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Interior Monologue

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Interior Monologue

Chad Erickstad

Interior Monologue of Chariot Driver from Exodus 14:23-25: Two Ways

1.

One wheel mired motionless, sunk in soft clay, the other splintered in twain, PILLAR OF FIRE climbing from earth to sky, menacing, tamp fear, cab crooked, cracked, bottomed, horses braying, rearing, writhing in snarled leather reins, eyes rolled back to white, high walls of water flanking and PILLAR OF FIRE menacing, tamp fear mighty maryannu, high walls of water flanking then seeping now flowing fast, rushing inward with chariot-flotsam, flailing bodies, Montu guide me, water crashing, bodies running, screaming, cascading, Pharaoh guide me, PILLAR OF FIRE flashing instantly to PILLAR OF CLOUD as water walls crumble in, roaring, deafening, jagged elm axle rapidly pinwheeling closer, Montu, closer, Pharaoh, closer, I AM FOREVER YOUR FAITHFUL SERVAN

2.

"What if we rock it?" the archer said.

The driver looked down at the broken chariot. This guy, he thought. "I don't think rocking it back and forth is going to help," he said. "This wheel is half-buried in mud, and that wheel," he said, pointing, "is com-

pletely shorn from the axle.”

“Couldn’t hurt to try,” the archer said.

Unbelievable, the driver thought. Pharaoh just had to bring everybody. Two thousand archers in the corps, and I get teamed with this guy. How many arrows did he waste shooting at that pillar of fire? Who does that? Did he think he was going to harm it? And now we’re stuck way back here while all the action, all the honor of battle, is way up there.

The archer half-heartedly pushed on the chariot’s cab; it didn’t budge an inch. “The horses have bolted anyway, so I guess why bother,” he said, leaning his bow against the cab. He adjusted his tunic, let out a sigh, then looked at the driver.

“What?” the driver said.

“What now? You’re the driver.”

“Was the driver! I have nothing to drive!”

The archer and driver paused, watching the pillar of fire dance across the horizon in front of them.

“I blame Pharaoh,” the archer finally murmured. “There, I said it.”

“Such insolence!” the driver barked. “Pharaoh is all! Remember Kadesh!”

“Ah, yes, the Battle of Kadesh,” the archer said, inflecting every word. “Here’s a riddle for you: how can you tell if Pharaoh was victorious at the Battle of Kadesh? Answer: You don’t have to, because Pharaoh will tell you all about it!”

“More insolence!” the driver yelled. “Enough!”

Another long, uncomfortable pause ensued as they watched the dancing pillar of fire.

“What should we do? These water walls are starting to cave in, if you haven’t noticed,” the archer said, pointing to his left. “And that fire thing just turned into clouds. I think something’s happening.”

Something’s been happening for a while, the driver thought. First the river of blood, then the vermin and the pestilence—it’s been a strange few months. And now I’m stuck in this unusual canyon with an imbecile and a broken chariot. I hate to think it, but this fool may have a point. Some of Pharaoh’s decisions during this strange time have seemed rather peculiar. For instance . . .

At that very instant, both the archer and the driver were crushed by the sudden reconstitution of the Red Sea.

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