treated than before:

for it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness: of such mean spirits were they, and had so poor a notion of, and taste for liberty, and so ungrateful were they to their deliverer.

Ver. 13. *And Moses said unto the people,* etc.] Not in wrath and anger, but very coolly and sedately, agreeably to his character of the meekest man on earth; though what they had said to him was very insulting and provoking:

fear ye not; Pharaoh and his numerous host, do not be dismayed at them or possess yourselves with a dread of them, and of destruction by them:

stand still; do not stir from the place where you are, do not offer to run away, or to make your escape by flight (and which indeed seemed impossible), keep your place and station, and put yourselves in such a situation as to wait and observe the issue of things:

and see the salvation of the Lord which he will shew to you today; which is expressive of great faith in Moses in the midst of this extremity, who firmly believed that God would save them from this numerous and enraged army, and that very quickly, even that day; at least within twenty four hours, within the compass of a day; for it was the night following that salvation was wrought for them, and their eyes beheld it: and it may be called the salvation of the Lord, for it was his own hand that only effected it, the Israelites not contributing anything in the least unto it, and was typical of the great salvation which Christ with his own arm, and without the help of his people, has wrought out for them:

for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever; that is, in such a posture or manner, no more armed, nor alive, and the objects of their fear and dread; for otherwise they did see them again, but then they were on the sea shore dead; for it should be rendered, not “whom”, but “how”, or “in what manner”^{f434}.

Ver. 14. *The Lord shall fight for you,* etc.] By commanding the wind of the heavens, and the waves of the sea, and employing them against their

enemies, and on their behalf; they being unarmed, and so not in a condition to fight for themselves, as well as they had no heart or spirit for it:

and ye shall hold your peace; be still, and quiet, and easy in your minds, and forbear saying or doing anything; “be silent”; and neither express the fear and distress of their minds, by any mournful sounds, nor their joy of faith by shouts and huzzas; as they could not draw a sword, they were not so much as to blow a trumpet, and break a pitcher, and cry the sword of the Lord, and of Israel as they after did on another occasion, at least their posterity.

Ver. 15. *And the Lord said unto Moses, wherefore criest thou unto me?* etc.] The Targum of Jonathan is, “why standest thou and prayest before me?”

and no doubt this crying is to be understood of prayer, of mental prayer, of secret ejaculations put up by Moses to the Lord without a voice, for no mention is made of any: this shows, that though Moses most firmly believed that God would work salvation for them, yet he did not neglect the use of means, prayer to God for it; nor was the Lord displeased with him on that account, only he had other work for him to do, and he had no need to pray any longer, God had heard him, and would save him and his people:

speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward; a little further, as Aben Ezra observes, until they were come to the sea shore, near to which they now were; and thither they were to move in an orderly composed manner, as unconcerned and fearless of their enemies.

Ver. 16. *But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it*, etc.] Even the same rod with which so many wonders had been done in Egypt; and Artapanus, the Heathen, says^{f435}, that Moses being bid by a divine voice to smite the sea with his rod, he hearkened to it, and touched the water with it, and so it divided, as it is said it did, (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 14:21)

and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea; and so they did, (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 14:22,29).

Ver. 17. *And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians*, etc.] That they shall have no sense of danger, and be fearless of it, incautious and thoughtless, hurried on with wrath and fury, malice and revenge:

and they shall follow them; the Israelites into the sea, supposing it to be as safe for the one as the other:

and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen: by the utter destruction of them, in just retaliation for the many innocent infants that had been drowned by them in the river Nile.

Ver. 18. *And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord*, etc.]

Acknowledge him to be Jehovah, the self-existent, eternal, and immutable Being, the one only living and true God, who is wise and powerful, faithful, just, and true; that is, those Egyptians that were left behind in Egypt, hearing what was done at the Red sea; for as for those that came with Pharaoh, they all perished to a man:

when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen; by casting them into the sea, and drowning them there, thereby showing himself to be mightier than he.

Ver. 19. *And the Angel of God which went before the camp of Israel*, etc.]

