

EXODUS

Lesson 11 - Chapters 12 and 13

Last week we saw that the King of Egypt finally released God's people, but not until Egypt was decimated. The livestock was dead, the field and tree crops were destroyed, and now hundreds of thousands of Egyptian males.....including the Pharaoh's own heir to the throne..... were deceased.

And, Israel left Egypt on Passover, in the month of Nisan. So, while Believers celebrate Passover as a day of **personal** salvation due to the redemptive death of Yeshua, the Jewish people view Passover (Pesach in Hebrew) as a day of **national** redemption from Egypt. In fact, the national redemption of Egypt was a shadow of the personal redemption that Messiah Yeshua would provide by means of His own blood.

Let's re-read a bit of chapter 12 to start our lesson.

RE-READ EXODUS CHAPTER 12:29 - end

Here we read of a place named Sukkot. Now, if the name Sukkot sounds familiar, it ought to. Becky and I, as have many of you, gone to Israel to celebrate the Biblical Feast of the Tabernacles, also known in Hebrew as Sukkot. This fall festival is the grand finale to end the yearly festival cycle. Sukkot, as most of you now know, means "booths" or "huts". The idea here is of temporary shelter or a temporary stopping place.....a place you pass through on your way to somewhere else.

We're also told, in vs. 37, that about 600,000 men (not counting children) made up the group that left Ra'amses. So, from that how do scholars arrive at the 2 to 3.5 million people they say participated in the Exodus? Well, first of all, the 600,000 are men only. And, it includes no children. But, it also includes no women. Nor does it include the elderly. Here's why: the Hebrew rule of census taking ONLY counted men of an age that could be part of the military.....that is, males of an age not too young, and not too old, to fight. So, the 600,000 consists of males from about 20 to about 50 years of age. No children of either sex were included. No women were counted and no males older than about 50 were included. If each man had only ONE wife, and some men at that time had MORE than one wife (and of course some had none), then the 600,000 gets doubled to 1.2 million. If each couple had only 2 children (and we know that the average household had as many children as possible), then the 1.2 million would double to 2.4 million. But, this is ONLY those Israelites that lived up in the land of Goshen, near Ra'amses. Thousands more lived throughout Egypt and joined the Israelites during their journey. Not only that, but vs. 38 explains that in addition to the Israelites, a "mixed multitude", or a "mixed crowd", went with them as well. Egyptians, foreigners of

several nationalities and races, of which there were scores of thousands living in Egypt at that time, families that consisted of Israelites who had married Egyptians, perhaps several generations earlier, and had only marginally continued to identify themselves with Israel (if you had the opportunity, why would you connect yourself to the slave labor class?).....these all joined up with Israel. This is why God made instruction and provision concerning so called “foreigners” (in Hebrew, ger) joining Israel, giving up their former tribal affiliations (and theoretically their connections to false gods) and declaring allegiance to one of the Israelite tribes.

And, oh by the way, they took with them (vs. 38) an enormous amount of livestock: their own livestock, of course, as most of the Egyptian livestock was now dead and their carcasses rotting in the pastures. And, it included all kinds of livestock.....sheep, goats, cattle, and oxen. Can you visualize this incredible migration? I doubt the world had ever seen anything like it. The equivalent of the population of the entire state of Oregon was leaving Egypt. And, they took with them all their livestock, their possessions, and some short-term food and water provisions. What a sight to behold that must have been. The entire known world would have known about it in short order.....and probably wondered just where it was they were heading; because life was never going to be the same for those already living wherever it was Israel was going.

When the multitude arrived at a place they would later name Sukkot, and stopped for a short time, they baked the unleavened dough that God had instructed they prepare BEFORE they left. And, apparently, they had precious little else because vs. 39 says they had left Egypt without time to gather adequate food supplies for themselves.

Next we find out that the exact amount of time that Israel spent in Egypt was 430 years. While this disagrees somewhat with Gen 15:13 that quotes God saying they’ll be in Egypt for 400 years, at the least we see that the Israelites were in Egypt for about 4 centuries. But, another way to understand this is that the Bible often speaks in round numbers. We just saw a few verses earlier where there were 600,000 males in the Exodus. Of course, it was NOT precisely 600,000, that is just a round number, as was the 400 years. However, vs. 40 & 41 says it was 430 years to the day. That’s not a round number. So, there is no reason to take it as anything other than PRECISELY 430 years. But, understand one other thing: by the lunar calendar, a year is 354 days. By our modern 365-day calendar, they were in Egypt just under 417 years. The Bible generally uses the lunar, Jewish, calendar. Further, many Rabbis insist that some of the 400 years that Israel was “in Egypt” included Abraham’s time there. So, there is disagreement over this. A few scholars (both Hebrew and Christian) hold that the amount of time from when Jacob arrived in Egypt proper, to the day Moses led Israel into the wilderness, was closer to 250 years.

