

EXODUS STORIES FROM THE DESERT

Part 2 – “God’s Unfathomable Rescue” (Exodus 13-14)

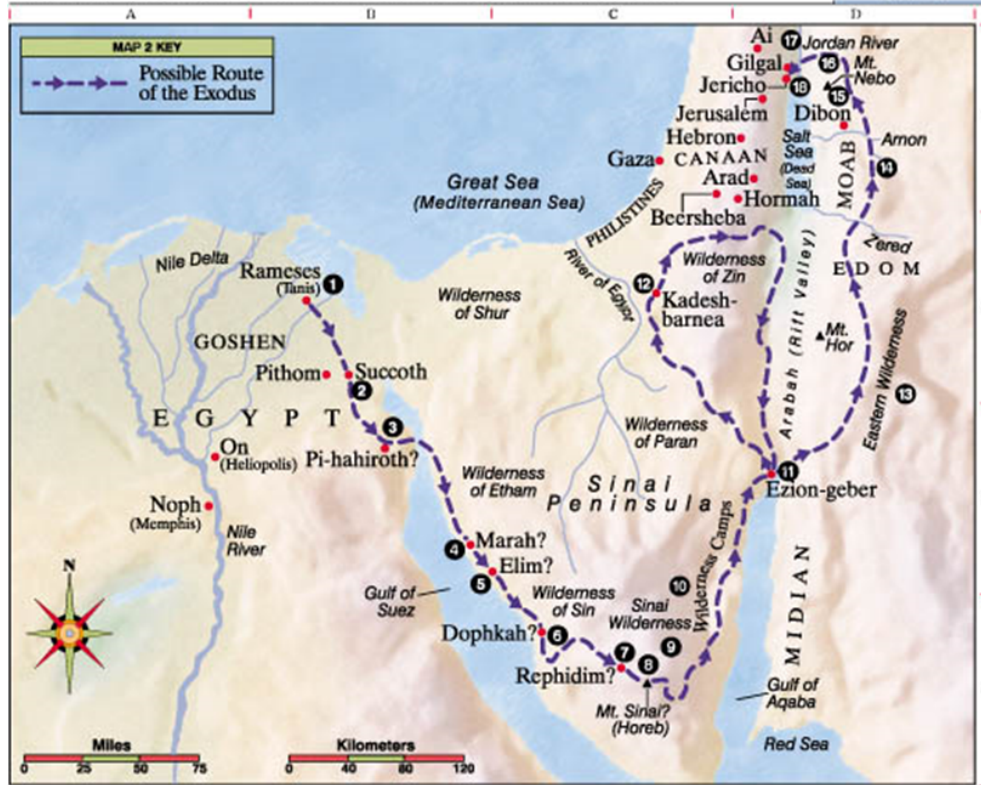
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Exodus 13

¹⁷ 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.”

¹⁸ But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea.

ISRAEL'S EXODUS FROM EGYPT AND ENTRY INTO CANAAN



LOCATIONS (cited in Bible)		NOTES
X	The way of the land of the Philistines	- The road God did <u>not</u> choose for Israel - Fastest conventional route to Canaan; major trade route 2-week journey “Via Maris”; runs along Mediterranean coast thru Palestine - Route was a militarized zone for Egyptian & Philistine fortresses. Fierce resistance along northern Sinai
1	Rameses	- City built by the Hebrew slaves - One of the “store cities” (Pithom is the other one) - Where the action of Pharaoh & Moses took place - Where the Exodus began
2	Succoth	God took them south; away from Canaan
	Etham	Unknown location, but at edge of wilderness (Sinai desert)
Turn back		Presumably north
3	Pi-hahiroth	Between Migdol & the sea; in front of Baal Zephon - Migdol = tower or Egyptian fort - Baal-zephon = Storm god that “sees, observes, covers”



Crossing the Red Sea – exact point unknown

Two Possibilities:

1. One of the large lakes north of Gulf of Suez

- Lake Ballah
- Lake Timsah
- Bitter Lakes

* Had to be a large body of water; Bible describes a “wall of water on their right & left”

* Several lakes were later drained to help construct the 120 mile Suez Canal in 1869

2. Gulf of Suez

Exodus 13

¹⁸ But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea.