The Jews say ^{f436} this was Michael, the great prince, who became a wall of fire between Israel and the Egyptians; and if they understood by him the uncreated angel, the eternal Word, the Son of God, who is always in Scripture meant by Michael, they are right: for certainly this Angel of the Lord is the same with Jehovah, who is said to go before them in a pillar of cloud and fire, (^(EXOD)Exodus 13:21):

removed, and went behind them; but because removing from place to place, and going forwards or backwards, cannot be properly said of a divine Person, who is omnipresent, and fills every place and space; this is to be understood of the emblem of him, the pillar of cloud, as the next clause explains it:

and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

“because of the Egyptians, who cast arrows and stones, and the cloud received them;”

and so Jarchi; whereby the Israelites were protected and preserved from receiving any hurt by them: so Christ is the protection of his people from all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, that sin cannot damn them, nor

Satan destroy them, nor the world overcome them; for his salvation is as walls and bulwarks to them, and he is indeed a wall of fire about them.

Ver. 20. *And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel*, etc.] That is, the pillar of cloud, and the Angel of God, or Jehovah, in it, whereby the camp of Israel was secured from being annoyed by the camp of the Egyptians; and was an emblem of the gracious interposition of Christ between his spiritual Israel, whom he has redeemed by his blood, and their spiritual enemies, the Egyptians, the men of the world that hate them, from whose rage and malice Christ is their protection and safeguard:

and it was a cloud and darkness [to them]; to the Egyptians; it cast a shade upon them, and made the darkness of the night still greater to them, so that they could not see their way, and knew not where they were:

but it gave light by night to these; to the Israelites, so that they could see their way, and walk on in the midst of the sea, as on dry land; and such a light and guide they needed; for it was now the twenty first day of the month, seven days after the full of the moon, when the passover began, and therefore could have no benefit from the moon. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem say, that half the cloud was light, and half darkness; and it seems plain from the account, that that side of it which was towards the Egyptians was dark, and that which was towards the Israelites was light, and so an hinderance to the one and a benefit to the other: thus Christ is set for the rising of some, and the fall of others; and his Gospel is to some the savour of death unto death, and to others the savour of life unto life; to the one it is a hidden Gospel, and lies in darkness and obscurity, and to others a great and glorious light:

so that one came not near the other all the night; an emblem of that division and separation which the grace of God, the blood of Christ, and the light of the Gospel, make between the true Israel of God, and the men of the world; and which will continue throughout time, and to all eternity, so that they will never come near to each other; (see ^{<2165>}Luke 16:26).

Ver. 21. *And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea*, etc.] With his rod in it, as he was directed to, (^{<2146>}Exodus 14:16). What the poet says ^{f437} of Bacchus is more true of Moses, whose rod had been lift up upon the rivers Egypt, and now upon the Red sea:

and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night; and the direction of the Red sea being nearly, if not altogether, north

and south, it was in a proper situation to be wrought upon and divided by an easterly wind; though the Septuagint version renders it a strong south wind. No wind of itself, without the exertion and continuance of almighty power, in a miraculous way, could have so thrown the waves of the sea on heaps, and retained them so long, that such a vast number of people should pass through it as on dry land; though this was an instrument Jehovah made use of, and that both to divide the waters of the sea, and to dry and harden the bottom of it, and make it fit for travelling, as follows:

and made the sea dry land; or made the bottom of it dry, so that it could be trod and walked upon with ease, without sinking in, sticking fast, or slipping about, which was very extraordinary:

and the waters were divided; or “after the waters were divided”, ^{f438}; for they were first divided before the sea could be made dry. The Targum of Jonathan says, the waters were divided into twelve parts, answerable to the twelve tribes of Israel, and the same is observed by other Jewish writers ^{f439}, grounded upon a passage in (^{<D63>}Psalm 136:13) and suppose that each tribe took its particular path.

