

Sunday, January 14, 2024 pm

## JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE (22)

### From Egypt to Sinai

### Exodus 12-19

We are continuing our journey through the Bible. In our last lesson, we noted the 10 plagues in Egypt and how that led to Israel leaving the land. After Egypt was devastated, they were driven out and took with them great possessions from the Egyptians. We now begin a study of the 6<sup>th</sup> period of Bible history – Israel in the Wilderness (NOTE: Some include this in the section tied to Israel in Egypt – making Exodus 1-19 the 5<sup>th</sup> period of time. I prefer to include this section in their wilderness wanderings).

#### I. The Text

- a. The Exodus is recorded in Exodus 12:31-42. Pharaoh drives out the people with urgency. NOTE that vs. 38 says “a mixed multitude” went with them, as well as flocks and herds. Exactly who this “mixed multitude” was is uncertain. It could be descendants of the servants of the Israelites, or some have suggested that over time, other people had assimilated into the midst of the Israelites. Clearly, whoever they were, they were following YHWH and His laws. Vs. 41 notes the timing of their exodus – 430 years, on the very same day “*all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.*”
- b. Exodus 12:43-13:16 finds Moses describing details about observing the Passover and feast of unleavened bread which would last for 7 days. We also find instructions for the consecration of the firstborn, as a memorial that God had saved the firstborn because of the blood of the Passover lamb.
- c. 13:17-22 – as they left, God did not lead them to Egypt via a direct route, lest they be faced with war immediately and return to Egypt. Instead He led them around the wilderness of the Red Sea. Moses took with him the bones of Joseph (Genesis 50:24-25, cf. Hebrews 11:22). As they traveled the LORD went before them by day as a pillar of cloud, and by night as a pillar of fire to give them light (21-22).
- d. 14 – the Red Sea crossing. They come to the Red Sea (likely the northern tip of the Gulf of Suez, the western gulf of the Red Sea). Israel is given instructions to camp by the Sea. Moses is told that Pharaoh will harden his heart again and pursue them. Note Vs. 4. Vs. 5-9 records this. AS Pharaoh approaches, the Israelites were afraid and cried to the LORD and said to Moses, “There were no graves in Egypt, so you have brought us out here to die. Didn’t we tell you to leave us alone in Egypt.” NOTE Vs. 13 – Moses replies, “*Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.*” The LORD then tells Moses to tell the people to move forward. He is to lift up his rod over the sea and it would divide. The children would cross the sea on dry ground (NOTE: Even at its northern tip, the sea is about 5 miles across, plenty of water for the miracle ahead). Moses complies and a wind divides the waters so that Israel crosses on dry land with a wall of water on their right and left (22). After they are across, Pharaoh and his army pursue them through the sea, but God made their pursuit difficult taking the wheels off their chariots. As the Egyptians realize YHWH is against them, they retreat. Moses stretches out his rod again and the sea closes. Pharaoh and his army drown. NOTE vs. 30-31. The LORD saved Israel that day, so the people feared the LORD and believed Him and Moses, His servant.
- e. 15:1-19 records a song of rejoicing by Moses that described their deliverance. Vs. 20-21 records the song of Miriam as the women went out and celebrated.
- f. 15:22-27, bitter waters. In the wilderness of Shur, they go 3 days and find no water. They come to a place called Marah (bitter) and find water but it was not drinkable. They complain against Moses. The LORD showed Moses a tree and told him to cast it into the water and the waters were made

- sweet (drinkable). So there was water for the people. Vs. 26-27 – the LORD made a statute with the people there promising that if they heeded His voice and obey His statutes that none of the diseases they had seen in Egypt would befall them, “For I am the LORD who heals you.” AFTER this they come to Elim where they find 12 wells and 70 palm trees and they camp there.
- g. 16:1-36 – Manna. Bread from heaven. The children of Israel come to the wilderness of Sin (NOTHING to do with sin, but shortened for the wilderness where Mt. Sinai was), on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the second month. They have been wandering for about a month now. AGAIN, the whole congregation complains against Moses and Aaron. “We had plenty of food in Egypt, but you brought us out here to starve to death.” The LORD noted that He would provide saying, “I will rain bread from heaven for you.” He gave specific instructions to be followed – gather just enough for the day each morning. Any left over would spoil the next day. BUT, on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, they were to gather twice as much because there would be no manna on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. It was to be a day of rest. With both sets of instructions, some people did not pay attention. He also provided meat for them in the evening. Vs. 14-15 describes this manna (meaning, “what is it?”) We also find here FOR THE FIRST TIME, the mention of the Sabbath rest (16:25). In this text we have the preliminaries – rest on 7<sup>th</sup> day and don’t go anywhere. Vs. 35 notes that this was how Israel ate in the wilderness for 40 years.
  - h. 17:1-7 – Water from a rock. AGAIN, the people are complaining demanding water, “You brought us out here to die of thirst.” Moses cried to the LORD who instructed him to take the elders and strike a rock with his rod. Moses complied, and water came out and the people drank. He called the place, “Massah & Meribah” because the people contended with the LORD there.
  - i. 17:8-16 – At a place called Rephidim, the Amalekites (likely descendants of Esau – Genesis 36:12,16) attack Israel. Moses with Joshua (this is our FIRST introduction to him – vs. 9) form an army to defend themselves and fight the Amalekites. Moses goes upon a hill and raises his rod. As long as the rod was raised, Israel prevailed. Later in the day Aaron and Hur held up his hands. So Joshua defeated Amalek. The LORD declared that a day would come when the Amalekites would be utterly destroyed. It is recorded in 1 Samuel 15 when King Saul is told to go utterly destroy the nation and everything therein. This is where king Saul only partially complies. Deuteronomy 25:17-19 tells us they attacked the rear ranks (the stragglers and the weak) and did not fear God. Thus a day was to come when they would be blotted out.
  - j. 18 records, Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law coming to meet him. After Moses tells him all that has happened and how the LORD was with him, Jethro takes a burn offering and other sacrifices to offer to God (18:11-12). Jethro also notices how Moses from sunrise to sunset is judging the peoples problems. He advises Moses to find trusted leaders to judge various size groups (1000, 100, 50, 10) and to bring the more difficult judgments to him. This made the job of Moses easier. His father-in-law departs.
  - k. 19:1 records Israel arriving at the wilderness of Sinai in the 3<sup>rd</sup> month, on the same day. According to this, it took the Israelites about 2-3 months to arrive at Mt. Sinai (there are different interpretations). Considering the size of this group with about 600,000 men and their families (Exodus 12:37), that is certainly understandable. The distance from Goshen to Mt. Sinai was approximately 450 miles. They will remain at Sinai for about 1 year (cf. Numbers 10:11).
  - l. In our next lesson, we will address Mt. Sinai and what happened there.

