

## Message #25

## Exodus 14:1-14

Every once in a while God's people need to be reminded of the fact that God is sovereign. Sometimes God's own people forget about the fact that we are connected to a living, sovereign God who is looking out for us, caring for us, directing us and protecting us.

**GOD IS SOVEREIGNLY DIRECTING HIS PEOPLE INTO WHAT SEEMS TO BE AN INESCAPABLE SITUATION SO THAT HE MAY DEMONSTRATE HIS GREAT SOVEREIGN DESTRUCTIVE POWER TO AN UNBELIEVING WORLD AND HIS GREAT SOVEREIGN SALVIFIC POWER TO HIS OWN PEOPLE.**

There are four main sovereign realities seen in these verses.

**SOVEREIGN REALITY #1** – God sovereignly reveals to His people exactly what He will do. **14:1-4**

There is tremendous stability that comes from knowing the Word of God precisely and knowing that we are exactly where God wants us to be. There should be a real sense of security in this. God wants His people to know what He is doing and His Word reveals that to His people. There are five sovereign facts that are revealed in this text:

**Sovereign Fact #1** - God reveals to His people exactly where He wants her to camp. **14:1-2**

It is clear that God specifically directed Israel to the very spot where He wanted them to be. As **verse 2** reveals, they were camping by the Red Sea.

Now the spot where God wants Israel to camp is a spot very near to the north end of the Red Sea. There apparently was some idolatrous place of worship and fortress known as "Baal-zephon" that God wanted her to camp in front of. I understand this to mean that they are camped in front of this and are butted up against the Red Sea.

Now the reason why God is doing this is because He is going to actually show the Egyptians that her false deities cannot do one thing. In fact, He is going to destroy the Egyptians in the shadow of their false religious idols.

So the purpose of God directing His people to this very spot is to trap Pharaoh and make one final demonstration of His sovereign power. To God's people this seems to be an erratic route. They were headed east and then they get to Etham and start moving back south west (Num. 33:6-7).

There is no question God is doing the leading in all of this, but the route is strange. We may learn a good lesson from all of this. Sometimes the way to God's greatest blessings is a route that seems to be a little erratic.

The way God leads us to His greatest blessings will probably not be the way we would script it. Sometimes when things may seem strange to us when God is leading, we may be certain of this one fact: God always knows what He is doing.

**Sovereign Fact #2** - God reveals to His people exactly what Pharaoh will say. **14:3**

Pharaoh was keeping close tabs on the Israelites. He was monitoring her movement. Now it would appear as though the Israelites were having a hard time finding their way out of the Egyptian territory. It would almost appear that they are getting all confused and turned around. While they were in Etham, instead of heading east they turn west and head back down into the west side of the Red Sea which keeps them still within the boundaries of Egypt.

God knew that Pharaoh would conclude that Israel doesn't even know where she is going. Pharaoh would conclude they are wandering aimlessly with no direction or goals and they are shut in by the wilderness and are out camping by the sea.

When we travel we have a GPS system that zeroes in on where we want to go. It stays on top of our route. One time I actually drove past the exit I should have taken. So I went to the next exit and turned around, which is exactly what my GPS was screaming for me to do. Now if you were monitoring my travel movement you would say, "He doesn't know where he is going." But the truth is even though I may not know, the GPS does know and it is keeping me right on track.

It may not have looked to Pharaoh that Israel knew where she was going, but the fact is God was Israel's sovereign GPS system. He was specifically leading her to exactly where He wanted her to be.

Now if Pharaoh would have had any ounce of rational thinking, he would have reasoned we have just seen God pour out 10 plagues on us and we have learned Israel's God is looking out for her and we had better back off. He would have said we may not know where she is going, but what we have learned is we had better not tamper with Israel because we don't have a chance. But Pharaoh doesn't think rationally.

**Sovereign Fact #3** - God reveals to His people exactly what He will do to Pharaoh's heart .  
**14:4a**

God makes it perfectly clear that He would harden Pharaoh's heart. When God hardens a person's heart, He actually becomes the aggressor in condemnatory judgment. This is a scary thought that Almighty God hardens a person's heart so that they will not do anything except walk right into His trap of condemnatory judgment.

**Sovereign Fact #4** - God reveals to His people exactly what Pharaoh will do. **14:4b**

After God had hardened Pharaoh's heart, the result would be that he and his army will chase after Israel. The Egyptians had a well-organized, highly trained military and I am certain that their intelligence department knew exactly where the Israelites were.

So the result of God's hardening would be that Pharaoh would not think about the previous things God had done to the Egyptians and would lead his army to their final humiliation and destruction.

But this is not a real rational move on Pharaoh's part. After all he has seen God do in the plagues including the last plague, which is the death of the firstborn, Pharaoh will make another bizarre and final and fatal move.

