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C0618 – May 3, 2006 – Ex 13:17-14:31 – The Red Sea Crossing

Let's trace the Israelites route as they left Egypt. Now, the journey is described in three stages:

1. Rameses to Succoth (12:37)
2. Succoth to Etham (13:20)
3. Etham to Pi-Hahiroth (14:2)

We don't know exactly where all these places were but if we assume several factors we can trace pretty closely the route they took.

- The elderly and children would have to be able to travel the route
- The destination was Midian in the Arabian Peninsula
- They crossed a body of water called *yam suph* (the Red Sea)

These factors help us trace the route as the DVD showed last week.



Chapter 12 discussed stage 1 of their travels but tonight, Exodus 13-14 record stage 2 of their travels and the Red Sea Crossing.

I. Stage 2: God's Route from Succoth to Etham (Exod 13:17-22)

Exodus 13:17 Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, "The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt."

¹⁸ Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt.

¹⁹ Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, "God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you."

²⁰ Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness.

²¹ The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.

²² He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines. The **Philistines** lived on the southeast corner of the Mediterranean in what is known today as the Gaza Strip. That would be the shortest route to the land of Canaan which God promised to Abraham (Gen 15:18-21), Isaac (Gen 26:3), Jacob (Gen 35:12) and later to Moses and the sons of Israel (Exod 3:8, 17; 13:5). But God did not take them that **way** because the Philistines lived there and they were waging war with the Egyptians. If the Israelites saw **war** they **might change their minds**, this is the OT word for repent, *nacham* and is a nice translation and picture of what repentance is all about. Repentance is simply a change of mind. The sight of **war** might cause the Israelites to **change their minds** about leaving Egypt and then they might **return**, which is the OT word for "conversion", *shub*. This is one of the nicest verses showing the relationship between repentance and conversion. One has an inner change of mind which results in an outer action or response. One may have a change of mind but not take action or one may do both. God is being very thoughtful here of Israel's fragile condition as a newborn nation. He thus leads **them around the wilderness to the Red Sea**. It is wonderful to ponder the fact that God knows how fragile Israel is and how easily she could change her mind and return to Egypt. Israel will have to learn to trust in God's provision and not in Pharaoh. It becomes

apparent that their minds are deeply slave-oriented (cf Exod 14:11-12) and so God is helping them learn to trust His leadership and thus take hold of their new-found freedom. Their faith is not yet read to be tested. It must be built to the level of testing.

PRINCIPLE: This marvelous picture of God's care and consideration of newborn Israel parallels God's care and consideration for a newborn Christian. He generally keeps us from extremely testing situations at first so we can have some time for our faith to grow in His leadership.

The people marched in **military array** which means in an orderly fashion as they departed Egypt. In addition, **Moses took the bones of Joseph with him**. This fulfills Joseph's prophecy from

Genesis 50:25-26 Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here." ²⁶ So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness.ⁱ Identification of these places is pure guesswork but you can see where I place them on the map (above). **The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.** The travels across the Sinai Peninsula were very dangerous. It was extremely hot by mid-day and so the Lord went **before them in a pillar of cloud by day**, probably to shield them from the sun so they could travel in the cool of the morning and then **in a pillar of fire by night to give them light** so that they could travel in the cool of the night. Supposedly they would rest in the heat of the day, possibly under the shelter of the **pillar of cloud**. This would preserve their energy and make their journey as easy as possible. The leadership of the Lord is the key. The Lord is making it very simple to follow Him. Just look to the cloud by day and the fire by night. Follow Me, I know where I'm going.

PRINCIPLE: The first thing all new believers are supposed to do is start following the Lord. At first God places no other burden upon us, no commandments to follow. Before we can walk we must learn to crawl, before we can crawl we must learn to sit up. So, there are baby steps that must be taken before we are able to walk. Eventually we should be introduced to the Lord's commandments. The Lord's commandments mark off the boundaries of His will. Then, to remain in His will we must walk according to His

commandments. So, the Lord is taking Israel through these baby steps which will lead them to walk across the Red Sea to Mt Sinai where they will receive His commandments.

Note verse 22, **He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.** Another key point: God is always with Israel. They are His chosen nation and now as redeemed from Egypt God is always with them.