Ver. 22. *And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground*, etc.] Some Jewish writers say ^{f440}, that the tribe of Judah went in first, and then the other tribes followed; but it is most likely, what Josephus says ^{f441}, that Moses first entered in, and then the Israelites, encouraged by his example, went in after him; and a very adventurous action it was, and nothing but strong faith in the almighty power and promise of God could have engaged them in it, to which the apostle ascribes it, (^{<S129>}Hebrews 11:29). It is the opinion of Aben Ezra, and some other Jewish writers, that the Israelites did not pass through the Red sea to the opposite shore, only went some way into it, and took a compass in a semicircle, and came out on the same shore again, and which has been espoused by some Christian writers; and chiefly because they were in the wilderness of Etham before, and from whence they went into it, and when they came out of it, it was still the wilderness of Etham they came into, and went three days’ journey into it seeking water; (see ^{<D33>}Exodus 13:20 ^{<S38>}Numbers 33:8). Though it is possible the wilderness on the opposite shore might bear the same name, because of its likeness to it; and if it was the same wilderness that went round the Arabic gulf, or Red sea, and reached on to the other side of it, and so the wilderness of Etham lay on both sides, the difficulty is removed; for it seems most agreeable to the

expressions of Scripture, that the Israelites passed through it from shore to shore. Others, in order to lessen the miracle, would have it that Moses, well knowing the country, and observing the tide, took the advantage of low water, and led the Israelites through it; and this story is told by the Egyptian priests of Memphis, as Artapanus^{f442} relates; but were the Egyptians less knowing of their country, and of the tide of the Red sea? and could Moses be sure of the exact time when they would come up to him, and the tide would serve him? Besides, the Egyptian priests at Heliopolis own the miracle, and relate it much as Moses has done; which must proceed from a conviction of the truth of it. And the above historian reports that the king (of Egypt) with a great army, and consecrated animals, pursued the Jews because of the substance they had borrowed of the Egyptians, which they took with them; but Moses being bid by a divine voice (or the voice of God, of Jehovah) to smite the sea with a rod, and hearkening to it, he touched the water with the rod, and so it divided, and his forces passed through a dry path, and the Egyptians attempting the same and pursuing, fire or lightning flashed out against them; and the sea shutting up the path again, partly by fire, and partly by the flow of the water, they all perished: and that this affair was miraculous, and could not be owing to any advantage taken from the tide, the following things have been observed; it is owned that the Red sea ebbs and flows like other seas that have a communication with the ocean, that is, the waters rise towards the shore during six hours, and having continued about a quarter of an hour at high water, ebb down again during another six hours; and it is observed by those who have examined it, that the greatest distance it falls from the place of high water is about three hundred yards; and that during the time of low water, one may safely travel it, as some have actually done; so that those three hundred paces, which the sea leaves uncovered during the time of low water, can continue so but for the space of half an hour at most; for during the first six hours, the sea retires only by degrees, and in less than half an hour it begins again to flow towards the shore. The most therefore that can be allowed, both of time and space of passable ground, in a moderate computation, is about two hundred paces, during six hours, or one hundred and fifty paces, during eight hours. Now it is further observed, that it is plain that a multitude consisting of upwards of two millions and a half of men, women, children, and slaves, encumbered besides with great quantities of cattle, household stuff, and the spoils of the Egyptians, could never perform such a march within so short a time; we may say within even double that space, though we should allow them also

double the breadth of ground to do it on. This argument, it is added, will hold good against those who suppose they only coasted along some part of the sea, and those who maintain that they crossed the small arm or point of it which is toward the further end, near the isthmus of Suez; seeing that six or eight hours could not have sufficed for the passage of so immense a multitude, allow them what breadth of room you will; much less for Pharaoh to have entered it with his whole host^{f443}: and for the confirmation of the Mosaic account of this affair, and as miraculous, may be observed the testimony of Diodorus Siculus, who reports^{f444} that it is a tradition among the Ichthyophagi, who inhabit near the Red sea, or Arabic gulf, which they have received from the report of their ancestors, and is still preserved with them, that upon a great recess of the sea, every place of the gulf became dry, the sea falling to the opposite parts, the bottom appeared green, and returning back with a mighty force, was restored to its place again; which can have reference to nothing else but to this transaction in the time of Moses. And Strabo^{f445} relates a very wonderful thing, and such as rarely happens, that on the shore between Tyre and Ptolemais, when they of Ptolemais had a battle with the Emperor Sarpedon at that place, and there being put to flight, a flow of the sea like an inundation covered those that fled, and some were carried into the sea and perished, and others were left dead in hollow places; after a reflux followed, and discovered and showed the bodies of those that lay among the dead fishes. Now learned men have observed^{f446}, that what is here said of the sea of Tyre is to be understood of the Red sea, and that Sarpedon is not a proper name, but the same with ἠωδπ ρϙ, “Sarphadon”, the prince of deliverance, or of the delivered, as Moses was:

and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left; some of the Jewish Rabbins from (⁴²⁵⁸Exodus 15:8) have supposed that the waters were frozen as they were drove back by the east wind, and so stood up firm while the Israelites passed through, and then another wind thawed them, which brought them upon the Egyptians; but no doubt this was done by the wonderful interposition of divine power, and perhaps the ministry of angels was made use of, to detain and continue them in this position, until the end was answered. Adrichomius says^{f447}, the breadth of the sea was six miles at the passage of the Israelites; but a late traveller^{f448} tells us, that the channel between Sdur (or Shur, on the opposite side) and Gibbel Gewoubee, and Attackah (which he supposes was the place of their passage), was nine or ten miles over. Thevenot says^{f449}, that during the

space of five days he kept along the coast of the Red sea, in going to Mount Sinai, he could not observe it to be anywhere above eight or nine miles over. A later traveller ^{f450} tells us, that from the fountains of Moses may be plainly seen a wonderful aperture (Pihahiroth; (see ^{<0242>}Exodus 14:2)) in the mountains on the other side of the Red sea, through and from which the children of Israel entered into it, when Pharaoh and his host were drowned; which aperture is situated west-southwest from these fountains of Moses, and the breadth of the sea hereabouts, where the children of Israel passed it, is about four or five hours' journey. The Arabic geographer ^{f451} calls the place Jethren, where Pharaoh and his host were drowned; and represents it as a dangerous place to sail in, and where many ships are lost, and that this rough place is about the space of six miles. A countryman ^{f452} of ours, who had been in these parts, guesses that the breadth of the place (called by the Mahometans, Kilt el Pharown, the well or pit of Pharaoh) where the Israelites are said to pass through is about six or seven leagues; the difference between these writers may be accounted for by the different places where they suppose this passage was.

Ver. 23. *And the Egyptians pursued*, etc.] The Israelites going forwards towards the sea as they were ordered, and going into it:

and went in after them into the midst of the sea; which if fearful of, they might conclude it was as safe for them to go in as for the Israelites; but perhaps through the darkness of the night, and the eagerness of their pursuit, they might not perceive where they were, nor the danger they were exposed unto:

even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen: which is observed to show, that as all that did go in perished, not one was saved, as after related, so all he brought with him, the whole of his army, went in, so that all that went out of Egypt were destroyed.

Ver. 24. *And it came to pass, that in the morning watch*, etc.] The Romans divided the night into four watches, so the Hebrews; though some say into three only. The first began at six o'clock, and lasted till nine, the second was from thence to twelve, the third from thence to three in the morning, and the last from three to six, which is here called the morning watch; so that this was some time between three and six o'clock in the morning:

the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire and of the cloud; the Angel of the Lord, and who was Jehovah himself,

who was in it, he looked to the army of the Egyptians; not to know whereabouts they were, he being the omniscient God; nor in a friendly manner, but as an enemy, with indignation and wrath. The Targum of Jonathan is,

“he looked through the pillar of fire, to cast upon them coals of fire, and through the pillar of cloud, to cast upon them hailstones.”

