

Exodus: The Miracle: Phase 3, Watery Trap, 1-8

3. Phase Three: Pharaoh's Army Got Drowned

Exodus 14:24 - And it came about at the morning watch that the Lord looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion.

Exodus 14:25 - And He caused the chariot wheels to swerve and He made them drive with difficulty; so the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from Israel, for the Lord is fighting for them against the Egyptians."

Exodus 14:26 - Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen."

Exodus 14:27 - So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak, while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it; then the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

Exodus 14:28 - And the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained.

The morning watch has been established as the third division of the night between 2 and 5 o'clock A.M. The passage informs us that it was during this period that the Egyptian army entered the miraculously created breach in Little Bitter Lake. Further, it was at the end of the morning watch that the waters returned to normal and in so doing drowned Pharaoh's army.

The mechanics of the miracle are a combination of several sources of power, authority, and timing.

Note: I will now describe the sequence of events which occurred at Little Bitter Lake. This is an attempt to help you organize your thoughts on how the events described in verses 24-28 may have occurred. I do not present them as an exegetical analysis but simply as logical conclusions based on research that I have done. These conclusions take into consideration facts presented in the context of the passage, namely, the intrusion of miraculous divine power, the presence of natural meteorological forces, and the function of the laws of hydrology:

The natural power of a meteorological event—a gale-force khamsin—was used by the Lord to blow a breach into the waters of Little Bitter Lake. This wind, plus additional heat from the concentrated supernatural power of the Shekinah fire, quickly dried out the lake bed so the Jews could advance on dry ground. However, once the drying process was completed, the khamsin abated somewhat since it would have been extremely difficult for the Israelites, and their animals, to advance into the face of a maximum strength gale-force wind.

Gale force, according to the Beaufort Scale, ranges between 32 to 63 miles per hour. Apparently, the breach was achieved at maximum force, while the crossing took place at minimum force. Thus, the walls of water pushed back by the khamsin were held in place by the power of divine omnipotence.

Placed between the camps of Pharaoh and the Israelites respectively, the Shekinah's fire illuminated the broad 1-mile breach. It provided visibility so that the Jews could not only see the escape route but also to behold the awesome spectacle of the lake's waters being held in check by divine power.

On the Egyptian side of the Shekinah, the cloud's fog-like wall of protection was withdrawn at some point during the morning watch so Pharaoh's soldiers could see the Jews escaping through the breach.

Taking the bait, Pharaoh's army made a fatal entry into the Lord's watery trap. Once the entire pursuing army was well into the breach, the Lord is said to have looked down on it from the cloud and fire and brought its soldiers into confusion. This confusion was accomplished by the Lord's management of both the wind and the restrained waters.

Apparently, the Lord again increased the khamsin toward maximum gale-force intensity thus slowing the army's advance and positioning it right in the middle of the lake. Rather than releasing the walls of water all at once and allowing them to rush towards each other, the Lord permitted the return to begin gradually, starting at the bottom. Thus, the water began a shallow flow towards the middle of the breach. As it swept across, the lake bed quickly became soggy, causing the chariot wheels and horses' hooves to sink into the mire.

The confusion and difficulty created by the waters' return caused the army to attempt a retreat back to the Egyptian side of the lake. It was at this point that the Shekinah ordered Moses to again stretch out his hand over the waters.

When he did the Lord withdrew the khamsin? Immediately the walls of water began to collapse and converge from the Egyptian shore eastward towards the shore of the Jornada. As they cascaded towards the middle of the lake the converging waters swept over Pharaoh's army along with its chariots, horses, and riders.

In summary, I'd like to reference a passage from:

Edersheim, Albert. The Exodus and the Wanderings in the Wilderness. Vol. 2 in Old Testament Bible History. Reprint. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982, p. 86:

The following extract from **Palmer's Desert of the Exodus (vol. i. p. 37)** may be interesting:

A strong wind blowing from the east, at the moment of the setting of the ebb-tide, might so drive back the waters that towards the sea they would be some feet higher than on the shore side. Such a phenomenon is frequently observed in lakes and inland seas. If there were ... any chain of sand-banks dividing the gulf, that portion might be blown dry, and a path soon left with water on either side.

We find that the waters returned, not with a sudden rush, overwhelming the Egyptians at once, but gradually, and at first, as we might expect, saturating the sand, so that it took off their chariot-wheels this would naturally cause such a panic and confusion as to seriously retard them in their passage. The waters were too surely advancing upon them, and when morning broke 'Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore.'

All this was visible to the Israelites who were safely ashore but looking on with reverence and respect for the Lord's deliverance, and obviously grateful for His faithfulness, veracity, and power.

Exodus 14:30 - Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

Exodus 14:31 - And when Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord [**showed reverence and respect**], and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses.

These Jews had reluctantly utilized the four-step process of faith-rest crisis management:

They faced the complexity of Pharaoh's advancing army while trapped in a cul-de-sac, helpless to escape, and hopeless to do anything about it.

They neutralized fear by reducing the complex to the simple. They claimed the promise found in:

Exodus 3:12 - ... when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.

They then moved from the simple back to the complex as they remembered doctrines taught by Moses which vectored their memory centers with reminders of the essence of God rationale:

Exodus 14:13 - Stand fast and see the deliverance of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today.

Finally, there was the move back to the simple, resting on the doctrinal conclusion stated in:

Exodus 14:14 - The Lord will fight for you while you keep quiet.

All that's left is application of doctrine under pressure. Application is executed when we hear the Word of God and then do what we are commanded.

Exodus 14:15 - Tell the Israelites to go forward!

Execution of the Christian way of life becomes quite simple when you remember the formula: Do your duty! God will take care of the details.

Duty is defined by the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit through recall and application of Bible doctrine circulating in the stream of consciousness and stored in long-term memory traces in the cerebral cortex.