PRINCIPLE: As God was always with Israel so God is always with believers. He will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb 13:5).

All that is left to explain is the pillar of cloud and fire. *First*, there is one pillar. In the day it is a cloud, in the night it is fire. Perhaps it was a cloud in the day to shield them from the blinding morning sun which they faced as they traveled east (Meyer). Obviously, at night it provided light to travel safely. *Second*, this is the Shechinah Glory, that is, a visible manifestation of God. *Third*, Nehemiah 9:19 says it was an act of God's compassion that He did not forsake them in the wilderness, but rather lead them.

II. Stage 3: Etham to Pi-Hahiroth (14:1-4)

Exodus 14:1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

²"Tell the sons of Israel to turn back and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you shall camp in front of Baal-zephon, opposite it, by the sea.

³"For Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, 'They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.'

⁴"Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." And they did so.

By this time the Lord had led them to Etham and **Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Tell the sons of Israel to turn back and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you shall camp in front of Baal-zephon, opposite it, by the sea."** Now, these places are unknown but it seems that Etham was on the road to Midian and that road went right on over the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba (see map above). This would have been the road that Moses took when he fled to Midian forty years earlier. But now God tells them to take another path and **to turn back and camp before Pi-hahiroth.** It seems that they turned south along the eastern edge of the Sinai Peninsula to reach this unknown location. However, the Hebrew word **Pi-hahiroth** means "mouth of the gorges" and adequately describes the location of their encampment on the west bank

of the Gulf of Aqaba, the eastern branch of the Red Sea. On the opposite side of the Red Sea was **Baal-Zephon** in the Arabian Peninsula. The place of encampment is known today as the Nueva Peninsula and is a very visible geographical landmark easily capable of accommodating more than 2 million Israelites.

Now, in verse 3 we have the reason God wants them to take this unorthodox route. **For Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, 'They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.'** Such a thought by Pharaoh would certainly be coupled with the idea that the Israelite's whom God had delivered from Egypt by great and mighty plagues had now abandoned them in the **wilderness** and that they were actually all alone **wandering aimlessly**. The theological question arises, "Would a God who delivers His people then abandon them?" Pharaoh is ignorant of the fact of God's faithfulness to His people and His gentle leading. And so, Pharaoh assumes, without any justification, that **They are wandering aimlessly in the land**, that is, **in the land** of Egypt since Egypt patrolled the Sinai Peninsula. From the reports Pharaoh received **the wilderness had shut them in**. They were cornered and so arose a great opportunity for Pharaoh to recall his servants and place them in slavery under taskmasters. It's amazing after all that Pharaoh has been through that he still thinks this way after such a great defeat and destruction of Egypt. Yet, isn't that exactly the story of Satan. He keeps fighting even after being completely defeated. It's called stupidity and is the result of a heart thoroughly hardened against God. The explanation is given in verse 4. **"Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD."** **And they did so**. When a people are in the condition described throughout the Exodus narrative it is apparent they have moved into the realm of judicial blindness. After men have continually sinned by hardening their hearts against Him they put themselves in a state of hardness that is irreversible. Only God knows when this point is reached. But when it has been reached God is completely justified to further **harden them** and use them for His own glory. And thus, God hardened **Pharaoh's heart** and his people's hearts so that they **will chase after them** with two results; God will **be honored through Pharaoh and all his army** and **the Egyptians** will be taught an object lesson, **that I am the Lord. And they did so**, in accordance with God's hardening of Pharaoh. This is so important for the revelation of God to the world. It is God getting His name out and making His reputation known.

III. Pharaoh's Pursuit of the Sons of Israel (14:5-9)

⁵ When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?"

⁶ So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him;

⁷ and he took six hundred select chariots, and all the *other* chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them.

⁸ The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were going out boldly.