The Jerusalem Targum is,

“pitch, fire, and hailstones;”

and Josephus^{f453} speaks of storms and tempests, of thunder and lightning, and of thunderbolts out of the clouds; and Artapanus^{f454} of fire or lightning flashing out against them, by which many perished. Perhaps the psalmist may have reference to this in (~~1960~~) Psalm 106:10-15)

and troubled the host of the Egyptians; the thunder and lightning no doubt frightened the horses, so that they broke their ranks, and horsemen and chariots might run foul on one another, and the hailstones scatter and destroy many; however, the whole must be terrible and distressing to them, especially it being in the night season.

Ver. 25. *And took off their chariot wheels*, etc.] The Targum of Jonathan renders it “cut” or “sawed them off”; perhaps they might be broken off by the hailstones. Milton^{f455} seems to have a notion of Pharaoh’s chariot wheels being broken, when he says, “and craze” (i.e. break) “their chariot wheels”; or, as Jarchi suggests, he burnt them, through the force of the fire or lightning:

that they drave them heavily; the wheels being off, the chariots must be dragged along by the horses by mere force, which must be heavy work; or, “and made them to go, or led them heavily”, or “with heaviness”^{f456}; and so to be ascribed to the Lord, who looked at the Egyptians, took off the wheels of their chariots, and stopped them in the fury of their career, that they could not pursue with the swiftness they had:

so that the Egyptians said, let us flee from the face of Israel; for by this battery and flashes of fire on them, they concluded that Israel, who they thought were fleeing before them, had turned and were facing them, and the Lord at the head of them; and therefore it was high time for them to flee, as follows:

for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians; for they rightly took the thunder and lightning, the fire and hailstones, to be the artillery of heaven turned against them, and in favour of the Israelites. Jarchi interprets it, the Lord fights for them in Egypt, even in Egypt itself; but so he had done many a time before, of which they were not insensible.

Ver. 26. *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] Out of the pillar of fire and of the cloud, when the Egyptians were in all the confusion before described, and about to make the best of their way back again:

Stretch out thine hand over the sea; with his rod in it, by which all the wonders were wrought, and particularly by which the sea had been divided, and now it must be used to a different purpose:

that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen; the waters which stood upright as a wall, on the right and left, might be no longer kept in such a position, but fall down upon the Egyptians, their chariots and horsemen, being higher than they.

Ver. 27. *And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea*, etc.] Or towards it, as he was ordered, the rod being in his hand, as before observed:

and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; being no longer detained by a superior power, contrary to the nature of it, to stand still as an heap, and firm as a wall, its waves came down and rolled with their usual force and strength, or it returned to its usual course:

at the appearance of the morning in its strength; when the morning looked forth in its first light and brightness, when it was broad day:

and the Egyptians fled against it; against the waves that came rolling down upon them: or “at meeting it”^{f457}, for as they turned their backs on the Israelites and fled, the waters of the sea met them, as well as fell on each side of them, or rather over them, and followed after them, and closed and shut them up on all sides; so that it was in vain for them to flee, for let them go which way they would, the sea was against them:

and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea; or shook them “off” or “out”^{f458}; out of their chariots, blew them out with the wind; for as there was a wind made use of to divide the waters of the sea, and make the bottom of it dry, there was another to cause the waters to return

to their former place; (see ^{<D150>}Exodus 15:10) or the waves of the sea dashed them out of their chariots, or through the force of them they were overturned in it.

Ver. 28. *And the waters returned*, etc.] To their place, and so in the above tradition related by Diodorus Siculus, it is said that the sea returning with a mighty force was restored to its place again; ((see Gill on “^{<D142>}Exodus 14:22”)).

