

Series: **Exodus: Seeing God in the Journey**

Title: **Taking the Longer Road**

Text: **Exodus 13:17-22**

Road trips in childhood

- Seemingly never ended
- No iTunes or Walkman
- Read books and played road games or slept to let the time slip away faster
- “Are we there yet?”
  - Rearview mirror

“I have traveled a long road from the battlefield to the peace table.”

– Moshe Dayan

A long road

- Long road to growth
- Long road back to health
- Long road to get there
- Long road with lots of ups and downs
- Long road to victory
- We have a Long road ahead of us

Israel had had a long road

- Persecution, slavery, hard labor, death of sons by Pharaoh
- Now they were free to go... and they had a long road ahead of them.
- But most likely in their minds...it was not going to take as long as what eventually transpired.
  - They headed out and were going to go north on the Pharaoh’s Highway. Called – *Qantara*; Known as the ‘Horus Road.’
  - 250 miles – as little as eleven days to two weeks

### **Exodus 13:17-22**

*<sup>17</sup> When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, “Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.” <sup>18</sup> But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle. <sup>19</sup> Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones with you from here.” <sup>20</sup> And they moved on from Succoth and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. <sup>21</sup> And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. <sup>22</sup> The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.*

### **GOD’S PERFECT TIMING FOR THE ROAD**

**1446 (B.C.) date of Exodus**

### **I Kings 6:1**

*In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the Lord.*

Several events are not in dispute:

- The date of construction of Solomon's temple in 966BC.
- The ~120 years for Saul, David and Solomon's combined reigns; and
- The 40 years of wilderness wanderings immediately after the Exodus.

The only variable is the time-span of Joshua and the Judges.

The later date (1270BC) was chosen due to the length of Ramses' reign (one of two pharaohs that ruled for over 40 years – the time Moses was in wilderness exile) and evidence of battles in Palestine dating to ~1230BC (Joshua's conquest after the wilderness wandering).

- However, the late-date Exodus allows only 180 years for Joshua and the Judges, while the early-date Exodus, allows 356 years. There are several benefits to the earlier date.
- The Exodus took place 480 years before the construction of Solomon's temple began. (Some scholars spiritualize this to mean 12 tribes x 40 years of trials. This lets them use the 1270 BC date.)
- Thutmose III's 60+ year reign makes him an ideal candidate as the pharaoh of the oppression, and his son Amenhotep II as the pharaoh of the Exodus.

### **Judges 11:26**

*While Israel lived in Heshbon and its villages, and in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities that are on the banks of the Arnon, 300 years, why did you not deliver them within that time?*

- a. Jephthah states that the Israelites had possession of the land for some 300 years.
  - i. With a 1270BC Exodus, he would have to have made that statement during Solomon's reign.
  - ii. Naturally, this scenario is untenable as Jephthah lived long before Solomon (or Saul, for that matter) was born.

### **So...1446 B.C. biblically established**

Thutmose III: (1485-1431)

- Officially he ruled Egypt from 28 April 1479 BC until 11 March 1425 BC, commencing with his coronation at the age of two and concluding with his death, aged fifty-six;
  - During the first 22 years of his reign, he was coregent with his stepmother and aunt, Hatshepsut, who was named the pharaoh.
- 1446 B.C. – 10 plagues – Exodus
  - First born son, Amenemhat dies
  - His mother Queen Satiah, dies
- Dies 1426 B.C.  
Under his mother's regency until 1463
- Or Hatshepsut who dies in 1458
  - Thutmose III reigns 30 more years after her death = 1428- 1427 B.C.

Amenhotep II, second son becomes Pharaoh

- 2 year joint reign with father 1427-1425
- Takes over 1427
- rules (1427-1401)

1446 + 43 years = 1403 cross the Jordan

- 1446 – 1443 Sanai and spies
- 1443 – 1403 – wilderness
- 1403 – cross the Jordan

1446 – 480 = 966 BC – Solomon's temple

- 40 Solomon - 1 Kings 11:42
- 40 David - 1 Kings 2:11; 2 Samuel 5:4
- 40 Saul - Acts 13:2
- 300 judges (possession) Judges 11:26
- 20 years conquest (Joshua?)
- 40 years wilderness
- **TOTAL 480 years - I Kings 6:1**

## GOD KNOWS WHO AND HOW MANY ARE ON THE ROAD

They went out

- The number of people by tribe – 600,000 men plus women and children.
  - From 70 (when Jacob went to Egypt) to 600,000 when Israel left!
- **Why believe?**
  - Text
    - It is what the word says...multiple times.
    - Numbers of deaths throughout journey account for such numbers.
    - Pharaoh fears the military strength – Egypt at time had 1.9 million.
    - Took day and night to cross Red Sea.

## Response to skeptics

- Deliberately exaggerated – ancient Sumerian Akkadian did this to show strength...hyperbolic. Yes, it is a norm in the era... **but only in large number...not smaller breakdowns.**
  - Everybody knows that.
  - Foolish to see otherwise.
  - The number is absurd.

## Hebrew word for their response – HA! / Greek = bologna!

- Growth rate over four generations
  - 70 men
  - 215-230 years – 3.5 -4 percent growth rate exact of rates in Sahara and South America
  - Easily reach the number.