⁹ Then the Egyptians chased after them *with* all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and they overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

It is obvious that the Israelites got a few days head start on Pharaoh. After sulking in his royal palace over the death of his firstborn son, **the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled**, and **Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people**. Pharaoh had commanded them to leave and the people of Egypt had hastened them to leave even in the middle of the night. Now **Pharaoh and his servants** want them to return. The sequence of events that led to this decision by Pharaoh is interesting

1. God told the Israelites to turn back
2. This led Pharaoh to think that Israel was wandering aimlessly without their Godⁱⁱ
3. God would harden Pharaoh's heart for this fallacious thinking
4. Pharaoh and his servants would chase after the sons of Israel
5. God would be honored

Now they say in verse 5, **"What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?"** What a terrible misinterpretation of what had happened. They did not simply **let Israel go!** God used compulsion (Exod 3:19) so they would let the people go so that it was truly by His mighty hand and not by Pharaoh's. Pharaoh is saying, "Now we who let them go must go and retrieve them so they will continue to serve us!"

So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him; and he took six hundred select chariots, and all the *other* chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. As you know, these **chariots** have been the center of the archaeological search for the location of the Red Sea crossing and some evidence of 18th century chariots has been found in the Gulf of Aqaba off the Nueva Peninsula. So, here Pharaoh gets his military together and plans to retrieve Israel.

Verse 9 shows that they finally catch up with them at **Pi-hahiroth**, “the mouth of the gorges”, most likely on the Nueva Peninsula. From this position the Israelites were completely surrounded. The mountains on every side are impassable for the elderly and children. They were completely cornered with apparently nowhere to turn and this was all by God’s design. Prepare to see the theme of judgment/salvation and perfect discrimination once more.

IV. The Sons of Israel’s Fright (14:10-12)

¹⁰ As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD.

¹¹ Then they said to Moses, "Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt?"

¹² "Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians '? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."

The very sight of the Egyptian army struck fear in the hearts of the sons of Israel. We now see clearly the slave orientation of Israel. And we can see how our own minds work when first confronted with difficulty in the Christian life. The temptation to go back to our old ways is almost irrepressible. Slaves, true slaves, fear freedom, and here we see that firsthand with Israel. **Leave us alone...let us serve the Egyptians** for it is **better for us to serve Egypt than to die in the wilderness**. They have completely given up on God and Moses. That’s the HVP. Let’s look at the situation from the DVP. God graciously delivered them with a mighty hand from Egypt. Then He did not lead them by the way of the Philistines but around by the Red Sea because He did not want them to change their minds and turn back. Instead, He wanted to give them some time to build their trust in His gentle and loving guidance and in His servant Moses (14:31). Now that God has done all this, is it logical that God would abandon them and not provide a way of deliverance from their enemies? No, and yet, what is the people’s response to the approaching **Egyptians**? Fear. They just failed their first test. Their faith is still weak and although they cry **out to the Lord**, they turn against their leader **Moses**, saying, **"Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt?"** ¹² **"Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians '? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die**

in the wilderness." It's as if they think this whole thing has been engineered by Moses and not the Lord. How easily the slave mindset forgets the miraculous accomplishments of God. How easily the slave mindset forgets the redemption of God. How easily the slave mindset forgets the gracious leading of God. How easily the slave mindset focuses on his circumstances rather than the God who controls the circumstances. This is the sad but true story of the slave mentality that all of us once had and many of us still cling to. Let go of the circumstances you can't control and trust in the God of our circumstances. It is difficult to shake the old man and live by the new but Paul says we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom 12:1-2). The old man walks by sight, the new by faith. And though they failed here God provided deliverance to boost their faith in Him and to confirm that Moses was His servant.

V. God Parts the Red Sea (14:13-31)

¹³ But Moses said to the people, "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever.

¹⁴ "The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent."

¹⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward.

¹⁶ "As for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land.

¹⁷ "As for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen.

¹⁸ "Then the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen."

¹⁹ The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.

²⁰ So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night.

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD swept the sea *back* by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided.

²² The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters *were like* a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

23 Then the Egyptians took up the pursuit, and all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen went in after them into the midst of the sea.

24 At the morning watch, 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.

25 He caused their 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."

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."

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.

28 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.

29 But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea, and the waters *were like* a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

30 Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

31 When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses.

V. 13 **Fear** is the wrong response. It is precisely when we are cornered that God's supernatural **salvation** can take place. This verse is one of the most beautiful in Scripture. The boldness of Moses saying, "**Do not fear! Stand by and see the *yeshua* of the Lord,** for *yeshua* is the name of our Savior "Jesus".