I love the expression used to describe the Israelites leaving Egypt; they were called the “hosts of the Lord”. Or in some versions, “all the divisions of the Lord”. Most literally from the original Hebrew, the phrase is “Yehoveh’s forces”. In fact, the Hebrew word used to describe the hosts or divisions or forces is “tsaba”. Tsaba indeed means hosts, or forces, because its sense is normally of a military. God called the Israelites, in essence, His army. And, the Bible uses a similar term at times to describe the “host of Heaven” meaning the angels. And, indeed, Angels are God’s spirit army.

Vs. 42 says that God kept watch over the Israelites as they left Egypt. That is, He protected them, guarded them, and shepherded them. Vs. 43 begins instructions on just WHO may partake of the Passover. And, it starts right out stating that NO foreigner can be involved. Yet, an Israelite's foreign slave, provided he has been circumcised (indicating he has been joined to Israel), may. A traveler, a visitor, even a houseguest may not participate, if they are not part of Israel.

Then, in vs. 46 we are given the injunction that not a bone of the Passover Ram is to be broken. Of course, that was made a point of emphasis in the Gospels that despite the beatings and the execution by Roman crucifixion, not one bone of His body was broken.....a must unusual circumstance by the way because it was usual in Roman-style crucifixion to break the leg bones of the condemned as means to faster death.

Now, look at vs. 49: God makes it clear that there is but ONE ritual, ONE law, concerning the Passover. There is not a Passover "A" for natural born Israelites, and Passover "B" for foreigners who have declared allegiance to Israel..... those who have joined themselves to Israel. All who are citizens of Israel, no matter whether they have Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's genes in them or not, are to be considered the same before God WHEN IT COMES TO SPIRITUAL MATTERS.

I've covered this with you before, but as we close out chapter 12, it bears repeating; we now understand that Yeshua is the highest fulfillment of Passover, that HE is the sacrificial Passover Ram for all, that those of us who are born OUTSIDE of the genealogical line of Abraham (gentiles), born OUTSIDE the natural family of Israel, we are grafted into, joined with, the nation of people who ARE of the line of Abraham when we accept Christ. But.....that is from a Spiritual aspect. And, to God, the TRUE members of HIS ideal Israel are all those who trust Him. And, trusting Him means accepting Yeshua as Messiah.

Open your Bibles to Romans 9. We're going to take just a moment to see how this principle laid down here in Exodus 12 comes to its fullest meaning in Christ; we're going to see what Paul says about all this because right here in Exodus the groundwork, the basic principle, of gentile believers (foreigners, ger, in Bible terms) being joined with Israel to partake in her covenants is set.

READ Rom 9:6-8, 23-26, 30-32

Ok. You see where I'm going with this. Verses 7 & 8 are so terribly important to grasp because here is defined just WHO the "seed of Abraham" (meaning all those for whom the promises made to Abraham were intended) are; and just as important, who the seed of Abraham are NOT! And, we find out that the physical descendants of Abraham are *not* ALL to be considered the "seed", just those who come through the line of Isaac. Who would have thought that in our modern day this definition would be so terribly important to define whom God's people ON A PHYSICAL level are. Because Islam says that it was Isaac's BROTHER Ishmael who would be the line of Abraham's seed. This shows you just how the most basic premise of Islam is utter deceit. And, I remind you, that the founder of Islam wasn't even born until 5 centuries after these words of Paul were spoken; so Paul wasn't battling theologies with

the Islamic world because it didn't even exist. Further, in verse 8, we see that from a **spiritual** aspect not all of the legitimate physical seed (the descendants of Isaac) would be counted as "seed" either. Now turn quickly to Romans 2:25.

