
Psalm 114

Psalm 114:1–8

God Has Control Over All of Nature

(inserted between Joshua 3 and 4)

Outline of Chapter 114

- vv. 1–2 **God takes Israel out of Egypt and into the Land of Promise**
- vv. 3–6 **God has control over the sea and the land**
- vv. 7–8 **God causes the earth to rotate and can bring water out of rocks**

Charts and Maps

Introduction: We have no clue as to when Psalm 114 was written. It was likely written long after the time of Moses and Joshua, probably during the time of the divided kingdom (see v. 2). However, we are going to cover it here since it looks back upon this dramatic moment when the Israelites cross the Jordan River dryshod. Most of the Psalms begin with an introduction or a preliminary verse, which is part of Scripture, but not part of the Psalm itself. Often, it names the writer and the circumstances of writing. However, we do not have that here. Psalm 114 is found in the fifth and last book of the Psalms, which deal primarily with praise and trust in God during times of trouble. Zodhiates lists this psalm as *A Song for the Passover Feast*. My guess is that this is when this psalm was traditionally sung (or read). This is included with the *Hallel* psalms (Psalms 113–118; those which begin or end with an *Hallelujah*); however this psalm neither begins nor ends with an *Hallelujah*. Various scholars have these as being sung on various feast days.

What stands out in this psalm is the number of times we find the use of personification. The sea looks and flees; the *Jordan River* turns around; the *mountains* skip like rams; and the *earth* trembles (more on that later).

NIV Study Bible: *A hymnic celebration of the exodus—one of the most exquisitely fashioned songs of the Psalter. It probably dates from the period of the monarchy sometime after the division of the kingdom...No doubt it was composed for liturgical use at the temple during one of the annual religious festivals [this and Psalm 13 were both before the Passover meal]. The theme is progressively developed through four balanced stanzas, reaching its climax in the fourth. The first two stanzas (vv. 1–4) recall the great events of the exodus; the last two (vv. 5–8) celebrate their continuing significance.*¹ The problem with this interpretation is that it ignores the fact that this also makes mention of the triumphs during the time of Joshua.

Keil and Delitzsch most correctly break this psalm into four tetrastichs, each pair of verses making up one tetrastich, each of which *pass by with the swiftness of a bird as it were with four flappings of its wings.*²

Something which stands out in this psalm is that we do not have the name of God—we do not find the words ELOHIM OR JEHOVAH anywhere in this psalm, although it is clear of Whom we are speaking.

One of the things that I think about when I read a psalm, or a passage of Scripture, is why do we find this here? Could the Bible have written with this particular psalm skipped? Obviously, for most Christians, they seem to feel that a couple of books, their life verse, and a handy grab any verse are enough for their spiritual growth; but God

¹ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 902.

² Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 5, p. 707.

feels differently about these matters. Sometimes there are one or two words included whose meanings are clarified by the context. Sometimes we receive an important insight to a person's character or personality in a passage; sometimes there is a bit of important history that we can glean. What we have buried in this psalm is a possible mention of the rotation of the earth based upon God's power and control—quite the interesting concept for a psalm which is written almost a millennium prior to the coming of our Lord.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

God Takes Israel out of Egypt and into the Land of Promise

Literally:

Smoother English rendering:

**In a going out of Israel from Egypt;
a house of Jacob from a people speaking a
foreign language [Egyptian].**

Psalm
114:1

**When Israel went out from Egypt;
the house of Jacob going out from a people
stammering in Egyptian.**

In the Septuagint, this psalm begins with *praise the Lord* (as do many of these psalms), but that is likely this was accidentally taken from Psalm 113 by the scribe copying these psalms. This verse begins with *in a going out of Israel from Egypt*. Barnes: *This is not to be confined to the exact act of the exodus, but embraces all that properly entered into that migration,—the whole train of events which resulted in their being brought into the promised land.*³

The translation of this is fairly straightforward until the last word which is the Qal active participle of *lâ'az* (רַצַּף) [pronounced *law-AHZ* or *law-GAHZ*], and it means *to talk indistinctly, to talk unintelligibly, to murmur, to speak in a foreign language*. This word appears to be found only here, although it has several similar verbs. Strong's #3937 BDB #541. The indication is that the Egyptians and the Israelites maintained their own languages over the four hundred years of slavery.