- Not plausible for camping or eating or moving
  - 1 million at the Capital
  - Rolling Stones concert: 800,000 in farmer's field
  - 1994 Rod Stewart concert in Brazil along the beach – 3.5 mil
  - *Kumbh Mela* – Hindu festival – 30-50 mil attending a day
  
- Not plausible for camping or eating or moving
  - Plenty of land around them
  
- Not plausible for moving
  - Armies move easily
  - Crowds at million man march easily
  - 700,000 people marched for the Seahawk Parade after their super bowl win
  
- Term *elaph* – 1000 or clan
  - Abundant majority use of this word is for mathematical tabulation.
  - The word 'clan' is NEVER used when details are broken down into smaller portions and even smaller units.
  
- Population of Canaan not so high
  
- The arrangement of the people as they traveled is listed by number
  
- The arrangement of the people as they camped is listed by area and number

### **Numbers 33:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> *The Israelites set out from Rameses on the fifteenth day of the first month, the day after the Passover. **They marched out defiantly in full view of all the Egyptians,** <sup>4</sup> who were burying all their firstborn, whom the Lord had struck down among them; for the Lord had brought judgment on their gods.*

## **YOUR LONGER ROAD MAY PREPARE YOU FOR BATTLE**

### **Not the Nearest Road**

#### **Ex. 13:17**

*God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near.*

### **Over the course of One Month**

They left and camped at Sukkoth (Num. 33:5)

- The Israelites left Rameses and camped at Sukkoth.
- They headed west to Etham.
- They left Sukkoth and camped at Etham, on the edge of the desert. (Num. 33:6)

### **Not the Easiest Road**

#### **Ex. 13:18**

*But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness*

### **Not easy because they have to backtrack**

**Ex 14:1-2**

<sup>1</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> “Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea.

They turn back and head east and south

- They left Etham, turned back to Pi Hahiroth, to the east of Baal Zephon, and camped near Migdol.
  - They go back in the direction they were escaping
  - Yet they were obedient to God

### **Not Easy Because They Would Have To Face a Known Enemy**

**Ex. 14:3**

*Pharaoh will think, ‘The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.’ And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them.*

- They were not going to escape a battle.... But God wanted to show them a lesson

**You have to face the enemy you know**

### **Why the Longer Path?**

#### **Equipped but Not Ready for Battle**

Ex. 13:18 - And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.

- They were equipped
- They set up their forces for protection
- But they were not skilled!

**You may feel equipped but God knows if you are ready for battle.**

There was one reason why God did not lead them the nearest way, which would have brought them after a few days’ march to the land of the Philistines (for it was that part of Canaan that lay next to Egypt), namely, because they were not as yet fit for war, much less for war with the Philistines, Exod. 13:17.

- Their spirits were broken with slavery; it was not easy for them to turn their hands of a sudden from the trowel to the sword.
- The Philistines were formidable enemies, too fierce to be encountered by raw recruits; it was more suitable that they should begin with the Amalekites, (Ex 17) and be prepared for the wars of Canaan by experiencing the difficulties of the wilderness.
- Note, God proportions his people’s trials to their strength, and will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able, 1 Cor. 10:13.
  - But when you face these trials – He will provide a way out so you can endure it!
- God knows our frame, and considers our weakness and faintheartedness, and by lesser trials will prepare us for greater. [Matthew Henry]

### **But wait!**

They were going to be chased by the Egyptians

- A ready, skilled, experienced, and dominant military force
- Surely they equaled the military prowess of the Philistines

**If they were not ready for battle, why would God put them in a cornered state on the beaches of the Red Sea with the full force of Egypt coming down on them?**

### **But it is the Lord's Road**

But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea.

The longer road because they were not ready to face that battle.

But also the longer road because God wants to show His mighty hand and reveal His glory.

### **To Show God's Mighty Hand**

#### **Exodus 14:4 (ESV)**

*"And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and **all his host**, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD."*

#### **Acts 7:35-36**

*<sup>35</sup> He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. <sup>36</sup> He led them out of Egypt and performed wonders and signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years in the wilderness.*

#### **Romans 9:17 (ESV)**

*For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."*

### **YOUR LONGER ROAD WILL BE GUIDED BY THE LORD**

#### **Ex. 13:21-22**

*<sup>21</sup> And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. <sup>22</sup> The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.*

### **Guided by Miracles and Means**

- The pillars
- The parting of the Red Sea
- The water
- The manna
- The quail
- The victories

#### **Micah 7:15**

*"As in the days when you came out from the land of Egypt, I will show you miracles."*

- The Lord said that miracles would be part of the believer's life
- Signs and wonders followed them
- They opened doors for the sharing of the Gospel
- God is not done doing miracles

### **Guidance by Promise and Presence**

#### **Haggai 2:5**

*'As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!'*

- Jesus said he would never leave us or forsake us
- We are sealed by the Spirit and will forevermore be with the Lord
- Always he is with you

### **Guided by Choice and Capability**

#### **Acts 13:17**

*The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it.*

- We are called the chosen of God
- God chose you and adopted you into His family
- God is more than capable to see you through the storms of your life
- He will battle for you
- The battle was won on the cross and is continually won in our life as we walk with Him

### **Challenge**

Trust the Lord to guide you in the way best suited for you

Trust the Lord to provide for you on your journey

Trust the Lord to prepare you for battles in your life

Trust the Lord to be present with you throughout your life

Trust the Lord to be glorified in your life