Red Sea in original Hebrew = “yam sup”.....“sup” means “reeds”

Exact Hebrew term = “Sea of Reeds” (must be fresh water)

200BC Greek translation (Septuagint) called it the “Red Sea”

- Septuagint also uses “Red Sea” later when referencing both Gulf of Suez & Gulf of Aquaba in Exodus & Numbers.
- Also when referring to Solomon’s fleet of ships sailing on the Red Sea.
- The Septuagint has a phrase describing shallower, marshy reed bodies of water. It is NOT used in Exodus for the crossing. “Red Sea” was referring to a large body of water.

Exodus 13:17 - 14:4

Pillars of Cloud and Fire

¹⁷ 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.” ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ 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.” ²⁰ And they moved on from Succoth and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. ²¹ 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. ²² The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

Crossing the Red Sea

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, ² “Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. ³ For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, ‘They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’ ⁴ 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.” And they did so.

Genesis 50:24-26

²⁴ And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” ²⁵ Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.” ²⁶ So Joseph died, being 110 years old. They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Hebrews 11:22

²² By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

What's wrong with our impulse for the pillar of cloud & fire today?

Principle #1

Our impulse to want guidance-only from God (who created us to be with us) is rooted in wanting God's gifts more than God's presence.

God's Holy Spirit is Who we have today. Much better than the pillar of cloud & fire.

- The work of the Holy Spirit provides:
 - Sanctification (growth)
 - Conviction of sin
 - Changed HEART
 - Desire what God desires
 - Love His mission
 - Love His Word (actively changes us, grows us up)
 - Relationship with the Lord
 - Helps us love Christ for WHO he is, instead of WHAT He can give us.

We don't need a burst of miracles and signs to prove His existence. We need a relationship—a changed life.

So, what has God taught us about Himself--just in these verses?

- 1. God knows His people (us).**
- 2. God keeps His promise. He is faithful.**
- 3. God is always present to His people.**
- 4. God is powerful enough to make everything work for His glory.**
- 5. Unfathomable.**

Principle #2

God rescues His people in ways they need it—often with:

- A wilderness never expected
- Wise protection
- Larger plans than can be conceived at the time

Exodus 14:5-18

⁵ When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, “What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” ⁶ So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, ⁷ and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. ⁸ And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. ⁹ The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

¹⁰ When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. ¹¹ They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? ¹² Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” ¹³ And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

¹⁵ The LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶ Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷ And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. ¹⁸ And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

We've got to analyze their reaction and fear (It's like ours)

What are some of the lies revealed in this statement?

Exodus 14:19-31

¹⁹ Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, ²⁰ coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. ²² And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and

his horsemen. ²⁴ And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, ²⁵ clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians.”

²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.” ²⁷ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. ²⁹ But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

The reason this event has been so treasured by believers for thousands of years, including now, is that it is FULL of Divine intervention.

Let’s count the ways:

1. Angel of the Lord and the Pillar of cloud & Fire
2. Created darkness and still lit up the night
3. Drove the sea back; walled on left & right
4. Strong east wind made the sea dry land
5. Threw the Egyptians into a panic; clogged their chariot wheels
6. Saps the courage of the best Egyptian soldiers
7. Made the sea return—at just the right time
8. ALL the Egyptians were killed (“threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea.”)
9. Restored the faith of the Israelites for the Lord & Moses

Summary:

Israelites did not do ANYTHING to save themselves:

- Didn't kill any Egyptians
- Didn't defend themselves
- Didn't fight Egyptians

The Red Sea Experience has marked the Jews—even through today:

- Defining salvation event in Judaism.
- The Red Sea experience shows up today in Jewish:
 - Worship
 - Identity
 - Theology
 - Ethics
 - Hope for the future.
- Marks the birth of a free nation. Dividing line between:
 - Slavery & Freedom
 - Fear & Trust
 - Pharaoh's Kingdom & God's Kingdom
- Whenever God wanted to remind Israel of Who He Is:
 - "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt"
- Israel's "Song of the Sea" (Exodus 15) called the "Shirat HaYam", is still sung for morning prayers
 - "I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously..."
- Hope
 - Oppression is not the final word
 - God remembers His covenant

For Jews:

The Red Sea crossing is not just an ancient miracle. It's a foundational example of God's power to save His people.

Principle #3

Sometimes, we don't grasp the Lord's love for us. We must be shown. God set-up the Red Sea experience to show us the breadth of His power, and the depth of His love & care. It's meant to leave a mark on us.