We find two words in this psalm which are almost used as synonyms at times: *Israel* and *Jacob*. They both refer to the same person—the son of Isaac, who is the son of Abraham. However, his given name was Jacob; and God later gave him the name Israel. Therefore, there are times when *Israel* stands for the Jewish people in fellowship and growing; or places them in a positive light; and *Jacob* refers to the unregenerate Israel; or those who are believers but have fallen backwards. Recall that there were two generations which left Israel: gen X, the older generation, which were a miserable generation whom God hated—this is *Jacob*; and the generation of promise, their sons and daughters, who watched their parents die in the desert for their reversionism, and then went into the land and took it—that was *Israel*. There is a second reason that Jacob is referred to, and not Abraham: it was Jacob and his family who actually went into Egypt to begin with, under the protection and care of Joseph, Jacob's son and a leader in Egypt.

McGee: *when Abraham first went into the Land of Promise, he was a stranger. God told him that his people would go down to the land of Egypt where they would become a nation. Israel began as a nation in Egypt, and anti-Semitism was born in Egypt. The Bible tells of their sufferings, their hardships, their persecutions, and their troubles in Egypt. Then god remembered His covenant with them, heard their cry, looked upon the children of Israel, and had respect unto them. God delivered them from Egypt, and this psalm begins with the wilderness march.*⁴

This psalm begins by celebrating one of the central themes of the book of the Exodus—the separation of Israel from Egypt. **And it came to pass on that same day the Jehovah brought the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies** (Ex. 12:51). The psalmist, in a way, is fulfilling a command of Moses, issued to the two generations who left Egypt, but a mandate which continues for all time to all Jews: **“Remember this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of bondage; for by a powerful hand, Jehovah brought you out from this place.”** (Ex. 13:3b).

³ Barnes' Notes, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. IV, p. 152.

⁴ J. Vernon McGee, *Psalms Chapters 90–150*, ©1991 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 75.

“And they will know that I am Jehovah, their God, Who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am Jehovah their God.” (Ex. 29:46).

**Judah became for His sanctuary;
Israel His realms.**

Psalm
114:2

**Judah became His sanctuary
and Israel His realm.**

The use of the names *Judah* and *Israel* indicate that this psalm was likely written after the split between the two kingdoms. From v. 1 to v. 2, we have the movement from Egypt into the Land of Promise and the conquering of the Land of Promise.

The two common synonyms used for Israel are *Israel* and *Jacob* because these are the two names used of the ancestor of all of Israel. However, when Israel was split into two kingdoms, the northern kingdom was Israel and the southern kingdom was Judah. This verse indicates that the author of this psalm lived after the dividing of the Jews into two monarchies. Despite the fact that this was written after the dividing of the kingdom, the psalmist still looks upon Israel as one people.

Sanctuary comes from the word *qôdesh* (קֹדֶשׁ) [pronounced *koe-DESH*], which is a noun meaning *holiness, sacredness, apartness, that which is holy, holy things*. In the singular, it often means *sacred dwelling place, sanctuary, inner room [reserved for spiritual things]*. Strong's #6944 BDB #871. We have the 3rd person masculine singular suffix, meaning that God has set Israel apart for Himself, for a place to dwell, as a place of holiness on this fallen and corrupt earth.

The next noun is the plural of the Hebrew word *mem^eshâlâh* (מַמְשָׁלָה) [pronounced *mem^e-shaw-LAW*], which means *ruler, dominion, realm*; in the plural, our best rendering would be *realm*. Strong's #4475 BDB #606. This is where God places Himself on this earth. We know that His Presence is further confined, so to speak, to the ark of the covenant inside the holy of holies.