## II. Lessons to learn

- a. ***Throughout this time in the wilderness, the LORD continually demonstrated that He was with them and taking care of them.*** This was a time when they needed to LEARN to trust Him. Today, we need to also trust that God is able to take care of us – Matthew 6:32-34, 5:6 – those hungering and thirsting

after righteousness shall be filled. 2 Peter 2:9 – He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation; Romans 8:31-32 – IF God is for us, who can be against us...? There is much to consider with this thought, but we live by faith knowing that just as He could sustain Israel in a hostile wilderness, so He can sustain us as well (both spiritually and physically).

- b. **The Red Sea crossing is a type of our salvation.** When Moses said, “Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD” (Ex. 14:13), we are reminded that God is our Savior. 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, a clear reference to the Red Sea crossing. It also demonstrates “immersion” as they had the cloud above them, a wall of water on either side and ground beneath. When we are baptized we are immersed (Romans 6:3-4), and saved through water (1 Peter 3:20-21, Acts 2:38).  
NOTE also that in the Red Sea crossing you have the 3 elements of salvation – Grace, faith and obedience.
- c. **Don’t settle for enslavement** – Ex. 14:11-12. What was glorious about generations of slavery? It is evil. Yet, the people were demoralized and satisfied to remain there. How many today, are enslaved to sin (John 8:34, Romans 6:16-17) and rather than making the difficult changes chose to remain there? Just as YHWH freed the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, He can and will free us from our bondage to sin and other addictive behaviors. Do the work to free yourself (1 Corinthians 6:12).
- d. **The dancing of Miriam CANNOT be compared to the modern, sensuous dances** so prevalent today in high schools, night clubs, and other venues. It was simply a celebration with joyful movements (NOTHING sensual is described or implied). Christians are to avoid environments that lead to or promote lasciviousness (lewdness – NKJV, sensuality – NASB, etc.).
- e. In this wilderness section we find **a series of complaints showing the ingratitude of the Israelites.**
  - i. They had plenty of reason to trust in YHWH – consider the miracles they had experienced: 1) The plagues, 2) the Red Sea crossing, 3) miraculous water – TWICE, 4) daily bread provided miraculously each morning, etc.
  - ii. YET, they expressed continued ingratitude!
  - iii. 4 times in the 2-3 months traveling complaints are documented – 1) at the Red Sea because of Pharaoh’s approach, 2) Bitter waters at Marah, 3) no food at the wilderness of sin, and 4) no water as they approached Mt. Sinai.
  - iv. Let us learn from their wicked example to be grateful. 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Philippians 4:6,
- f. **Manna – bread from heaven.** This is a reminder that God can sustain us day by day.
  - i. Matthew 6:11 reminds us that in our prayers, we include “daily bread”.
  - ii. While God supplies what He can, we STILL have to do our part. Consider our prayers for bread - we STILL need to work for it – 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11.
  - iii. But we have an even greater “bread” – John 6:51 where Jesus declared, “I am the bread which came down from heaven...”; 6:48, “I am the bread of life”.
- g. **Another lesson in leadership.** Moses was told to find reliable leaders who could help him with his work of judging the people. Good leaders delegate authority, based upon trustworthiness and ability.

And thus we come to Mount Sinai, where Moses will receive the Law of God and deliver it to the people. Up to that point there were many events and lessons that accompanied each of them. Let us continue to learn from the OT accounts and seek to make applications to our own lives (Romans 15:4). As you are engaged in your journey through this life, do you trust God? And are you grateful to Him for all that He has supplied? Think about it!