

Exodus and the Plagues

Part 2

Steve Thompson

UUCF

November 17, 2008

J in Exodus

Joseph dies	1:6
boys	1:22
Moses	2:1-23a (entire chapter except last 2.5 verses)
burning bush	3:2-4a, 5, 7-8, 19-22
return	4:19-20a
circumcision	4:24-26
Pharaoh	5:1-2
departure	13:21-22
chase	14:5a, 6, 9a, 10b, 13-14, 19b, 20b, 21b, 24, 25b, 27b, 30-31
Song of Sea	15:1-18 (ancient, independent poem inserted by J)
bitter water	15:22b-25a
bread	16:4-5, 35b
Mt. Sinai	19:10-16a, 18, 20-25 (except Aaron phrase)
mountain	24:18b
10 Commandments	34:1-28 except 1b, 4b referring to previous tablets

E in Exodus

slavery, midwives	1:8-12, 15-21
non-burning bush	3:1, 4b, 6, 9-18
staff, hand, Aaron	4:1-18, 20b-23, 27-31
additional work	5:3-23
threat to Pharaoh	6:1
the Nile turns to blood	7:14-18, 20b-21, 23-29
plague of frogs	7:26-29; 8:3b-11a
plague of insects	8:16-28
death of livestock	9:1-7
plague of hail	9:13-34
plague of locusts	10:1-19
plague of darkness	10:21-26, 28-29
death of firstborn	11:1-8
Passover	12:21-27, 29-32
departure	12:33-36, 37b-39
consecration	13:1-19
Pharaoh reneges (the Sea)	14:5b, 7, 11-12, 19a, 20a, 25a

P in Exodus

Hebrews	1:7, 13-14,
God hears	2:23b-25
Moses is called	6:2-11,30
Aaron, staff	7:1-13
bloody Nile	7:19-20, 22
frogs	8:1-3a
lice	8:12-15
boils	9:8-12
Passover	12:1-20, 28
departure	12:40-50
Pharaoh pursues	14:1-4, 8, 9b-10a, 10c, 15-18, 21a, 21c-23, 26-27a, 28-29
more later in Chapter 16 and following	

P's Plagues Not the Same as E's

- The Priestly author has five plagues
 - The Nile turns to blood
 - Frogs
 - Gnats (or lice)
 - Boils on humans and animals
 - Death of the firstborn
- The E author has eight plagues
 - The Nile turns to blood (interleaved with P's bloody Nile)
 - Frogs (interleaved with P's frogs)
 - Swarm of insects or flies (not gnats; the morning after P's lice)
 - Death of Egyptian livestock (but not Hebrew livestock)
 - Hail
 - Locusts
 - Darkness
 - Death of the first born

E's Negotiations and P's Magicians

- E and P differ on *why* so many plagues are required to convince Pharaoh to let the people go
- The E author has Moses negotiate with Pharaoh
 - Steps of the negotiations are on the next slide
 - In E, Pharaoh seems to believe in Yahweh's power, but only gradually makes concessions
 - In P, none of these negotiations occur
- In P, Pharaoh's magicians replicate some of the plagues and wonders, which causes Pharaoh to be unconvinced
 - Eventually the magicians cannot replicate the plagues, and Pharaoh begins to concede

E's Negotiations with Pharaoh

- The E author has Moses negotiate with Pharaoh
 - Moses asks for festival in the wilderness; does not mention whether or not they will return
 - Pharaoh counters: have your festival in Egypt
 - Moses says festival sacrifices will be offensive to Egyptians
 - Pharaoh concedes, but says do not go far
 - Pharaoh says only the males can go (forcing them to return)
 - Moses insists all the people and their animals will go
 - Pharaoh concedes on women going, but not the animals
 - Moses says the animals are required for sacrifice
 - After the last plague, Pharaoh concedes to everything
- In P, none of these negotiations occur

P's Plague of Boils Exodus: 9:8-12

Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from a furnace and have Moses toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, and festering boils will break out on people and animals throughout the land.”

So they took soot from a furnace and stood before Pharaoh. Moses tossed it into the air, and festering boils broke out on people and animals. The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and on all the Egyptians. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said to Moses.

E's Plague of Hail: Exodus: 9:13-26

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. You still set yourself against my people and will not let them go.