McGee: *God is speaking now of the whole nation being a tabernacle. God's original intention was that Israel would be a nation of priests—not just one tribe—which means they were to be priests for the world. I think that that is what will happen in the Millennium when Israel will serve in the earthly temple.*⁵

The key here is that God would dwell within a particular country insofar as the working out of His plan and purpose were concerned. The change in dispensations brought about almost the opposite of what I would have expected. I would have thought that God would have first worked within many nations when the mode of transportation and the communication between nations was slow. However, God remained very centralized from the time period of Abraham to the resurrection of our Lord. “Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you will know that I am Jehovah your God, Who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.” (Ex. 6:7). “And you will be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Ex. 19:6a). “And I will dwell among the sons of Israel and I will be their God. And they will know that I am Jehovah their God Who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am Jehovah their God.” (Ex. 29:45–46). Then Moses and the Levites the priests spoke to all Israel, saying, “Be silent and listen, O Israel! This day you have become a people for Jehovah your God.” (Deut. 27:9; also see Ex. 15:17). This did not mean that He did not reach out to other nations nor did it mean that Gentiles could not be saved. All Gentiles who placed their faith in the God of Israel, Jesus Christ, even for just an instant, were saved at that time with results that continued forever. There is every indication within the Bible that the power and the authority of the God of Israel reached to all the nations around them. The nations that Israel conquered or fought against were well aware of their God. When they entered into the land of Canaan, the entire population had heard of the God of Israel and were in desperate fear of His power. There were a few, Rahab and her family, who trusted in Jesus Christ and were delivered from the wrath to come. No doubt there were some who believed, but would not take a stand and they perished in the rubble of Jericho (although their souls are delivered forever by the hand of God).

⁵ J. Vernon McGee, *Psalms Chapters 90-150*, ©1991 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 76.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

God Has Control over the Sea and the Land

**The sea looked then fled;
the Jordan turned [itself] to back.**

Psalm
114:3

**The sea looked and then it fled;
the Jordan turned itself around backwards.**

This takes in the two parallel incidents—when Israel left Egypt and crossed the sea of reeds; and when Israel crossed over the Jordan to take the land. The first verse is somewhat poetic, the verb being the Qal perfect of to see, and the second being the Qal imperfect of *nûṣ* (נוּס) [pronounced *noose*], which means *to flee*. Strong's #5127 BDB #630. This of course refers to Moses parting the sea of reeds: *Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Jehovah swept the sea by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided* (Ex. 14:21). *At the blast of Your nostrils the waters were piled up; the flowing waters stood up like a heap; the deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea* (Ex. 15:8).

Barnes: *The sea—(the Red Sea)—saw the mighty movement—the marshaled hosts—the moving masses—the cattle—the pursuing enemies—the commotion—the agitation—on its usually quiet shores. We are to conceive of the usual calmness of the desert—the waste and lonely solitudes on the banks of the Red Sea,—and then all this suddenly broken in upon by vast hosts of men, women, children, and cattle, fleeing in consternation, followed by the embattled strength of Egypt,—all rolling on tumultuously to the shore [I would have said, and all hell broke loose]. No wonder that the sea is represented as astonished at this unusual spectacle, and as fleeing in dismay...[the sea fled], as if affrightened at the approach of such an host, coming so suddenly upon its shores.*⁶

The second line has the Qal imperfect of *ṣāḇ* (סָבַח) [pronounced *saw^b-VAH^{bV}*], which means *to turn oneself, to go around, to surround, to encircle*. Strong's #5437 BDB #685. What it turns itself around to is the masculine substantive *ʿāchôwr* (אָחֹר) [pronounced *aw-KHOHR*], and it means *the hinder side, the back part, backwards* (in poetry). Strong's #268 BDB #30. It was preceded by the lamed preposition. It is because of this second line that we chose to handle this Psalm after Joshua 3. *So it came to pass when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people, and when those who carried the ark came into the Jordan, and the feet of the priests carrying the ark were dipped into the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest), that the waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho* (Joshua 3:14–16). Barnes: *They [the waters of the Jordan] also seemed astonished at the approach of the Hebrews, and retired to make a way for them to pass over.*⁷ NIV: *The Red Sea and the Jordan River...saw the might God approach in his awesome pillar of cloud and fled.*⁸