Read Romans 2:25-29

Notice the key here: God sees the true Israel....which is the heavenly ideal of Israel..... as a Spiritual entity. Therefore, with the advent of Christ, God sees His Israel as a congregation of Jewish and Gentile believers. Most certainly He sees and recognizes the physical nation of Israel (the descendants of Isaac and Jacob), the people born as natural Israelites, as Israel....PHYSICAL Israel. national Israel. But, that is apart and separate from the "Israel of God" which is an everlasting spiritual entity.

Now, remember I've told you several times that our chapter designations, and the way we separate and divide and number Bible passages is arbitrary and done simply for the sake of being able to refer to a particular book or passage. In the original, which was written on lengthy scrolls, the books of the Bible were undivided.....each book was like one long continuous work. In fact, originally, the books didn't even have names. So, where we have this tendency to mentally stop with a certain subject at the end of a chapter, and then feel as though we're beginning with a new subject at the next chapter, we get this skewed idea of what is happening.

In this case Romans 2 simply continues on with Romans 3. So, let me read to you Romans 2:24 through Romans 3:4, without stopping, as it was originally written.

Read Romans 2:24 – 3:4

Notice how Paul makes sure that we understand that the PHYSICAL differences AND purposes God created for His chosen people, Israel, remain intact. And, then remain intact AFTER Yeshua has come and gone. Israel, physical Israel, remains central to God's purpose, and remains set apart and valuable to Him.

So, here in these last few verses of Romans 2 and the first few verses of Romans 3, we get this all import God principle, that tends to really mess with our minds: as pertains to each of God's principles and commands there is an earthly, physical, fleshly level on the one hand, and there is a corresponding heavenly, spiritual level on the other. This is what I call a "duality".... or, the Reality of Duality (dual, as in two); in this case, there are two "levels" of Israel: physical and spiritual. Both are real, and exist simultaneously, and are organically connected; however, not everyone who is part of physical Israel will belong to spiritual Israel, and not everyone who is part of spiritual Israel will be physical Israelites. Just as with Passover there is the earthly ritual and meaning that Moses was instructed to perform, and then there is its fullest, spiritual aspect that was fulfilled with the death of Jesus.

The physical aspect of Israel consists of the earthly nation of Israel and its people; people that we today refer to as Jews. Spiritual Israel consists of all those, Jew and gentile, who are

faithful to God.....that is, those who have accepted God's Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Does this come together for you? I hope so. I realize this can be a little difficult to fully grasp. Now, with that as a background, allow me to address one other issue that, because of the point in mankind's history we find ourselves, it has become critical for believers to grasp: the church consist of all believers, gentile and Hebrew. There are not Jewish believers as apart from gentile believers; to God, a believer is a believer is a believer. It doesn't matter whether Jewish believers go to a gentile church or a Messianic Jewish Synagogue; and it doesn't matter whether a GENTILE attends a Messianic Jewish Synagogue (as many do) or a typical gentile church. those are just manmade divisions and organizations.

The thing is this: over the centuries, the meaning of the term "Church" has changed. Remember, Church is simply the chosen English rendering of the Greek word "ekklesia", which is what the NT often uses when referring to believers. Sadly, over time, the term Church has lost its true meaning. The Church is people. When the Bible refers to Church, ekklesia, it is referring ONLY to people, to human beings, who have submitted to Messiah Yeshua. The Church has nothing to do with buildings and places and activities and man-ordained denominational organizations. It is a terrible misuse of the term "church" when we refer to the place where we go to worship as "Church". It is a terrible misuse of the term "church" to call what many do on Sundays as "doing Church". The Church is Believers. Period. You are the church. I am the church. A gentile who believes in Christ is the church, and an Israelite...or as we think of it today, a Jew.... who believes in Christ is the church. Unfortunately our misuse of the term church has led to this way of thinking that means that Jews, Israelites, Hebrews, who trust Yeshua are in a different class or category than gentiles who trust Yeshua. Nothing could be further from the truth. God, through Moses in Exodus, and through Paul in Romans, and through Christ in the Gospels, and through several of the prophets, has tried with great effort to get this into our brains.

Does all this really make a difference to us? You bet it does. Because this shows just how connected we are to Israel in every imaginable way. It explains how the Body of Believers, the Church, is to see itself; that our true identity is as part of Spiritual Israel. Not as a "new" Israel. Not as a replacement of Israel. Rather, Believers compose the Spiritual ideal that represents all that God envisioned for a group of people set apart for Him....Israel.

