

*OUR LORD KNOWS THE WAY
THROUGH THE WILDERNESS*



ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS FOLLOW ...

OUTLINE EXODUS 13:17-14:31

I. GOD KNEW THE WAY ISRAEL NEEDED TO FOLLOW THROUGH THE WILDERNESS, EXODUS 13:17-22.

- (Exodus 13:17–22 ESV) When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, “Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.” 18 But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle. 19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones with you from here.” 20 And they moved on from Succoth and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. 21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. 22 The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

A. God knew that the closest way was not the best way, 13:17a.

B. God knew that although the people were equipped for battle they were not ready for battle, 13:17b-18.

C. God knew that this slave nation needed to be trained immediately to honor their word, 13:19.

D. God provided clear, indisputable, simple direction through the wilderness, 13:20-22.

What was that clear, indisputable, simple direction? Follow the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

- (Exodus 40:36–37 ESV) Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. 37 But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up.
- (Numbers 9:17 ESV) And whenever the cloud

lifted from over the tent, after that the people of Israel set out, and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the people of Israel camped.

II. THE LORD PLANNED THE WAY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS THAT WOULD BEST SHOW THAT HE IS THE LORD AND WOULD BRING HIM GLORY, 14:1-4.

- (Exodus 14:1–4 ESV) Then the LORD said to Moses, 2 “Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. 3 For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, ‘They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’ 4 And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.” And they did so.

III. THE LORD CARRIED OUT HIS PERFECT WAY TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PERFECT WILL, 14:5-9.

- (Exodus 14:5–9 ESV) When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed 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 ready his chariot and took his army with him, 7 and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. 8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. 9 The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pihahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

IV. FEAR AND DESPERATION WILL OVERCOME THOSE WHO RELY ON SEEING AND NOT BELIEVING, 14:10-12.

- (Exodus 14:10–12 ESV) When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up

their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. 11 They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? **What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt?**" 12 Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: '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."

A. Israel had set their minds on what they could see.

They lost their way in the wilderness as fear, not faith, dominated their lives. Setting their minds on what they could see they fell prey to fearful minds of unbelief.

- (Deuteronomy 1:30–32 ESV) The LORD your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 31 and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, all the way that you went until you came to this place.' 32 **Yet in spite of this word you did not believe the LORD your God.**

IN THEIR GREAT FEAR they were blind to the way of God. Their fear produced discontent which resulted in great sin as they sat in judgment of the LORD and vented their anger toward Moses.

IN THEIR FEAR AND PANIC, they decided that it would be better to serve the Egyptians than to trust the LORD to lead them to the promised land.

IN THEIR FEAR they determined that the plan of YAHWEH was a plan of death.

B. God's way through the wilderness is the way of faith, not sight.

- To navigate the wilderness we must believe God without reservation.

They were not believing God because what God said conflicted with what they saw. Their stubborn refusal to believe God escalated and rendered them incapable of believing God.

- (2 Corinthians 5:7 NLT) For we live by believing and not by seeing.
- (Ephesians 4:17–18 NLT) With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, **for they are hopelessly confused.**

18 **Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him.**

- To navigate the wilderness we must set our minds on the things upon which God tells us to set our minds.

- (Colossians 3:2 ESV) **Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.**
- (Romans 8:6 NASB95) For the mind set on the flesh is death, but **the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.**
- (1 Chronicles 22:19a ESV) **Now set your mind and heart to seek the LORD your God.**

V. MOSES COMMANDS THEM TO NOT FEAR BUT TO STAND FIRM SO THEY COULD SEE THE GLORIOUS WAY OF THE SALVATION OF THE LORD, 14:13-14.

- (Exodus 14:13–14 ESV) And Moses said to the people, "**Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD**, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. 14 The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

VI. THE LORD COMMANDS MOSES TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO GO FORWARD IN THE WAY HE HAS LED THEM, 14:15-18.

- (Exodus 14:15–18 ESV) The LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? **Tell the people of Israel to go forward.** 16 Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. 17 And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. 18 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

Behind the scenes ... In their fearful state they could neither see nor even imagine the road ahead ... there was no room in their unbelieving minds and hearts for the miracle God was about to perform in making a road through the mighty waters of the Red Sea ...

- (Psalm 77:16–20 NLT) When the Red Sea

saw you, O God, its waters looked and trembled! The sea quaked to its very depths. 17 The clouds poured down rain; the thunder rumbled in the sky. Your arrows of lightning flashed. 18 Your thunder roared from the whirlwind; the lightning lit up the world! The earth trembled and shook. 19 Your road led through the sea, your pathway through the mighty waters—a pathway no one knew was there! 20 You led your people along that road like a flock of sheep, with Moses and Aaron as their shepherds.

VII. GOD UNVEILS HIS GRAND FINALE, 14:19-29.

- (Exodus 14:19–29 ESV) Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, 20 coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night. 21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. 22 And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. 23 The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24 And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, 25 clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians." 26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." 27 So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the

Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. 28 The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. 29 But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

VIII. THE LORD SAVED ISRAEL FROM THE EGYPTIANS THAT DAY, 14:30-31.

- (Exodus 14:30–31 ESV) Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

A. THE GOOD: The LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians.

B. THE BAD: ... but not from themselves.

C. THE REALLY BAD: Israel had established walking by sight and not by faith as their modus operandi.

Modus operandi ... a particular way or method of doing something, especially one that is characteristic or well-established; a distinct pattern or method of operation; an individual's or group's habitual way of operating, which forms a discernible pattern.

Due to their faithless modus operandi they were blinded to the ways of the LORD ... and rendered incapable of entering the Promised Land—the abundance of the Lord.

- (Deuteronomy 9:23–24 ESV) And when the Lord sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, 'Go up and take possession of the land that I have given you,' then you rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God and did not believe him or obey his voice. 24 You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.
- (John 10:10 ESV) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.