**The mountains leaped like rams;
the hills like sons of sheep.**

Psalm
114:4

**The mountains leaped about like rams;
the hills like lambs.**

The first verb is the Qal perfect of *râqad* (רָקַד) [pronounced *raw-KAHD*], which means *to skip about, to leap, to run with leaps and bounds*. It refers to the quaking of Mount Sinai when the law was given, as well as to God's power during an earthquake and other seismic action. Strong's #7540 BDB #955. *Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently* (Ex. 19:18). *The mountains quaked at the presence of Jehovah. This Sinai, at the presence of Jehovah, the God of Israel* (Judges 5:5). *The earth shook and quaked; and the foundations of the mountains were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry* (Psalm 18:7). *O God, when You went forth before Your people; when You marched through the wilderness—the earth quaked; the heavens also dropped [rain]*

⁶ Barnes' Notes, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. IV, p. 153.

⁷ Barnes' Notes, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. IV, p. 153.

⁸ The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 902.

at the presence of God; Sinai itself [quaked] at the presence of God, the God of Israel (Psalm 68:7–8). And He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox (Psalm 29:6). There is an imagery here that would not be the first thing to come to my mind; however the Hebrew mind saw a connection between the ambling of their cattle and the shaking of the mountains. Barnes: *They seemed to move from place to place; everything seemed to be unsettled and acknowledged the presence of the Omnipotent One...[The hills here refer] to the less prominent eminences of Sinai. The lofty hills, and the smaller hills surrounding, seemed to be all in a state of commotion.*⁹ He looked and surveyed the earth; He looked and startled the nations. Yes, the perpetual mountains were shattered; the ancient hills collapsed. His ways are everlasting (Habak. 3:6).

**What to you, the sea, that you flee?
The Jordan, that you turn [yourself] to back?**

Psalm
114:5

**Why do you flee, O sea?
Why do you turn yourself around, O Jordan?**

This is the same as what we have above, pretty much, with a slightly different beginning. It begins with the interrogative *mâh* (מַה) [pronounced *maw*] and it means *what, how*. This is followed by the *lâmed* preposition which has the masculine singular suffix; with the *kiy* preposition, it means *what to you...that*. *Mâh* can also be used as an adverb of interrogation, meaning *why, wherefore*. Strong's #4100 BDB #552. Literally, this is *what to you, the sea?* Barnes: *What influenced you,—what alarmed you,—what put you into such fear, and caused such consternation? Instead of stating the cause or reason why they were thus thrown into dismay, the psalmist uses the language of surprise, as if these inanimate objects had been smitten with sudden terror, and as if it were proper to ask an explanation from themselves in regard to conduct that seemed so strange.*¹⁰ Habak. 3:8 asks: **Did Jehovah rage against the rivers; was Your anger against the rivers? Was Your wrath against the sea, that You rode on Your horses, on Your chariots of salvation?**

McGee sets up an analogy. When the Red Sea was held back, Israel was separated from Egypt. This represents our first stage of redemption. God killed the first-born of all the Egyptians and Israelites except for those who put the blood on the door sill. This separation from Egypt is analogous to our salvation. Between this deliverance and the separation of the waters at the Jordan, we have Israel committing failure after failure—however, when Israel crossed that Jordan River into the Land of Promise, this was analogous to our second stage of redemption, when our lives fall more in line with His, which occurs through the filling of the Spirit and growth in His Word. The Jordan River stood between the Israelites and blessing from God—God and only God could remove that barrier. All they had to do was cross into the land.¹¹

The second line carries with it the interrogative from the first line.

