

Hymns: 11 How Great Thou Art 62 Solid Rock
Scripture: Psalm 146

This has been quite a week for extreme weather. Did you see that storm yesterday at 2:00 pm? Winds of 65 mph or higher were recorded. It's been a tough week for the global warming crowd also. Record low temperatures across the nation gave people cause to wonder **where's all of this warming** that they're talking about?

And did you hear the news about the people who went to Antarctica last month? A group of **so-called scientists** went down in the peak of summer (in the southern hemisphere). They were there on January 4th, the day that the earth was closest to the sun.

Led by Chris Turney, a *professor* of climate change at Australia's University of New South Wales Climate Change Research Center, a group of 52 *climate scientists* and tourists set out in a Russian ship on November 28th to explore and make measurements in Antarctica.

On December 24th, the ship became stuck in the ice. An icebreaker ship from China went to rescue the travelers, but when **it too** became stuck, its crew had **to** helicopter the scientists and tourists to **the** safety of an Australian ship nearby in open water.

To get a better idea of where this group stands we need only read their website:

*Natural factors alone cannot explain this **warming**, suggesting that **increasing greenhouse gases are responsible**....Our climate is changing, and it is likely that **we** are responsible.*

And here's what Turney himself wrote on his blog on June 24, 2012:

*Managing carbon levels in the atmosphere remains **an urgent issue**, no matter how the media sometimes present the scientific results.*

Fox News reported of Turney: "He remained adamant that sea ice is melting, even as the boat remained trapped in frozen seas."

From Wikipedia we find the following definition:

***Poetic justice** is a literary device in which virtue is ultimately rewarded or vice punished, often in modern literature by an ironic twist of fate intimately related to the character's own conduct.*

We also have a classic example of this twist of fate in the Bible. You may recall the story of Haman found in the Book of Esther. We cannot get into that today, but it's along the same line. Haman hated the Jews and especially a Jew named Mordecai.

He plotted to have the Jews killed and had constructed a 75 foot-high gallows upon which to execute Mordecai. Moments from when it looked like his evil plan would succeed, he was found out. He was then ordered to go before Mordecai and announce to the people the greatness of this one whom he hated. The Jews were saved from being annihilated, and Haman was first humiliated and then executed on the gallows that he had built. That was poetic justice.

Perhaps this incident with global warming *junk* scientists is of similar nature. So often we wonder where God is in these dark days **where lies abound** and **the truth is ridiculed**, suppressed, and even condemned – often in the name of science. We can take comfort that **in due time all will be made right** by a holy, righteous, and just God.

The Bible says, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:9).

Today we're going to look at a story in the Bible where **two** groups of people were **stuck**. Here too we will see another example of *poetic justice* as tables turn in a sudden and unique fashion.

Review

This is our sixth venture into key Bible passages. To set the context, you may recall a little over a month ago, we looked back 3500 years to see Moses tell Pharaoh to let his people go as he brought plagues upon Egypt **that** mocked Egypt's false gods. During that series of events, the Passover was established, and the last plague on Egypt killed the firstborn in every Egyptian house. After God wasted Egypt through these plagues, He moved the hearts of the Egyptians to repay the Jews for the 400 years of slave labor they had performed – giving them gold, jewels, and clothing as they left. The Jews spoiled the Egyptians without ever lifting a sword. God won the victory for them.

We'll pick up the story there. Israel is leaving Egypt victoriously. This time we want to move quickly to the source passage in Exodus. As we go, when we find an extra tidbit from our summary passages, we'll site it then.

Here's the first:

Ps 105:38-39;

*[38] Egypt was glad when they departed: for the **fear of them** fell upon them.*

The Egyptians had grown very weary of these plagues from God. Getting rid of the Jews, they reasoned, would free them from further judgment. Note also that **after** the ordeal they had suffered, the Egyptians feared the Israelites and their God.

Exodus 14

[1] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

*[2] Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before **it** shall ye encamp by the sea.*

This is somewhere in the region of today's Suez Canal. Note that the Lord is leading the Israelites into this apparent trap.

[3] For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.

Thinking in terms of military strategy, the Israelites will be trapped.

*[4] And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that **he shall follow after them**; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and **upon all his host**; [Why?] that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they [the Israelites] did so.*

*[5] And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the **heart of Pharaoh** and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that **we have let Israel go from serving us?***

The answer should have been clear. Everything in Egypt was decimated except their army.

[6] And he made ready **his chariot**, and took his people with him:

[7] And he took **six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt**, and captains over every one of them.

[8] And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and **he pursued after the children of Israel**: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.

This could refer to hands raised in praise, joy, defiance, or some combination of the three.

[9] But the Egyptians pursued after them, **all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them** encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.

[10] And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, **behold**, the Egyptians marched after them; **and they were sore afraid**:

Do you recall that expression from last time. When the shepherds saw the angel announcing Jesus birth and the glory of the Lord, we read those same words.

and the children of Israel **cried out** unto the LORD.

