

# 18 Pi-Hahiroth

## Names (also known as)

Pi-Hahiroth

## Etymology

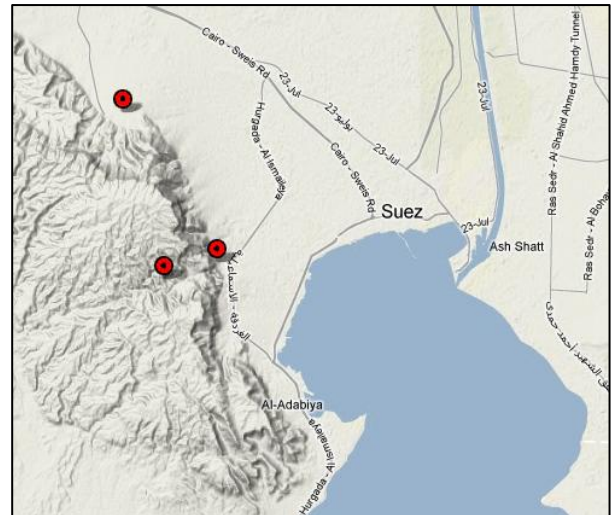
Hebrew: ‘mouth of the caverns’, or ‘mouth of the gorges’, from the words פֶּה *peh*: the *mouth* (as the means of *blowing*) and חֹר חֹר *chôr*: a *cavity, socket, den*: - cave, hole.

## Location/Description

The precise location of Pihahiroth is uncertain. From Scripture we can deduce the following evidence:

- It is between Migdol, and the Sea;
- It is opposite Baal-Zephon (Ex. 14:1);
- The location formed a natural bottle neck, shutting in the Israelites, between the sea and the wilderness (Ex. 14:3);
- The stretch of water at its location, was deep enough and large enough to ‘baptise’ all of Israel at once (1 Cor. 10:1);
- The stretch of water was deep enough to drown all the Egyptians (Ex. 14:28);
- The location necessitated miraculous deliverance by Yahweh.

To quote Brother Mansfield’s Expositor... “All the requirements of the narrative are supplied some 25 kms southward of Suez, at a place called Ras Attakah. Brother Mansfield quotes G. Sandie (‘Horeb and Jerusalem’, 1866), “Words will not easily convey to those familiar only with pastoral hill country, an idea of its grim and terrible aspect. It arises not so much from its sudden elevation, as from the precipitous chaos and endless confusion of the sand heaps that lie along its slopes... You cannot but think that the Israelites, looking to these hills would feel that escape was as hopeless as resistance was vain. The ridge circles round to the north, and as the enemy came down upon them from that direction, they were fairly imprisoned – the Egyptian army on the north, the hills on the west and to the south, and the sea on the east. It was as though they were pent up for slaughter; and at the only opening, the cruel enemy was coming in to work his cruel will” The following map shows the topography of the area, creating the conditions described.



## Scriptural references

### Old Testament

Exodus 14:2,9  
Numbers 33:7,8

### New Testament

None

## Famous characters

Moses,  
The Children of Israel,  
Pharaoh and the Egyptian army

## The Allegory of Pi-hahiroth

The natural features of Pi-hahiroth fit beautifully with the Scriptural allegory portrayed in the record. 1 Cor. 10:1 tells us that the events at the Red Sea are a record of the national baptism of Israel. The nation of Israel being called out of Egypt is set forth as the type of what each believer will go through in their individual lives. Having been called out of Egypt, Israel is directed by the angel of God’s presence to turn to the south, and told to encamp before Pi-hahiroth. The word of God directed His people out of Egypt, and to a narrowing of the path. From a natural human perspective it was a disastrous place to be, a narrow place, fenced in by the sea, the mountains and the pursuing Egyptians. This is the same affect that the word of God has on those who hear it. It directs us in our lives, it takes us on a path that we would not by natural inclinations take. The power of God’s word narrows the path which we can take, until we are directed to baptism. God’s word brings us to this place and confronts us with a

choice. When we have knowledge of the truth, we are forced to make a choice in baptism. We must choose to leave forever the land of Egypt and continue to be led by the spirit, not only in baptism, but in a life thereafter that renounces the flesh. Alternatively, we can choose to surrender to Pharaoh, and return to his bondage. Pi-hahiroth is typically a place of no escape. The knowledge of the truth brings us to this point, we are no longer in the world, nor are we yet in the truth. At this point in our life, we are forced to decide which path we are going to take.



Like the choice we make in baptism, it is only through reliance on God all through our wilderness wandering that it will finally culminate in the conquering of sin and death. The believer cannot go ahead in his own strength for it is beyond human capacity to save oneself. It is not until we learn our utter dependence on the strength of God and wait patiently for his salvation, that we will be given the victory over King Sin.

“And Moses said unto the people, **Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Yahweh, which he will shew to you today:** for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever. Yahweh shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” - Exodus 14:13-14.

And yet Yahweh was not particularly happy with Moses’ advice to Israel. While it was absolutely critical that they realised their only hope was in deliverance from Yahweh, what He wanted from them was personal commitment. Hence, the response was – “And Yahweh said unto Moses, Wherefore

criest thou unto me? **speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.**” – Ex. 14:15.

So it is with us. Baptism is a decision to crucify “the flesh with its affections and lusts” and rely wholly on the mercy and strength of God to achieve in us what we cannot achieve for ourselves, but God cannot work without the personal commitment of everyone who reaches the ‘Pi-hahiroth’ moment in life.

Accordingly, Bro. Islip Collyer wrote in Conviction and Conduct page 155:

“There is only one work in which God has any actual need of your assistance, and that is the work of your own salvation.”

### Sources:

Christadelphian Expositor – Exodus - HP Mansfield

Map – Peter Boon

(Compilers – Jeff Cooper/Jim Cowie)