**Exodus 14:1-4**

[*https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/exod/exod-14/exodus-141-4/*](https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/exod/exod-14/exodus-141-4/)

*In verses 1 – 4, the LORD told Moses to change direction and camp at a certain place beside the sea. He warned that Pharaoh will come after them to bring them back and enslave them once more. But it was really preparation for another mighty act of the LORD to show both the Egyptians and the Israelites that He is the sovereign Ruler of all.*

The Israelites were camped at a place called Etham (13:20) when *the Lord spoke to Moses*.They were no doubt relieved to be out of Egyptian slavery and on their way to the Promised Land. They probably thought that they would continue to head southeast away from Egypt and away from bondage. However, the LORD told Moses to *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*. The Hebrew word for “turn back” can also be translated “return,” and it implies that the LORD wanted them to go back toward Egypt and camp at a place called Pi-hahiroth, whose exact location is not known.

The LORD then said that the result of this U-turn is *that Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, ‘They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’* That is, the LORD was using this unusual tactic to deceive Pharaoh into thinking that the Israelites were confused, disoriented, afraid, and as a result very vulnerable to being recaptured. He would then be motivated to go after them.

Also, the LORD would also *harden Pharaoh’s heart*, just as He did in the plagues. Hardening his heart would cause him to be persistent in pursuing his true desire, and this stubbornness would encourage him to *chase after them*. But it would not result in the Israelite returning to Pharaoh’s service, as he wanted. Instead, the LORD said that He *will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.*

Pharaoh would depend on the Egyptian gods and goddesses to bring him victory and glory, but it would be the LORD that would bring glory and honor for Himself through His final deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea. They would know that the God of Israel is truly the sovereign One of creation and indeed all things.

In obedience to the word of the LORD, *they did so*. Moses guided the people to turn around and go back and camp at a place closer to Egypt, making them vulnerable to attack by Egypt.

**Biblical Text:**

**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. 3For Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, ‘They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’ 4Thus 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.**