READ CHAPTER 13 all

"Set aside for me all the firstborn." We are going to see, in Chapter 13, some Biblical principles that Gods develops that will play a huge role in the New Covenant that will be realized in Christ Jesus.

Before we get to that, though, notice that instruction is given as to WHEN the changes to Passover, or better, the additions to the Passover festival, are to begin. It is to start AFTER the Israelites are in the land of Canaan. Or, as the Bible puts it, in the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Emorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And, this festival of Matza is to occur during Passover week...actually, it starts on Nisan 14th, Passover, and continues until the 21st of Nisan. An additional command concerning this feast of Unleavened Bread (Matza) is

ordered: you are not only to remove all leaven from your house; you are to remove it from your territory. That is, once the Israelites take Canaan, during this festival they can't even have leaven present ANYWHERE throughout the territories that the tribes of Israel own. And, in vs. 8, the people are told that the recounting of God delivering Israel from Egypt is to be taught to the children.

Now, a quick word about these various nations of people that were the current occupiers of the land of Canaan: the Canaanites were the scores of tribes and clans that had been spawned by Noah's infamous grandson, Canaan. Remember that Canaan was accursed by God via Noah, much of that curse a result of Canaan's father, and Noah's son, Ham. And, the Canaanites represented, at this time, the majority of the inhabitants of that loosely defined territory, the Land of Canaan. Please recall that the Land of Canaan was NOT a nation with sovereign borders; it was just an area of land given a general name for the sake of identification. It was an area predominately inhabited by descendants of Canaan, but scores of these descendents had formed their own independent people groups, several of them becoming small city-states, each with their own king and usually with their own set of gods.

The Hittites were not native to the land of Canaan. Rather, the Hittites were a very high and powerful culture that dominated most of what is modern day Turkey, Syria, northern Iraq and western Iran. While they had settlements and influence in the Land of Canaan, they were not dominant there. There is no clear agreement among Bible Scholars or historians as to the ancestors of the Hittites. Some believe they were from Ham, others from Japheth and still others say they were Semites, from Shem. But, the study of them is rather new because until the 1800's the ONLY mention of a people group called the Hittites was in the Bible, and of course, to many academics that just meant it was made up by those who wrote the Bible. Imagine their surprise since the Hittite culture has been unearthed, found to be large and dominating, with a fully developed written language that has many similarities to Hebrew, and the Hittites records themselves have yielded corroboration of Bible texts concerning the time of the Patriarchs.

The Hivites and the Emorites were descendants of Canaan. But, they had achieved sufficient population and power, by this time, as to warrant being spoken of as separate nations of people. If you'll recall, the people who populated the city of Shechem, where Abraham first stopped in Canaan, and later Jacob would attempt to settle down, were identified in the Scriptures as Hivites.

The Jebusites were also of the line of Canaan, however they occupied the hill country of southern Canaan, while the Hivites occupied the plains. The Jebusites are given credit for being founders of the city of Shalem, later called Jerusalem, and were controlling the city when David took it from them about 1000 BC.

The key thing to understand here is that AFTER the Great Flood, the people that God had allowed to populate the land that He would eventually give to the descendants of Abraham were declared cursed because they were descendants of Canaan.

The thing that is hard for us to accept, sometimes, is that Almighty God has allowed some

people to be cursed (or ransomed, if you would), in order that others might be redeemed. We hear the Lord speak of Egypt being the ransom for His people, Israel. In other words, in order for Israel to carry out their portion of God's grand plan; God had Egypt pay a dear price. We see the same thing happening here, where Canaan will soon become a ransom for Israel.....Canaan is going to pay heavily, with the loss of their land, so that Israel will get the land God has set aside for Himself and promised to Abraham.

Let us not ever forget, fellow gentile believers, that Israel has also paid, and is paying, a very dear price so that WE could be joined to the covenants God gave to Israel. They were given the Word of God to keep alive, at the expense of the greatest continuous and ongoing persecution of a people that the world has ever, or will ever, know. They eventually had their hearts made stony, for a time, for the **sake** of gentiles... that the gospel is taken to the entire GENTILE world. That is why Israel had no business being proud or haughty of their lofty place before God as they viewed what God did to Egypt and to Canaan, and later to Assyria, then Babylon, then Persia, the Greece, then Rome, all for the sake of Israel; and Paul tells us gentile believers that WE have no business thinking that somehow we are better than the Israelites, who God has and is using for His purposes, because God gave US the task of spreading the Gospel.

