

INTO THE WILDERNESS

Lessons from the Book of Exodus

CROSSING THE RED SEA

THE SET UP

How did we get here?

Brief Synopsis

- The Israelites were enslaved sometime during their 430 years in Egypt
- The 10 Plagues convinced Pharaoh to let the Israelites go into the wilderness for a festival
- Moses and the gang have no intention of ever coming back to work for Egypt

EXODUS 12:31-32

During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me."

THE ROUTE

- Started on the good trade route through Philistine country
- God leads to the "desert road" to the Red Sea to safety

FACT OR FICTION?

Did Moses and the gang really cross the Red Sea on dry ground?

WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS?

Do you approach scripture from your mindset or the



Modern Day Suez Canal

mindset of the intended audience?

Exodus 12: 37-38

There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. Many other people went up with them, as well as large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds.

HOW MANY WERE THERE?

SCRIPTURE THROUGH MODERN EYES

An Accurate Census:

- 600,000 - counting only men ready for military service
- Maybe _____ all together
- Plus flocks and herds

Moses would have had to provide:

- 3 _____ pounds of food a day
- 8 _____ pounds of firewood a day
- 11 _____ gallons of water a day

Scope of Project:

- In order to cross in one night, the Red Sea dry section would need to be 3 miles wide to get 5000 people abreast
- Camping footprint would be _____ square miles, 2/3 the size of Rhode Island
- The caravan would be six _____ long

We View Numbers:

- Numbers are used for accounting and planning purposes
- Numbers are used for accountability
- Statistics are fun!

THE ANCHENT EASTERN VALUE OF NUMBERS

- In Eastern thought 3400 years ago, big numbers represented ideas and feelings more than accurate accounting.
- Even saying "3400 years ago" is applying our western need for accuracy to a culture that had no such expectations

TRANSLATING DEAD LANGUAGES

The Hebrew word "elep" can be translated:

- 600 "Thousand"
- 600 "Military Troops"
- 600 "Clans" or "Tribes"

CONTEMPORARY MILITARY FORCES

- The Hittite army of 34 _____ is thought to be the largest 3300 years ago.
- The whole state of Egypt at the time probably had 4 to 5 million people all together.
- An army of 600,000 had nothing to fear from anyone!

SO HOW MANY?

Well, a nation. Do you need more than that?

THE LORD LEADS

EXODUS 13:20 - 22

21 By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.

EXODUS 14:1-4

2 "Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea.

PHAROAH'S TACTICAL MOVE

- Pharaoh sees that Moses has made a tactical error
- 600+ Chariots provide plenty of "shock and awe" for Israelites

ISRAELITE RESPONSE?

"Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt?" Exodus 14:12

ISRAELITE RESPONSE?

- "I know God got us out of Egypt by His mighty power, but what about now?"
- Every comment laced with deadly _____

MOSES LEADS

The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still." Exodus 14:14

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MOSES

- **Raise your staff**
 - Symbol of authority
- **Stretch out your hand**
 - Symbol of the work of God
- **The Sea will divide**
- **The Israelites will cross on dry ground**
- **Pharaoh will get his comeupings**

WHERE DID THEY CROSS?

- **Maybe the "Red Sea"**
 - Salt Water
 - Southern Route and out of the way
- **Maybe should be "Reed Sea" or "Sea of Reeds"**
 - Could be any marshy lake
 - Must be fresh water lake
- **Now, obscured by the Suez Canal**

THE BIG FINISH

- **God takes the rear guard**
 - Angel and God's pillar move behind
- **Darkness & Light keep the two parties separated**
- **Israelites walk into the dry seabed**
 - Moses creates dry land with walls of seawater piling up on either side
- **Pharaoh's chariots give chase**
- **God makes their wheels fall off and causes great panic**
- **When the Israelites clear the sea, Moses moves the water back, killing all the Egyptians**

WHAT TO DO WITH THE HARD PARTS?

How do we get past the all the craziness of this passage?

- **The problem is in our understanding, not Moses story**
 - It isn't about what is fact or fiction, it is about translating an Ancient Mid-Eastern Document
- **Faith play a part? You Bet!**

WHAT DO WE LEARN?

- **God gains glory for Himself by doing for you what you cannot do for yourself**
- **You learn to trust God when you become _____ and let Him work**
- **God never asks you to move in faith without covering your _____**

END OF THE STORY?

Be a nice ending if it was!



KEY: 2 million, million, million, million, 750, weeks, thousand, sarcasm, rear, still