Some commentators see this as the finality of their liberation that had begun in Egypt and was now complete as they left Egypt. However, it is possible to understand this as their present salvation, their past salvation being complete in Egypt. We must never forget that there are three aspects of salvation; past, present, and future.

ISRAEL	CHURCH
Saved from physical death of firstborn	Saved from spiritual death (penalty of sin)
Saved out of Egypt	Saved out of world system
Positional truth	Positional truth

Saved from the reigning power of Egypt	Saved from the reigning power of sin
Saved from physical enemies (Egyptians)	Saved from spiritual enemies (world forces of darkness)
Experiential truth	Experiential truth
Means of salvation: faith	Means of salvation: faith
Basis of salvation: grace	Basis of salvation: grace
Source of salvation: the LORD	Source of salvation: the LORD

They were already saved but they were being saved. God's salvation is once for all but it is also continuous. How marvelous are the ways of God! Moses says, do not fear but stand and see.

It is when we do not fear the world that we can trust the Lord. And it is when we stand still that we can see the Lord move with salvation!

It is the Lord that accomplishes this for us each and every day as we faithfully obey Him. Let God take care of your enemies. There is no need to fear when God is with you for one man and God is always the majority. When He is the one doing the fighting it can only mean victory for His omnipotence is unable to be defeated.

In verse 15, it was not time to pray, it was time to move: **go forward!** Where was **forward?** It was *yam suph*, the Red Sea, not the Reed Sea (13:8; 15:4, 22, et. al.). "**As for you [Moses] , lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land.** The biblical text necessitates a miracle. No other explanation is possible from a normal reading. So, let's define a miracle because theologians have been particularly sloppy in this area, most giving a deistic definition that assumes natural law.

- A miracle *is not* God's violation of natural law
- A miracle *is not* God intervening in the natural laws that govern the world.
- A miracle *is* God's governance of His universe in an extra-ordinary manner.

The most common argument (excuse) for not believing in miracles is that it would violate natural law. But this argument assumes what it is trying to prove, namely, that God does not exist but natural law does exist. The Bible teaches just the opposite; God does exist but natural law does not exist. Another common excuse for not believing in miracles is that the individual did not see it for himself. On this line of reasoning people living in 3rd

world countries at the time of the Apollo moon landings would have difficulty believing it happened because they had not seen it and it is beyond normal human experience. The point is that it is false to assume that not seeing something means it can't happen. Some people today still do not believe men have been to the moon.ⁱⁱⁱ Biblically, we live in a supernatural universe, not a natural one. As such, its sustenance comes from a supernatural source. What are often called laws of nature are really just mathematical formulas (sentences) that reflect God's ordinary way of governing nature. There is no reason God cannot govern His universe differently at some point in space and time since it requires the same omnipotent power to govern it extra-ordinarily as it does to govern it ordinarily. However, it is the fact of its extra-ordinariness that elicits our awe and wonder since it is so different from our ordinary experience. Usually God governs bodies of water by holding the water at the lowest elevation. In the case of the Red Sea parting God sent an east wind which only affected some of the water, causing it to retreat, joining the surrounding waters and leaving a path through the waters. He also dried up the land. So, a wall of water stood on their right and their left and their feet stood on dry ground underneath. If this occurred off the Nueva Peninsula then these walls of water would have reached several hundred feet deep at the deepest point and would have stretched for eight miles. The strength of the east wind required to blow back such a large amount of water would have been extra-ordinary and yet, miraculously, the east wind did not affect the Israelites who were standing right next to the sea on the beach, so the wind was controlled with great precision by God. All of these factors point clearly to what we call a miracle.