Look at all that had to happen to even lead up to Christ coming. All that had to be prepared, nations built and destroyed, entire peoples decimated, persecution of the Jews.....the "Church Age" as we like to call it, or the Time of the Gentiles as the Bible refers to it, that 2000 years since Christ, is just for a time and for a purpose. In God's great scheme of things, our spreading of the Gospel is just one piece of a very big puzzle, that many other people and nations played roles in since the beginning of the world. We need to remember that the Gospel is primarily about redemption. And, redemption is NOT God's end plan; redemption is NOT the be-all end-all of the Creator's divine purposes; redemption is just a step, among many other earlier steps, along the way to the final stage of His vision of having a Universe of perfection, full of beings that love Him and commune with Him, for all eternity.

Now, in vs. 9, we get some words that have led to a peculiar practice by Orthodox Jews. It speaks of "having a sign on your hand, and a reminder between your eyes", and it is repeated in vs. 16. Nobody knows exactly when the tradition started, but it certainly existed in Jesus' day. You have all probably seen pictures of some Jews wearing this strange headband with a little black box attached that sits squarely in the middle of their foreheads. And, of these same Jews wrapping a leather strap around their forearm and wrist, also with a little black box attached. Well, this is how the Orthodox Jews have come to take the meaning of verses 9 and 16. These wraps are called Tefillin in Hebrew, and Phylacteries in the Greek. The black boxes contain tiny scrolls with certain prescribed O.T. bible verses and prayers written on them: it is standard that they use Ex.13 verses 1-10 and 11-16; and Deut.6 verses 4-9, and Deut.11 verses 13-21. So, they have taken this command to remember to its most literal possible sense.

Now, starting in vs. 11, more is said about this setting apart of the firstborn. And, we are reminded that **WHENEVER** the bible speaks of the firstborn, it doesn't mean ANY firstborn; rather, it means (sorry ladies) **ONLY** the firstborn **MALES** (Hey, I don't make the rules). Next we see that this includes animals as well as humans, and then goes on to speak of a donkey

that is to be redeemed with a lamb. Very interesting. What is being set up here is the entire God-principle of redemption. And, within the PRINCIPLE of redemption, we will see the PROCESS of redemption.

I don't want to get philosophical here, but let's remember that while, at least on the surface, redemption is a principle quite familiar to us Christians, it was NOT a principle well understood by the world in Moses time, just as its not understood by the world in our time. Even the Jews have a more nationalistic, corporate and collective view of redemption; they don't see the Messiah's purpose as redeeming individual souls from a fiery eternity, they see the Messiah as returning Israel to glory and power as a nation and establishing His physical kingdom on earth around a physical Israel.

From the time of Moses forward, it became a practice that within 30 days of the birth of a firstborn son, the father paid to the High Priest (or his representative) an amount of money to redeem his son.

Notice the dichotomy set up here: in Egypt, the firstborns of Egypt were set apart and marked for death. In Israel the firstborns of Israel were set apart for life and service to God. In Egypt, the firstborns were set apart and sacrificed, killed, **ransomed** in order to REDEEM Israel. In Israel, the firstborns are also set apart to be sacrificed to God...but, by the terms of redemption, they are bought back. Remember how Abraham took Isaac to the altar on Mt. Moriah to sacrifice him to God, but God redeemed Isaac, by substituting a Ram (which was a "type" after which the Passover would become modeled) and Isaac was not killed? Again, what was the basis of redemption? It was by substitution. The entire concept of redemption is not just about deliverance, or buying back. It is sometimes, and it is this way in this case, about SUBSTITUTION.

I don't want to get too deep into the subject of redemption just yet, but it's key to understand that there are two basic kinds of redemption spoken of in the Scriptures: one is the act of a relative, a kinsman, and it concerns family members, and is often called the kinsman redeemer. In Moses day, and for hundreds of years after, this type of redemption usually involved the living brother marrying (redeeming) his deceased brother's widow. But, it can also involve land and other property. The second type of redemption is a buying back or a substitution, and does NOT have to do with the rights of a relative; it involves a deliverance brought about by paying a ransom. In Hebrew, this kind of redemption is called "padah", and that is what we're dealing with here in Exodus 13. This is NOT the kinsman redeemer kind, which in Hebrew is "ga'al".