[11] And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?

[12] Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For **it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness**.

This gives us some better understanding of the summary passage from Hebrews 11:29 “**By faith** they passed through the Red sea as by dry land” The question is, Whose faith? The passage in Hebrews is recounting **Moses as one** of the heroes of faith. While it **did** take some faith for the Israelites to walk through the dry sea bed, as we shall see, the person who exhibited exemplary faith was Moses, not the fearful, complaining Israelites.

[13] And Moses said unto the people, **Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD**, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

[14] **The LORD shall fight for you**, and ye shall hold your peace.

[15] And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:

Apparently, Moses sought the Lord regarding the Israelites' whining and complaining.

[16] But **lift thou up thy rod**, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

Why did God instruct Moses to lift up his rod? We know that when he lifted up a bronze serpent on a pole in the wilderness it was a picture of salvation through Jesus' death on the cross (John 3:14). This is another instance of a pole being lifted up as an instrument of salvation. There may be a link here. You decide.

[17] And I, **behold**,

*I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and
I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and
upon all his host,
upon his chariots, and
upon his horsemen.*

Why?

[18] And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon **Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.**

The Egyptians had not learned their lesson. They needed one more reminder of whom God is.

[19] And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, **removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:**

[20] And it came **between** the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and **darkness** to them [the Egyptians], but it gave **light** by night to these [the Israelites]: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

God placed a barrier between the Egyptian armies and the Israelites. So too is God able protect us from our most feared enemies. Note the symbolism, Egypt, representing the godless, had *darkness*, but the people of God had *light*.

[21] And Moses **stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.**

It's amazing to me how quickly a wind can cause evaporation. Often, after a rain and a sudden drop in temperature I awake to find the car windows **not covered in ice**, but instead to find them completely clear and dry. As the weather changed, the associated wind evaporated away the water before the temperature dropped below freezing. A wind that moved the water certainly would have been sufficient to dry the ground and at the same time quicken the exodus of the Israelites.

[22] And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea **upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.**

[23] And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even **all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.**

Notice that all of Pharaoh's army had the same amount of faith that the waters would be held back as the Israelites had.

[24] And it came to pass, that in the morning watch

the pitch-dark four hours before dawn

*the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and **troubled the host of the Egyptians,***

*[25] And **took off their chariot wheels,** that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said,*

Let us **flee** from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth **for them** against the Egyptians.

We're **not** told how this happened, but basically the LORD disabled the chariots of the Egyptians. If the Lord could disable chariot wheels (a rather high-tech device for that time) is it not true that he could disable any device of today as well? I think so.

[26] And the LORD said unto Moses, **Stretch out thine hand over the sea**, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.

[27] And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

[28] And the waters returned, and

covered the chariots, and

the horsemen, and

all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them;

there remained not so much as one of them.

[29] But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

[30] Thus **the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians**; and Israel saw the Egyptians **dead** upon the sea shore.

[31] And Israel

saw that **great work** which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and

the people **feared** the LORD, and

believed the LORD, and

[believed] his servant Moses.

Exodus 15

[1] **Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD**, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: **the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.**

[4] **Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.**

[5] **The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.**

[6] Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath **dashed in pieces the enemy.**

[7] And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which **consumed them as stubble.**

[11] **Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?**

[12] **Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.**

Here we have *redemption* and *poetic justice* all rolled into one. The Egyptians thought the Israelites were **stuck** by the sea, but instead the Egyptians were the ones **stuck** and consumed in the sea. No

magic, no mighty armies, just the power of the Almighty God made the impossible possible – again.

Application

In a classic scene from Star Trek, Captain Kirk consulted with McCoy and Spock concerning an unsolvable problem. Each of his learned advisors (a doctor and a computer-like man) deduced only two equally disastrous courses of action. Kirk was resolute and defiant. “I want another answer....I want that third alternative.” Of course, before the episode finished, they found it.

We too may be on the horns of a dilemma.
We may be between a rock and a hard place.
We may have painted ourselves into a corner.
We may have our backs against the wall.
We may be trapped with no way out.

As we've seen, the Israelites were in just such a situation, and the Lord saved them. Our Lord is greater than our most vexing problems. Whether it be health, finances, personal relationships, or something else; He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. We need only trust Him.

Fanny Crosby in her great hymn *He Hideth My Soul* put it this way:

*A wonderful **Savior** is Jesus my Lord,
He taketh my **burden** away,
He **holdeth me up** and I shall not be moved,
He giveth me **strength** as my day.

He hideth my **soul** in the cleft of the rock,
That shadows a dry, thirsty land;
He hideth my **life** in the depths of His love,
And covers me there with His hand,*

Benediction

*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,
according to the power that worketh in us,
Unto him be glory
in the church
by Christ Jesus
throughout all ages,
world without end. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)*