and covered the chariots and the horsemen; the wall they made being much higher than a man on horseback, when they fell down, covered even those who had the advantage of horses and chariots; and much more must the infantry be covered by them, who may be meant in the next clause:

and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; the foot, that went into the sea after the chariots and horsemen, or the whole army, including the cavalry and infantry, which went into the sea after the children of Israel. Who this Pharaoh was is not agreed; according to Berosus ^{f459} his name was Cenchres, or Chenchres, whom Acherres succeeded; according to Bishop Usher ^{f460} it was Amenophis; but our English poet ^{f461} calls him Busiris; though Strabo ^{f462} says there was no king or governor of that name. Diodorus Siculus ^{f463} indeed speaks of two so called; yet he elsewhere ^{f464} says, not that there was any king of the name, only the sepulchre of Osiris was so called:

there remained not so much as one of them; wherefore it must be a falsehood which is related by some, that Pharaoh himself was preserved, and afterwards reigned in Nineveh ^{f465}, since not one was saved; (see ^{<D461>}Psalm 106:11) and so Artapanus ^{f466} the Heathen says, they all perished, and among these are said ^{f467} to be Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Egypt mentioned in (^{<S188>}2 Timothy 3:8) but this is contradicted by those ^{f468} who ascribe the making of the golden calf to them.

Ver. 29. *But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea*, etc.] The bottom of it becoming so through the strong east wind, which blew all night until they came to the opposite shore, where they landed on “terra firma”; and so Noldius renders the phrase “through the sea”; that is, from shore to shore:

and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left; ((see Gill on “^{<D142>}Exodus 14:22”)).

Ver. 30. *Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians*, etc.] For though it was now six or seven days since they had leave to go out of Egypt, and actually did depart, yet they could not be said properly to be saved, or to be in safety, till this day, when all the Egyptians their enemies were destroyed, that pursued after them; and this was the twenty first day of the month, and the seventh and last day of the passover, and was an holy convocation to the Lord; ((see Gill on “⁽¹²¹⁶⁾Exodus 12:16”))

and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the sea shore; all along, as a late traveller ^{f469} observes, as we may presume, from Sdur (or Shur) to Corondel, and at Corondel especially, from the assistance and termination of the current there. The word for “dead” ^{f470} is in the singular number, and joined with a plural may denote that they saw everyone of the Egyptians dead, since they were all destroyed, and not one remained of them, as in (⁽¹²⁴⁸⁾Exodus 14:28). Aben Ezra thinks the sense of the words is, not that the Egyptians were seen dead upon the sea shore, but that the Israelites standing upon the sea shore saw the dead bodies of the Egyptians, that is, floating on the waters of the sea; but rather the meaning is, that their dead bodies were by the force of the waters cast upon the shore, and there beheld and plundered by the Israelites. Josephus ^{f471} observes, that the day following (that night the Egyptians were drowned) the arms of the Egyptians being cast on the shore where the Hebrews encamped, through the force of the sea and wind, Moses gathered them up and armed the Hebrews with them; and this will account for it how they came to have arms, since it is highly probable they came out of Egypt unarmed; and how they could fight battles as they did in the wilderness, and when they came into the land of Canaan.

Ver. 31. *And Israel saw the great work*, etc.] Or “hand” ^{f472}; the hand of the Lord, the mighty power of God, and took notice of it, and seriously considered the greatness of it:

which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; which mighty hand he laid upon them, and which great power he exercised on them, and which great work, the effect thereof, he wrought in destroying them in such a manner, by causing the waters, which divided for them and their safety, to return upon the Egyptians to their utter destruction:

and the people feared the Lord; had an awe of his power and greatness upon their minds, and a sense of his goodness to them upon their hearts,

which influenced their fear of him, and caused them to fear him with a filial and godly fear:

and believed the Lord and his servant Moses; they believed the Lord to be the only Jehovah, the supreme Being, the one only living and true God, faithful to his word, able to do all things, and wise to do them in the fittest season, for his own glory and his people's good; and they believed his promises, and the fulfilment of them; and that as he had now saved them out of the hands of the Egyptians, he would bring them to the land of Canaan, which he had promised their fathers to give unto them; and they believed Moses was sent of God to be their deliverer out of Egypt, and to be their leader to the promised land; (see ¹⁹⁴²Psalm 106:12) and who were now by the apostle said to be baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, (⁴⁰¹1 Corinthians 10:1,2) and of their passage through the Red sea under the direction of Moses being an emblem of baptism, ((see Gill on "⁴⁰¹1 Corinthians 10:1"))).