

The Book of Exodus

The Beginning of the Journey

Text: Exodus 13

Introduction:

1. As Israel exited from Egypt, they travelled from Ramses to Succoth.
2. Soon, they would reach the Red Sea and face a serious threat from Pharaoh and Egypt.
3. However, God who had delivered them continued to be their faithful guide.

I. Sanctification of the Firstborn

(Exodus 13:1-16)

A. The Significance of the Firstborn

(vs. 1-2)

1. The firstborn son represented the strength, name, and legacy of the family.
2. Pharaoh's attack against the male children of Israel was an attempt to remove them as a power or threat (Exo. 1:7, 9-10, 16, 22).
3. Yet, Israel was the firstborn son of Jehovah (Exo. 4:22).
 - a. Thus, Pharaoh's attack was against Israel's sons.
 - b. But, it was also an attack against God and His son.
4. The judgment of the Tenth Plague was a just punishment of Egypt.
5. It also resulted in their sound defeat and unconditional surrender.
6. While the firstborn in Egypt died, the firstborn in Israel were spared.
 - a. However, this was not because of who they or their fathers were.
 - b. Rather, it was because they heard and obeyed God's commands.
 - c. They were saved by grace through faith (cf. Eph. 2:8).
7. Now, the firstborn in Israel were to be sanctified unto the Lord in memory and honor of God's sparing of their firstborn while in Egypt (Num. 3:13; 8:17).

B. Instructions for the Passover Week

(vs. 3-10)

1. They were to remember the day and the fact that God alone was responsible for their deliverance.
2. The instructions for keeping the Passover would come into effect when Israel came into the land of Canaan.
 - a. Perhaps this refers primarily to the feast of unleavened bread.
 - b. On the first anniversary of their exodus, God commanded them to keep the Passover in the wilderness (Num. 9:1ff).
 - c. However, there is no record of them keeping it again until they came to Gilgal in the land of Canaan (Josh. 5:10).
 - d. These instructions were given in anticipation of what would come to pass (cf. Matt. 16:18; 18:17).
3. This feast was to affect the thinking, action, and speaking of God's people.

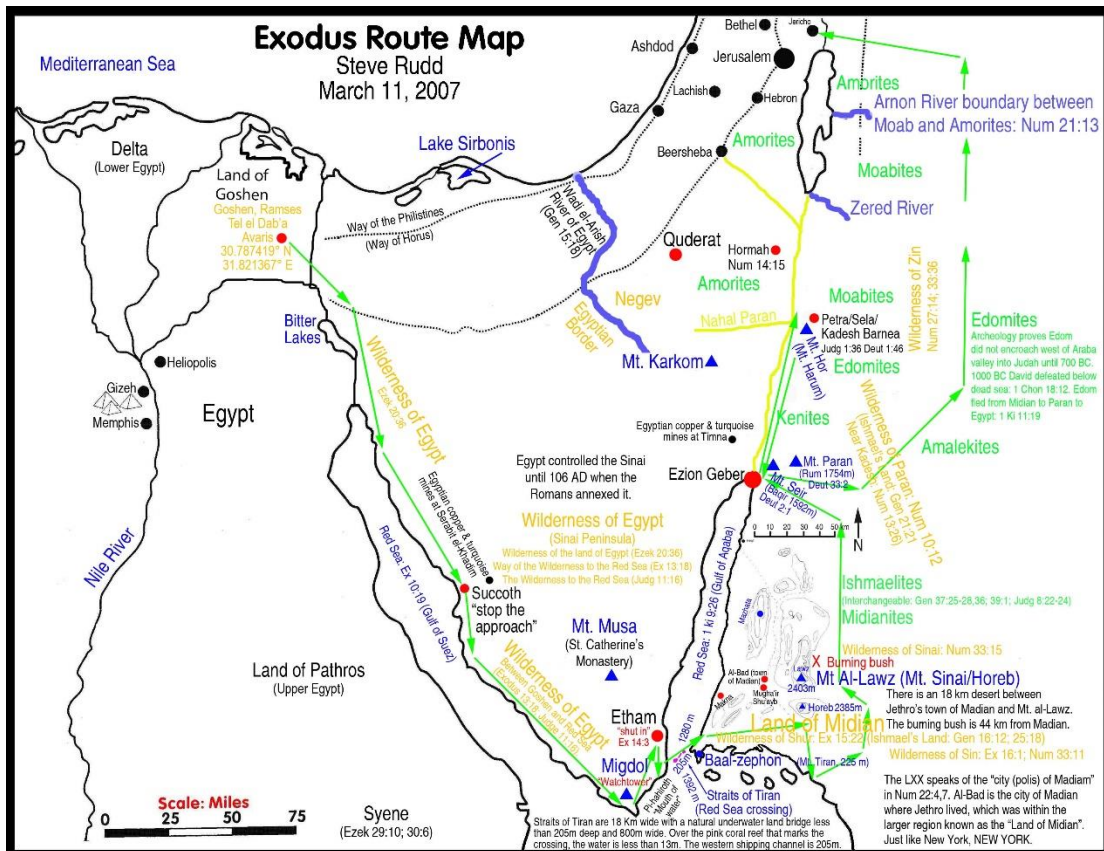
C. Instructions for Sanctification of the Firstborn