**The mountains, you leap like rams;
hills like sons of sheep?**

Psalm
114:6

**Why do the mountains leap like rams
and the hills like lambs?**

This is a continuation of the questions from v. 5. There is no interrogative particle (*mâh*) in either line, but it is understood. The psalmist asks the mountains and the hills what could cause them to jump and to leap about as if they were animals. He asks them, although he knows the answer is God's great power.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

⁹ Barnes' Notes, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. IV, p. 153.

¹⁰ Barnes' Notes, Baker Books, ©1996; Vol. IV, p. 153 (I traded all the *thee*'s in this quote with *you*'s).

¹¹ This idea came from J. Vernon McGee, *Psalms Chapters 90-150*, ©1991 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 76.

God Causes the Earth to Rotate and Can Bring Water out of Rocks

From before faces of a Lord, writhe [or,
rotate], O earth;
from before faces of a God of Jacob.

Psalm
114:7

From before the presence of the Lord,
rotate on an axis, O earth;
from before the faces of the God of Jacob,
rotate on an axis, O earth.

This is a most remarkable verse, the implication of which is missed by all translators that I am aware of:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Before the Lord be in anguish, O earth, before the God of Jacob;
NWT	Because of the Lord be in severe pains, O earth, because of the God of Jacob,...
REB	Earth, dance at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob,...
TEV	Tremble, earth, at the Lord's coming, at the presence of the God of Jacob,...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	From before the Lord be afraid, O earth, From before the God of Jacob,...

This verse begins with two prepositions and the plural construct of pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced *paw-NEEN*] (which is generally in the plural) and which means *face(s)*. This is preceded by the preposition mî (-מִ) [pronounced *me*], which means *from, out from, away from*. It is then preceded by the lâmed preposition, which means *to, for, before*. Together, they mean *from before the face of, from the presence of*. Strong's #6440 BDB #815 (lâmed is BDB #510; mî is Strong's #4480). What follows is not Y^ehowah, but the masculine singular substantive 'âdôwn (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *aw-DOHN*], the word we often know as *adonai*; and this word means *lord, master, owner, superior, sovereign*. It is a word used of both man and God; and here of God, in terms of being the sovereign being of the universe. Strong's #113 BDB #10.

The verb is the Qal imperative of chûwl (חָוַל) [pronounced *khoor*], which means, primarily, *to turn, to turn around, to be twisted*. More specifically, it means ❶ *to dance [in a circle]*; ❷ *to be twisted, to be hurled [on or against something]*; ❸ *to twist oneself, to writhe, to writhe in pain* (used of giving birth); ❹ *to bring forth [in birth]*; ❺ *to tremble* (probably from the palpitation of the heart); ❻ *to be strong, to be firm*; ❼ *to wait, to stay, to delay*. Allow me to add an eighth meaning: ❽ *to spin, to rotate on an axis*. This latter meaning is closer to the basic meaning of the verb and is obviously very applicable. Strong's #2342 BDB #296. You might be asking yourself did ancient man grasp what was here in this verse? Highly unlikely. Did God realize what was written here? Certainly, from eternity past. However, to remain true to the context here, this likely refers to the earth writhing and trembling due to earthquakes.

What the psalmist is speaking to is *the land or the earth*. The Hebrew word is 'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced *EH-rets*] is a feminine singular substantive which means *earth (all or a portion), land*. It can mean ❶ *planet earth* (Gen. 18:18, 25 22:18 Job 37:12); ❷ *a specific portion of the earth, such as a country, region, or territory* (Gen. 11:28, 31 21:21 Psalm 78:12—you will note that in these instances, 'erets is in the construct and generally translated *the land of*).. Strong's #776 BDB #75. In context, we take this word to refer to the land, to the mountains, to a specific geographical area. The psalmist orders these mountains to tremble. However, take this verse from its context and apply the most basic meaning to the verb, and we take the most common use of the noun, and the psalmist is ordering the earth to turn—to turn around—at the presence of God. We find a very similar in Psalm 96:9: *Worship Jehovah in holy array; turn before Him, all of the earth*. Again, *turn* is in the imperative. Personally, I would not need to be told in the presence of God to tremble. Like the exodus generation at Sinai at the voice of God, fear would be a natural response. God would not have to order me to tremble under those conditions. Certainly, as before, one could make a case from context for the *turning of the earth* to mean the *trembling of the peoples of the earth before God*; however, it is amazing that we could have such an implication as the rotation of the earth found in three places in the Bible (the 3rd is I Chron. 16:30).