The firstborn donkey, an animal, therefore, has to be redeemed, **padah**, at the price (a ransom price) of a clean animal permissible for use as a sacrifice: a Ram. And, the Israelites have the CHOICE of killing the donkey OR paying the redemptive price. Why would the Israelites choose to NOT redeem a donkey? If it was born defective, or weak, or perhaps they had no need for another donkey, or because the Ram was more valuable to them than a donkey. But, God makes it clear, in vs. 13, that with HUMAN firstborn males, there is no choice: God values human life so much that EVERY human male firstborn MUST be redeemed.....must have a redemption price paid. I cannot help, here, but point out that this sure seems to shoot holes in

the notion that a mother has the right to abort the life of an unborn child, if she so chooses.

And, what is it that God says that the Israelites are to say, in explanation, to their children about this practice of paying a redemption price for their firstborns? Look at vs. 14 and 15: it is too remind each generation of Israelites that a) HUMAN LIFE MUST BE REDEEMED, and it involves a price; and that b) God used the death of the Egyptian firstborns as a terrible price, the redemptive price for Israel, His chosen and set apart people.

So, here the principle and process of redemption is set up. If **real** life, which to God is the life of our souls, (not our corrupted bodies) is to be realized, then we **MUST** be redeemed for a price. And, the price is substitutionary death; and the substitution must be male and must be a firstborn. Do you see this? The entire premise for Yeshua's substitutionary death for us is now in place. And, it's not optional.

Verse 15 sums up what has just been taught in the previous verses. Let's read it again.

Read Ex. 13:15

In verse 16 the command first stated in verse 9 is repeated to wear this as a sign on your hand and between your eyes on your forehead....which has led to the use of Tefillin by the Jews.

Verse 17 now shifts the focus of the book of Exodus to the actual exodus itself. And, it leads off with the reason God led them to take the route they did.

The first thing we're told is the route they did NOT take. They did not take a well-known, long established, highway called the "Way of the Land of the Philistines". Notice a couple of things: the words in verse 17 speaking of the location of the Way of the Philistines are "it is nearer", which helps to reinforce the location of the bulk of the Israelites as they gathered to leave Egypt. In fact, the Way of the Philistines **BEGAN** at the stores city of Ra'amses (also known as Tanis). The Way of the Philistines was primarily a trade route. It had Egyptian fortresses strategically located along this highway, both to monitor and guard Egypt from foreign invasion, and to protect the myriads of merchants and traders that traveled this route from the never-ending bands of robbers that attacked the caravans.

But, what God is well aware of is that if the Israelites took this route, it is likely that not only would Pharaoh command his armies stationed at the various fortresses to attack and annihilate the Israelites, but the Philistines and the Canaanites and the Hittites and other people living up in the Middle East might come against Israel. Why would they do that? Simple. With a 600,000 man army, and a group of 3 million people who considered themselves, generally, to be of one nation, they would have a tremendous impact on whoever and wherever it was that they would finally stop and settle. Imagine if the entire population of Canada just upped and decided, unilaterally, that they were going to migrate to the US, all at once. The US would do all it could to prevent it, because the impact on our nation would be hard to even calculate. The same thing was about to happen here. Israel's leaving would not only devastate Egypt by their loss, and it would change forever the culture and balance of power wherever it is they wound up.

And, one could imagine that the Pharaoh would quickly know the truth of the matter if the Israelites traveled the Way of the Philistines: the Israelites were not going into the desert wilderness for 3 days to worship their god, as was their original request to Pharaoh. They were leaving forever. There is nothing in Scripture to indicate that Pharaoh was informed that Moses' demand had changed from the 3-day sojourn to permanent migration of the Israelites. I suspect that had a lot to do with Pharaoh's reaction to send his armies and chariots after the Israelites.....when he realized that he had unwittingly authorized the loss of a ¼ of his entire nations' population, and almost it's entire skilled workforce.

Anyway, Yahweh knew His people well enough to know that if they had to fight their way all the way to the Promised Land many, if not most, of the Israelites would simply give up and go back to Egypt. Back to the life they knew rather than risk death in war, or the great unknown of what lay ahead in Canaan. What could be more human? We do that all our lives; forever timid about stepping fully into the new life that God has for us; forever trying to keep one foot in our familiar and comfortable old life, and the other into the changed and unknown way of walking with God.

Next week we'll continue with examining the probable route of the Exodus.