Therefore, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now. Give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the field to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every person and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field, and they will die.’”

Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. But those who ignored the word of the Lord left their slaves and livestock in the field. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that hail will fall all over Egypt—on people and animals and on everything growing in the fields of Egypt.”

When Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, the Lord sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground. So the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt; hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields—both people and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree. The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were.

P's Plagues are Briefer than E's

- The P author's plagues are shorter than E's (average of 7 lines)
 - The Nile turns to blood (7 lines)
 - Frogs (4.5 lines)
 - Gnats/lice (9 lines)
 - Boils on humans and animals (10 lines)
 - Death of the firstborn (5.5 lines)
- The E author's eight plagues (average of 24 lines)
 - The Nile turns to blood (19 lines)
 - Frogs (15 lines)
 - Swarm of insects or flies (29 lines)
 - Death of Egyptian livestock (12 lines)
 - Hail (43 lines)
 - Locusts (42 lines)
 - Darkness (15 lines)
 - Death of the first born (19 lines)

E's Plague of Hail: Exodus: 9:27-35

Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. "This time I have sinned," he said to them. "The Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. Pray to the Lord, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don't have to stay any longer."

Moses replied, "When I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands in prayer to the Lord. The thunder will stop and there will be no more hail, so you may know that the earth is the Lord's. But I know that you and your officials still do not fear the Lord God."

The flax and barley were destroyed, since the barley had headed and the flax was in bloom. The wheat and spelt, however, were not destroyed, because they ripen later. Then Moses left Pharaoh and went out of the city. He spread out his hands toward the Lord; the thunder and hail stopped, and the rain no longer poured down on the land. When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts. So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the Lord had said through Moses.

E's Plague of Locusts: Exodus: 10:1-11

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your son's son how I have made sport of the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them; that you may know that I am the Lord."

So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, and they shall cover the face of the land, so that no one can see the land; and they shall eat what is left to you after the hail, and they shall eat every tree of yours which grows in the field, and they shall fill your houses, and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians; as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.'" Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

And Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God; do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?" So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh; and he said to them, "Go, serve the Lord your God; but who are to go?" And Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old; we will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, for we must hold a feast to the Lord." And he said to them, "The Lord be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind. No! Go, the men among you, and serve the Lord, for that is what you desire." And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

E's Plague of Locusts: Exodus: 10:12-20

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left." So Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning the east wind had brought the locusts. And the locusts came up over all the land of Egypt, and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever shall be again. For they covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left; not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. Now therefore, forgive my sin, I pray you, only this once, and entreat the Lord your God only to remove this death from me." So he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord. And the Lord turned a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

P's Text Compared to E's

- E dominates the merged plague stories (Chapters 7-11)
 - E is roughly 3-4 times as verbose per plague
 - E has eight plagues to P's five
- But P has distinctive characteristics
 - P has signs and wonders (staff becomes a serpent)
 - Only P has Pharaoh's magicians replicate the signs
 - In P, Aaron is more prominent than he is in E
- J, E, and P all have God calling on Moses to confront Pharaoh
 - J had burning bush and E has a bush, but no bush in P
 - J's and E's bush stories are merged
 - P's calling of Moses occurs much later, after Moses has already seen Pharaoh according to J and E; so P's calling is merged with J-E's "follow up" talk between God and Moses
 - I don't think P has Moses go to Midian

E's Plague of Darkness: Exodus: 10:21-29

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt." So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days; they did not see one another, nor did any rise from his place for three days; but all the people of Israel had light where they dwelt. Then Pharaoh called Moses, and said, "Go, serve the Lord; your children also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind."

But Moses said, "You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. Our cattle also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the Lord our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the Lord until we arrive there." But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me; take heed to yourself; never see my face again; for in the day you see my face you shall die." Moses said, "As you say! I will not see your face again."

E's Death of Firstborn: Exodus: 11:1-8

The Lord said to Moses, "Yet some plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely. Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry." And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

So Moses said, "Thus says the Lord: 'About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again. But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.' And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, 'Get out, you and all the people who follow you.' And after that I will go out." And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger.

P's Passover and Death: Exodus: 12:1-13

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

“Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover.