The word for *God* in this verse is not masculine plural 'êlôhîym¹² (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*], as we would expect but it is the masculine singular noun 'êlôhah (אֱלֹהָהּ) [pronounced *el-OH-hah*], a word for God or deity found

¹² Since this is so commonly referred to in reference books, we will use the designation *Elohim* as well.

primarily in Job (e.g., Job 3:4, 23 4:9, 17 5:17 6:4, 8, 9) and found scattered throughout the Bible in fewer than a dozen other places. Strong's #433 BDB #43 . The reason that we do not find *Elohim* here is that *Elohim* is the plural and it stands for all the members of the godhead, whereas *ʿēlôhah* is in the singular and stands for only one of the members of the godhead—in this case, it is the revealed member of the godhead, Jesus Christ.

**The One turning the rock [into] a pool of waters;
the flint to a fountain of waters.**

Psalm
114:8

**The One Who turned the rock into a pool of water;
the One Who turned the flint into a fountain of water.**

This last verse begins with the definite article and the Qal active participle of *hâphak*^e (הָפַךְ) [pronounced *haw-FAHK*^e], which means *to turn, to overturn*. Strong's #2015 BDB #245. With the definite article, this refers to the person of God via what He does. The object of the noun-verb is *tsûwr* (צוּר) [pronounced *tzoor*], which means *rock, cliff*. Strong's #6697 BDB #849.

What God turned the rock into was the construct of *ʿăgam* (אֲגָם) [pronounced *uh-GAHM*], which means *pool, pond*. Strong's #98 BDB #8. What follows is the plural of the noun for *water*. Strong's #4325 BDB #565. This refers to gen X, the failures of the exodus. We read about this in Ex. 17:1–7: **Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed in stages from the wilderness of Sin, according to the command of Jehovah, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water to drink. Therefore, the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water that we may drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test Jehovah?” But the people thirsted there for water and they grumbled against Moses and they said, “Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst.” So Moses cried out to Jehovah, saying, “What will I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me.” Then Jehovah said to Moses, “Pass before the faces of these people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Observe, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you will strike the rock and water will gush out of it, so that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested Jehovah, saying, “Is Jehovah among us, or not?”**

Like the rest of the Psalm, the beginning of the first line goes with the second line. The masculine construct found here is *challâmîysh* (חַלְאִמִּישׁ) [pronounced *khahl-law-MEESH*], which means *flint or hard stone*. Keil and Delitzsch give an ample background of this word in Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 5, p. 708 footnote. Strong's #2496 BDB #321.

The hard rock is followed by the lamed preposition and what it is turned into is the masculine construct of *maʿyân* (מַעְיָן) [pronounced *mahg-YAWN*], which means *spring, fountain*. Strong's #4599 BDB #745. This is followed again by *waters*. After 38 years of almost total silence, Israel began to move forward again toward the land. **Then the sons of Israel, the entire congregation, came to the wilderness of Zin in the first month; and the people stayed a Kadesh. Now Miriam died there and was buried there. And there was no water for the congregation; and they assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron. The people thus contended with Moses and spoke, saying, “If only we had perished when our brothers perished before Jehovah! Why then have you brought Jehovah's assembly into this wilderness, for us and our beasts to die here? And why have you made us come up from Egypt, to bring us in to this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or of figs or vines or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink.” Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting, and they fell on their faces. Then the glory of Jehovah appeared to them, and Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, “Take the rod and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield its water. You will thus bring forth water for them out of the rock and cause the congregation and their beasts to drink.” So Moses took the rod from before Jehovah, just as He had commanded him and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock. And he said to them, “Listen now, you rebels, shall be**

bring forth water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank." (Num. 20:1–11).¹³