While Moses tells the **sons of Israel to go forward and lifts up his staff and stretches it out over the sea and divides it** God will be doing something else in verse 17, "**As for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them;** This is a strengthening of their already hard hearts. After ten plagues, seven of which displayed perfect discrimination, to go into the Red Sea after the Israelites is one of the stupidest things imaginable. Yet, that is why Paul said, "Professing to be wise, they became fools" (Rom 1:22). Their mind is darkened because of the hardness of their hearts so that they cannot reason reasonably! And through this, **I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen.**¹⁸ "**Then the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen.**" If God would not be honored by Pharaoh's life then He would most certainly be honored through his death. Then the **angel of God moved and went behind the** Israelites, getting in between the two camps. In other words, He got into battle position between the Israelites and the Egyptians. This is the first instance of "holy war" or "YHWH war" in the OT. "YHWH war" was undertaken

by the Lord to defend His own reputation, promises and self-interest. It is to be distinguished from ordinary war that Israel might undertake on her own. The **angel of God** was probably the pre-incarnate Christ in all His glory shielded by the **pillar of cloud** around Him. The **pillar of cloud** caused darkness for the **camp of Egypt** but **light** for the **camp of Israel...at night**. He formed an impenetrable boundary between the two camps. And during the night **Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided.** ²² **The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.** ²³ **Then the Egyptians took up the pursuit, and all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen went in after them into the midst of the sea.** ²⁴ **At the morning watch, 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.** The look of YHWH was a sudden brilliance of fire bursting forth from the pillar of cloud, a blinding spectacle which **brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion.** ²⁵ **He caused their chariot wheels to swerve, and He made them drive with difficulty;** And this is what some researchers think they have found off the coast of the Nueva Peninsula and the opposite shoreline, broken chariots wheels, **so the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from Israel, for the LORD is fighting for them against the Egyptians."** They know this is the hand of YHWH but it is too late. The Israelites are being saved while the Egyptians are being judged and perfect discrimination is in effect. 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."** ²⁷ **So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak, So, they had walked all night long across the eight miles and while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it; then the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.** ²⁸ **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.** And so, this includes Pharaoh according to Psalm 136:15. ²⁹ **But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.** ³⁰ **Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.** That is, the Lord *yasha* Israel that day from their physical enemies. ³¹ **When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses.** Originally the people had feared Pharaoh and his armies (cf 14:1) but now they fear YHWH for now they have seen **the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians.** Omnipotence is the key attribute of Exodus 1-15. His great power precipitates fear. We

are to both fear and not fear the Lord. We are to fear Him in the sense of being in awe of His being, His attributes. The Israelites were in awe of God's omnipotence as the capstone Song of Moses demonstrates in chapter 15. We too are to fear God for who He is. Yet we are not to fear Him in the sense of unbelievers who only expect God's judgment. **and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses.** The miracle of God increased their faith in the Lord and in Moses. The structure **and they believed in the Lord** is similar to Gen 15:6 when Abram "believed in the Lord and it was credited to him as righteousness". Thus, some commentators have said that at this point the entire nation was justified by faith. However, the structure is different since it is a collective plural. It seems better to say that their faith was strengthened at this point and not that this is justification by faith. The Genesis context differs from the Exodus context. Whenever YHWH acts on behalf of Israel the people's confidence in **His servant Moses** is also lifted. The highest title a mortal can have in the OT is ascribed to Moses here—the 'servant of Yahweh.' It signifies more than a believer; it describes the individual as acting on behalf of God. For example, when Moses stretched out his hand, God used it as his own (Isa 63:12). Moses was God's personal representative" (NET Bible). God's works for us increase our confidence in God.

CONCLUSION

PRINCIPLE: The pillar of cloud by day and fire by night is a marvelous picture of God's care and consideration of newborn Israel and parallels God's care and consideration for a newborn Christian.

PRINCIPLE: The first thing Israel did after redemption from Egypt was follow the Lord. All new believers are supposed to start following the Lord immediately after redemption from the world system.

PRINCIPLE: As God did not take away His pillar of cloud or pillar of fire from Israel so God will never leave you nor forsake the believer (Heb 13:5).

PRINCIPLE: God's miraculous salvation at the Red Sea bolstered Israel's faith in God just as it bolsters our faith in God when we detect God's miraculous works.

Next week we will see the proper response to God's miraculous works in chapter 15.

ⁱ Some commentators place Etham on the western edge of the wilderness while I place it on the eastern edge.

ⁱⁱ God did not determine Pharaoh's thinking but God did orchestrate the circumstances which led Pharaoh to fallacious thinking.

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.thepeacock.com/Miscellaneous/Did_Men_Land_on_the_Moon.htm

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