For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

P's Passover: Exodus: 12:14-20, 28

This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you. And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever. In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwelling places you shall eat unleavened bread.”

Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

E's Passover: Exodus: 12:21-27

Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. And when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ you shall say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.’” And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

E's Death of Firstborn: Exodus: 12:29-32

At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead. Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, "Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as you have said. Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!"

Finally time to depart!

- P begins the departure in Ex. 12:41
- Oddly, P goes from God instructing Moses to tell the people about the Passover, to God threatening to kill the firstborn, to instructing the people to commemorate this occasion in the future, to saying they had been slaves for 430 years culminating in the departure, but without mentioning God actually killing the firstborn or Pharaoh relenting!
 - The omission of the actual killing of the firstborn is noticeable only when you read just the P story, because in the interleaved account, E does describe it happening
- E's departure occurs in Ex. 13:17, significantly later than P's
- In between P's departure and E's departure is E's description of the Passover, which makes reading the merged story awkward
- In Exodus chapters 12 and 13, the climatic departure occurs in just a few verses; the vast majority of these two chapters are about Passover
 - P discusses Passover mostly before departure; E just the opposite

E's Departure: Exodus: 12:33-36, 37b-39

The Egyptians were urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead." So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their cloaks on their shoulders. The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing. And the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

P's Departure: Exodus: 12:40-50

The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. At the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It was a night of watching by the Lord, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same night is a night of watching kept to the Lord by all the people of Israel throughout their generations.

And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. No foreigner or hired worker may eat of it. It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.”

All the people of Israel did just as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron.

E's Unleavened Bread: Exodus: 13:1-13

The Lord said to Moses, "Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine."

Then Moses said to the people, "Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the Lord brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out. And when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this service in this month. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. You shall tell your son on that day, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.' And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this statute at its appointed time from year to year.

"When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, you shall set apart to the Lord all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the Lord's. Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.

E's Unleavened Bread: Exodus: 13:14-19

And when in time to come your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, 'By a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.' It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt."

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." 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. 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."

Crossing the Sea: Exodus 14

- This chapter has to be the most heavily interleaved chapter in Exodus, and probably in the Torah:
 - P (vv. 1-4); J (5a); E (5b); J (6); E (7); P (8); J (9a); P (9b-10a); J (10b); P (10c); E (11-12); J (13-14); P (15-18); E (19a); J (19b); E (20a); J (20b); P (21a); J (21b); P (21c-23); J (24); E (25a); J (25b); P (26-27a); J (27b); P (28-29); J (30-31)
- In J, God pushes the sea back with wind; God throws Egyptians into chaos, they run into dry seabed; God releases waters to swallow them
- In P, the sea is split, forming a dry path with walls of water on either side; the Hebrews cross safely; but when the Egyptians try to pass, the water closes over them

J Resurfaces in Exodus!

- Ex 14:5a, 6, 9a, 10b, 13-14, 19b, 20b, 21b, 24, 25b, 27b, 30-31
 - The pharaoh is told that the people have fled and so he hitches his chariot and takes his men with him
 - Egypt pursues the Hebrews, and the Hebrews see this and are afraid
 - Moses tells them to not be afraid, and to stand still and watch how Yahweh will save them
 - Then the column of cloud stood between them and the Egyptians, causing the Egyptians to be in darkness, yet giving light to the Hebrews all night
 - Yahweh drove back the sea with the east wind all night and turned the seabed dry

J in Exodus

- Ex 14:24, 25b, 27b, 30-31
 - In the morning, Yahweh throws the Egyptian camp into turmoil and the Egyptians flee
 - The sea starts flowing again as the Egyptians head straight toward it
 - The Egyptians are tossed into the sea
 - Yahweh saved Israel, and the Hebrews saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore
 - The people trust Yahweh and Moses
 - There are several differences to P's version, which is the more commonly known story: P has Yahweh commanding Moses to act; only P has the sea divided and the people walking through parted waters (in J they stay put all night)

J: Ex 14:5a, 6, 9a, 10b, 13-14,19b, 20b, 21b, 24, 25b, 27b, 30-31

When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, The Egyptians pursued them. The people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand still, 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. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

And the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night. And the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land. 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. And the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from before Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians.”