Both generations of Jews to exit Egypt faced one great initial test—the no-water test (which they both failed); and they both saw a tremendous initial miracle—the holding back of the water. God has control over all of the elements of the earth—He can give water at His own pleasure and He can hold water back. He changes a wilderness into a pool of water and a dry land into springs of water (Psalm 107:35). He wrought wonders before their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. He divided the sea and caused them to pass through, and He made the waters stand up like a heap...He split the rocks in the wilderness and He gave abundant drink like the ocean depths. He brought forth streams also from the rock and caused waters to run down like rivers (Psalm 78:12–13, 15–16). He opened the rock and water flowed out; it ran in the dry places like a river (Psalm 105:41). He changes a wilderness into a pool of water and a dry land into springs of water (Psalm 107:35; also see Deut. 8:15). In this way, God sustained and refreshed the lives of His own.¹⁴

Keil and Delitzsch: *The causing of water to gush forth out of the flinty rock is a practical proof of unlimited omnipotence and of the grace which converts death into life...For that which He has been He still ever is; and as He came once, He will come again.*¹⁵

When we covered this material in context, I gave you a couple of different scenarios. In any case, the amount of water involved here had to be tremendous. Whether the miracle was based upon a series of natural events, or whether it was partially based upon natural events with some supernatural power thrown in, or whether this was a completely supernatural event, it makes no difference. Only God is capable of such an event. His miracles are not rated in the Bible—there is not one which is more or less improbable than another. One can choose not to believe in miracles because they have never witnessed one (or, they have not ever identified an event which they witnessed as a miracle). This goes back, generally speaking, to a lack of belief in God. For a person who believes in God, the ability of God to perform a miracle is almost taken for granted. In fact, some believers are more confused because of the lack of miraculous events in their lives. They seem to take the position that the Bible is filled with miracles (which it is) and they expect their lives to be, by their way of thinking, equally abundant. However, if you took the total number of miraculous events recorded in the Bible and divide that by the number of people who were alive during the history that the Bible records, you would come up with 1/100,000th of a miracle per person (I actually didn't do the math—I am thinking that the fraction must be much smaller). Even if you multiply the number of miracles by 1000 (since John testified to the incredible number of unrecorded miracles at the hand of our Lord—John 21:25), you still have a very small number of miracles. Out of every 100 people, one person might witness one miracle in his lifetime on average. I know that seems like not many miracles, because there aren't many miracles in the Bible. So the idea that you can go to a holy roller service and witness dozens of miracles during any given service is poppycock. It is inconsistent with the Biblical record. Here, in the books of Exodus, Numbers and Joshua, we have the testimony that 3,000,000 people witnessed a handful of incredible miracles or powerful works (along with the population of Egypt). We are talking less than two dozen miracles performed over a period of forty years, during one of the more miraculous times of history. Keep in mind that these miracles were not like fireworks—not everyone had a front row seat and not everyone fully could see them or appreciate them. So, here we are in a very miraculous period of time, when these miracles are performed for the purpose of showing that the God of the Universe is also the God of Israel, a God greater than and set apart from any national deity. Here, at a time when there are a plethora of miracles, a person could expect to see, in his lifetime, perhaps two dozen miracles. I mention this because that is the emphasis of the charismatic movement, and it is an emphasis which is totally out of step with the Bible and completely fallacious.

A final note, more to those who are textual critics; in the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Syriac the Arabic and in several other manuscripts, there is no division between Psalm 114 and Psalm 115; however, such a division is natural and we don't know why this division found in the Hebrew was not carried over into the various codices.

¹³ Obviously, Moses striking the rock rather than speaking to it, as God had commanded, was the great mistake of Moses.

¹⁴ Paraphrased from *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 902.

¹⁵ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 5, p. 708.

[<<Return to Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

[<<Site Map>>](#)

[<<Return to the Psalms Homepage>>](#)

[<<Return to Beginning of this Chapter>>](#)