(vs. 11-16)

1. These instructions would also take effect when Israel came into the land of Canaan.
2. All firstborn males were to be set apart for the Lord.
 - a. The word 'sanctify' in verse 2 means, "To consecrate, hallow, set apart as holy."
 - b. The words 'set apart' in verse 12 mean, "To alienate or to cause to pass over."
 - c. The word for 'matrix' is the same Hebrew word as 'womb' (vs. 2).

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3. The firstborn males of clean animals were to be used for sacrifices.
 - a. They were to be offered on the eighth day after their birth (22:30).
 - b. Those that were blemished were not to be sacrificed to God, but eaten by the people (Deut. 15:21-22).
4. The firstborn males of unclean animals were to be redeemed (cf. Num. 18:15).
 - a. To redeem a donkey, a lamb was to be substituted.
 - b. If this was not done, its neck was to be broken.
 - c. Man does not have the right to use for himself that which belongs to God.
5. The firstborn son was to be redeemed.
 - a. God never demanded human sacrifice (cf. Jer. 19:5; 32:35).
 - b. Instead, God desires men to be living sacrifices (cf. Rom. 12:1).
 - c. Eventually, God chose the tribe of Levi as substitutes for the firstborn of Israel (Num. 3:11-13).
 - d. They became the priesthood, separated and dedicated to the service of Jehovah.
 - e. Still, the rest of Israel had an obligation to redeem their firstborn.
 - f. This they did by paying five shekels per firstborn to the Levites (Num. 3:47; 18:16).
 - g. This was to be done when the child was a month old (cf. Luke 2:22-24).
6. This was to be a reminder to the children of Israel and to affect their thinking and action.



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II. The Guidance of God

(Exodus 13:17-22)

- A. God's mercy toward Israel did not end with His freeing them from Egypt; for, He continued to guide them until they reached the Promised Land.
- B. The Protection of God (vs. 17-18)
 - 1. The shortest and quickest route from Egypt to Canaan was to travel northeast through the land of the Philistines.
 - 2. However, in order to protect His people, God chose to lead them on a different path.
 - 3. The Philistines were an aggressive and violent people.
 - 4. However, God did not cause Israel to avoid the Philistines because they might defeat His people in battle.
 - 5. Instead, He did not want the Israelites to be defeated by discouragement.
 - a. Discouragement because of weakness
 - b. Discouragement because of the way (Num. 21:4)
 - c. Discouragement because of the fight (Num. 32:7-9)
 - 6. The word for 'repent' means, "To be sorry; to sigh; or to regret."
 - a. This verse gives a simple illustration of repentance.
 - b. It is to change one's mind toward a situation.
 - c. This change of heart results in a change of direction.
 - d. Godly sorrow works repentance which leads to turning (2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 26:20).
 - 7. Instead, God led them 'about' – indicating a circuitous route – through the wilderness of the Red Sea.
 - 8. Israel left Egypt "harnessed" – meaning, "Girded, equipped (for a long journey), arrayed (for battle)." (Cf. Psalm 105, 107)
- C. The Promise of God (vs. 19)
 - 1. Joseph had caused his brethren to make an oath to carry his bones to Canaan for burial (Gen. 50:25-26).
 - 2. This was in anticipation of the promised deliverance of God (cf. Josh. 24:32).
- D. The Presence of God (vs. 20-22)
 - 1. God did not leave the children of Israel alone on their journey; instead, He led them each step of the way.
 - 2. He appeared in the form of a pillar.
 - a. In the daytime, it was a pillar of cloud.
 - b. In the nighttime, it was a pillar of fire.
 - 3. This pillar is sometimes called the angel of God (14:19).
 - 4. This pillar showed Israel where to go (Deut. 1:33; Neh. 9:12, 19).
 - 5. God would speak from this pillar (33:9; Num. 12:5; Psa. 99:7).
 - 6. When it rested upon the tabernacle, it meant that Israel was to stay (40:34ff).
 - 7. It also became a means of protection (14:14, 19-20).
 - 8. This pillar symbolizes the Word of God.

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