As we have been seeing in Exodus, when God hardens someone's heart they do not think rationally. God is the One taking the initiative here to make sure that Pharaoh will chase after His people. God is doing this so that His people will see His magnificent sovereign protection in the destruction of Israel's enemies.

**Sovereign Fact #5** - God reveals to His people exactly why He will do this. **14:4c**

God is going to do this so that the entire Egyptian army will know He is the Sovereign God. God will be honored by destroying the Egyptians. God's wrath speaks to the honor and glory of God.

**SOVEREIGN REALITY #2** – Pharaoh and his army chase after the Israelites because he has forgotten about the sovereignty of God. **14:5-9**

In **verse 5**, Pharaoh was informed that the Israelites had fled the area, which of course he initially authorized with the full support of the Egyptian people (12:31-33; 13:17). Now we learn from this verse that he and his servants had a change of heart or change of mind, which is clear evidence of the fact that God is hardening their hearts. They started thinking we have let our slaves go. Our workforce is gone so let's go get them back.

According to **verse 6**, Pharaoh made his own chariot ready and took his key military men with him.

As **verse 7** reveals, there were 600 select elite, military chariots plus all other chariots with all Egyptian military officers. Chariots in this time were like tanks. They could take an army into battle and protect them. Primarily, they were used on flat terrain and it is clear that Pharaoh had a large chariot corps. Now the "select chariots" were the first class models. These were the best equipped chariots and the men who rode in them were the best trained.

Now if there were 600 elite chariots plus others, we may assume that the total number would be at least 1000 chariots.

Again, God wants His people to realize that He was the instigator of all of this. It was God who was hardening their hearts (**verse 8**) and they were chasing after the sons of Israel with “all” the horses and “all” the chariots, and Pharaoh came charging up with his horsemen and army and there was Israel camped by the Red Sea right in front of one of their idolatrous shrines (**Verse 9**).

I have no doubt that when Pharaoh saw that shrine he thought our deity is giving us back our slaves.

**SOVEREIGN REALITY #3** – The Israelites are totally afraid and panic because they have forgotten about the sovereignty of God. **14:10-12**

Now if you were working around camp and you look up and see 1000 chariots heading straight toward you, it would be intimidating. **Verse 10** is very clear to point out that they actually saw the chariots and the army coming after them and their response is quite human and normal. **However, the people of Israel make one major mistake here; they take their eyes off the pillar cloud of God, and they look at the enemy.** If they would have kept their eyes on God, they would not have been as intimidated because they would have said, “Wait a minute, we have God right here with us.” But they were human and they responded in three ways:

**Response #1** - They were frightened . **14:10a**

**Response #2** - They cried out to God. **14:10b**

**Response #3** - They start saying ridiculous things. **14:11-12**

When people get into pressured situations they can begin to say dumb things. Warren Wiersbe said when we forget God’s promises we can start imagining crazy scenarios (*Be Delivered*, p. 82).

I talked to a person who wasn’t sure they were going to heaven because they weren’t perfect. My response was of course you are not perfect, why do you think Jesus Christ came to this world? If you believe in Him you are saved, not if you believe in yourself. Forget God’s Word and you can imagine crazy things.

**(Ridiculous Statement #1)** - Apparently we have been brought out here to die. **14:11**

They are just making this up. God did not tell them I am taking you out of Egypt so you can die by the Red Sea. What these people have forgotten is God has led them out of the land and He has specifically told them that He is going to take them to a Promised Land that will be flowing with milk and honey.

The Word of God promised that to Abraham in Genesis 12 and they were fulfilling that. He did not tell them He is leading them out of Egypt to die in the wilderness. They are making that up.

**(Ridiculous Statement #2) - You should have left us alone so we can be slaves. 14:12**

What a ridiculous statement. Who in their right mind would rather be a slave? There are many of God's people who would rather live their lives enslaved to something rather than obey the Word of God and be set free of it.

**SOVEREIGN REALITY #4 – Moses calms the people down by reminding them of the sovereignty of God. 14:13-14**

Here is where God's man is so critical. God is not a dead God. God is not a deistic God who has just abandoned His people. God is with His people and He is directing His people and He will care for His people and Moses communicated four messages:

**Message #1 - Do not fear. 14:13a**

Fear can be paralyzing. Fear can make a person so afraid that they forget proper doctrine.

**Message #2 - You are to stand and see the salvation of God. 14:13b**

Stand firm and quit wavering in your faith. Stand and see the salvation of God. Salvation is God's salvation. In fact, all we have to do to be saved is look at the cross by faith.

**Message #3 - The Lord will fight for you. 14:14a**

Victory belongs to the Lord. These Egyptian soldiers are well-trained military men and the Israelites were a bunch of slaves. But the Israelites had the one necessary ingredient for victory: a relationship with God.

**Message #4 - You keep silent. 14:14b**

Moses not only told the Israelites to stand still, but be still. In other words, you can be silent because your God will not be silent.

We may face some intimidating things in life but those are the moments to be quiet and to watch and wait on God.