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

P: Ex 14:1-4, 8, 9b-10a, 10c, 15-18

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, ‘They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’ 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.

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, all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

The Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. 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. 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. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

P: Ex 14:21a, 21c-23, 26-27a, 28-29

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the waters were divided. 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. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

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.” So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, 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.

E: Exodus 14:5b, 7, 11-12, 19a, 20a, 25a

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?” And he took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them.

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? 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.”

Note: in the next paragraph, some E text has been deleted because the J text (highlighted), described what happened, and the first redactor considered some E text to be redundant.

Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land. 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, 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.”

Awkward Reading

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, 20coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night¹ without one coming near the other all night.

²¹Then Moses ^kstretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by ^{pa} strong east wind all night and ^qmade the sea dry land, and the waters were ^rdivided. ²²And ^{sthe} people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being ^{ta} a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ²³The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. ²⁴And 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, ²⁵clogging² their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the ^uLord fights for them against the Egyptians."

²⁶Then the Lord said to Moses, ^v"Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." ²⁷^wSo Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea ^xreturned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the Lord ^ythrew³ the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. ²⁸The ^zwaters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, ^anot one of them remained. ²⁹But the ^bpeople of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Exodus

- Ex 15:1-18 The Song of the Sea, or The Song of Miriam
 - The song is an independent, old song
 - Friedman says it might be the oldest composition in the Bible!
 - So it is not written by J, but was picked up by J and inserted into his text
 - Notice the references to places (Philistia, Edom, Moab, Canaan) unknown to these people
- Ex 15:22b-25a
 - The people cannot find water in the wilderness for three days
 - They find water at Marah, but it is bitter, and they complain
 - God has Moses throw a tree into the water to make it sweet

Crossing the Sea

- Separating the three accounts of the sea results in two coherent stories (JE, P), revealing that both J and E told a less dramatic manipulation of the sea by God than P describes
- P says God “split” the water, forming a dry path for the Hebrews to walk on, with walls of water on their left and right; then when the Egyptians tried to pass, the walls of water fell and the Egyptians were drowned by falling water, as portrayed in The Ten Commandments movie
- However, J does NOT have the Hebrews cross the sea, nor really even the Egyptians either; instead, Moses tells the Hebrews to “stand still” when they see the Egyptians behind them, and God causes the wind to push the sea back and create dry ground; God puts the Egyptians into chaos while they are still encamped; the Egyptians begin to flee toward the water and God tossed them into the water

Crossing the Sea

- The timing of the crossing of the sea story also differs significantly between JE and P
 - According to P, the Egyptians caught up with the Hebrews, who immediately panicked, and Moses then (presumably within minutes) split the sea, the people walked across the dry ground with walls of water at their side, and then the Egyptians followed, all dramatic and quick
 - But according to the merged J-E story, the Hebrews are accompanied by a pillar of fire and a cloud according to J, and by an angel according to E; upon seeing the Egyptians, God causes the wind to push back the sea *all night, so this does not have the suddenness of P's story*; J explicitly references the morning comes before more occurs; God throws the Egyptians into tumult *before* the sea is allowed to flow back
- Because the P story is more dramatic, a reading of the merged stories naturally gives the movie plot we already know

Exodus

- Ex 16:4-5, 35b
 - Yahweh tests the people by raining bread on them to see if they will follow directions
 - The people are to gather twice as much on the 6th day
 - They eat this manna until they arrive at Canaan's edge
- Ex 19:10-16a
 - Yahweh tells Moses to consecrate the people and prepare for the 3rd day, when Yahweh will come to them on Mt. Sinai
 - The people are not to touch the mountain
 - Moses comes down from the mountain (had not gone up in J)
 - Moses consecrates them, but they are not to touch a woman
 - Casts doubt on women being included in “the people”

Exodus

- Ex 19: 18, 20-25 (except Aaron phrase in v. 24)
 - Mt. Sinai is wrapped in smoke on the 3rd day, and the mountain trembled
 - Yahweh came down to the top of the mountain and called Moses up, and Moses comes up
 - Yahweh sends Moses down to warn the people not to come up; Moses says they have already been warned, but Yahweh sends him anyway
 - So Moses goes down the mountain
- Ex 24:18b
 - Moses is on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights