

Unpacking the Book

#4 The Exodus from Egypt: Part One

I. The Exodus

- A. The Hyksos ruled Egypt from 1720-1550 BC. They were a Semitic group (similar in background to Abraham's family) which may explain their assistance to Joseph and his brothers.
- B. Israelites under persecution
1. Joseph's family arrived in Egypt as his guests (Gen. 50). After a period of time, the Hebrews became Egyptian slaves. "There arose up a new King over Egypt who knew not Joseph" (Ex. 1:8). It is generally accepted that Seti I (1305-1290 BC) was the Pharaoh of the oppression and Ramses II (1294-1224 BC) was the Pharaoh of the Exodus.
 2. God raised up a leader named Moses who appears on the scene in approximately 1525 BC (see Ex. 1-4). His father was Amram and his mother was Jochebed. After being initially rejected by the Hebrew slaves, Moses was called by God to lead His people out of Egypt. (Burning bush – Ex. 3)
 3. He and his brother Aaron confront Pharaoh in an attempt to have him let the children of Israel leave and return to their land. (See Ex. 5-13).
- C. The Ten Plagues of Egypt

Plague	Scripture
WATER TO BLOOD – The waters of the Nile turned to blood	Ex. 7:14-25
FROGS – Frogs infested the land of Egypt	Ex. 8:1-15
GNATS (Mosquitoes) – Small stinging insects infested the land of Egypt	Ex. 8:16-19
FLIES – Swarms of flies, possibly a biting variety, infested the land of Egypt	Ex. 8:20-32
PLAGUE ON THE CATTLE – A serious disease, possibly anthrax, infested the cattle belonging to Egyptians	Ex. 9:1-7
BOILS – A skin disease infected the Egyptians	Ex. 9:8-12
HAIL – A storm that destroyed the grain fields of Egypt but spared the land of Goshen inhabited by	Ex. 9:13-35

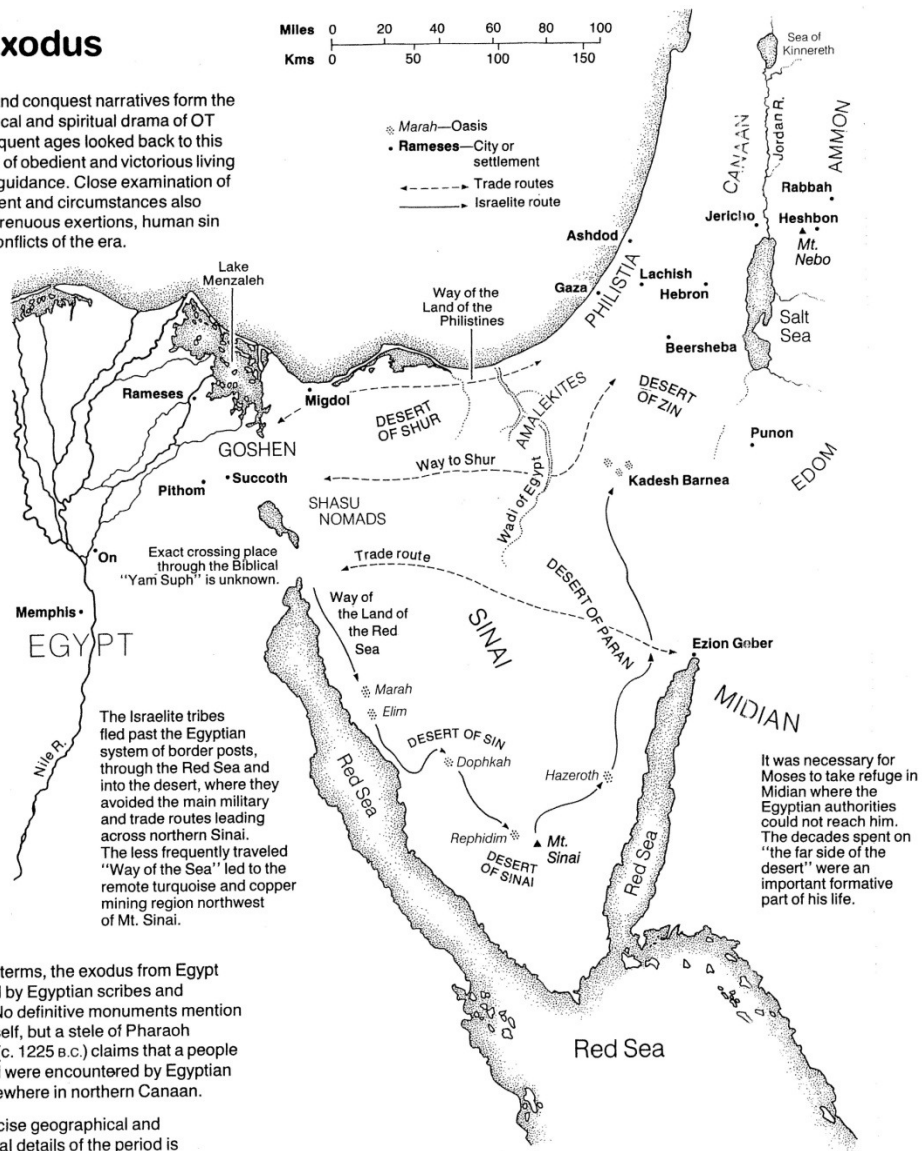
the Israelites	
LOCUSTS – An infestation of locusts stripped the land of Egypt of plant life	Ex. 10:1-20
DARKNESS – A deep darkness covered the land of Egypt for three days	Ex. 10:21-29
DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN – The firstborn of every Egyptian family died	Ex. 11:1 – 12:30

(Holman Quicksource, p. 122)

God’s purpose was to force everyone (Egyptian and Hebrew) to “know God” (See Ex. 5:2, 6:6, 7:5, 10:2, 14:4, 18).

The Exodus

The exodus and conquest narratives form the classic historical and spiritual drama of OT times. Subsequent ages looked back to this period as one of obedient and victorious living under divine guidance. Close examination of the environment and circumstances also reveals the strenuous exertions, human sin and bloody conflicts of the era.



Lake Menzaleh

Rameses

GOSHEN

Pithom

On

Memphis

EGYPT

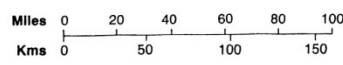
Nile R.

The Israelite tribes fled past the Egyptian system of border posts, through the Red Sea and into the desert, where they avoided the main military and trade routes leading across northern Sinai. The less frequently traveled "Way of the Sea" led to the remote turquoise and copper mining region northwest of Mt. Sinai.

In historical terms, the exodus from Egypt was ignored by Egyptian scribes and recorders. No definitive monuments mention the event itself, but a stele of Pharaoh Merneptah (c. 1225 B.C.) claims that a people called Israel were encountered by Egyptian troops somewhere in northern Canaan.

Finding precise geographical and chronological details of the period is problematic, but new information has emerged from vast amounts of fragmentary archaeological and inscriptional evidence. Hittite cuneiform documents parallel the ancient covenant formula governing Israel's "national contract" with God at Mount Sinai.

The Late Bronze Age (c. 1550-1200 B.C.) was a time of major social migrations. Egyptian control over the Semites in the eastern Nile delta was harsh, with a system of brickmaking quotas imposed on the labor force, often the landless, low-class "Apiru." Numerous



⊗ Marah—Oasis

• Rameses—City or settlement

--- Trade routes

— Israelite route

It was necessary for Moses to take refuge in Midian where the Egyptian authorities could not reach him. The decades spent on "the far side of the desert" were an important formative part of his life.

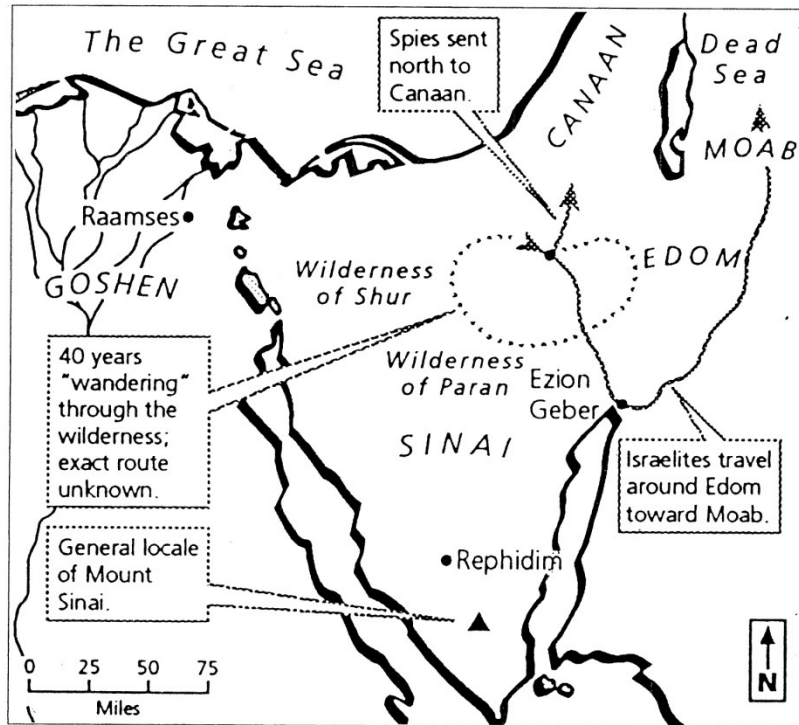
Canaanite towns were violently destroyed. New populations, including the "Sea Peoples," made their presence felt in Anatolia, Egypt, Palestine, Transjordan, and elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean.

Correspondence from Canaanite town rulers to the Egyptian court in the time of Akhenaten (c. 1375 B.C.) reveals a weak structure of alliances, with an intermittent Egyptian military presence and an ominous fear of people called "Habiru" ("Apiru").

Exodus 12:31—Deuteronomy 34:12
(Summary: Numbers 33:1-48)

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D. Wanderings of the Israelites



(Nelson's Book of Maps & Charts, p.55)

1. Statistics (12:37-42)
2. 600,000 men plus women and children ... maybe 2-3 million people
3. Consecration of the first born and the Passover regulations (13:1-16)
4. The drama at the Red Sea ("yam suph" – "sea of reeds") (14:1 – 15:21)
 - a. Note: there are number of scholarly articles arguing for a particular location of the Red Sea. Some have it as the Gulf of Aqaba, others believe it to be the Gulf of Suez. Neither seems likely due to:
 - 1) Those bodies of water are note made up of actual reeds
 - 2) Their location does not square with the location of the Israelites first encampment in the Wilderness of Shur. It is likely the Red Sea was located at the northern end of the Gulf of Suez.
5. The journey continues...(15:22 – 18:27)

E. Mountains of the Bible

Mountains are a location where God has met with His people throughout the Scripture. God gave Moses the Law atop Mt. Sinai, and Moses commanded that an altar be built atop Mt. Ebal when the Israelites entered the Promised Land. Although God did not permit Moses to enter that long awaited land, He did allow him to view it from Mt.

Pisgah. God buried Moses there on the mountain with His own hands. Following are several significant mountains of the Scriptures:

Mt. Ararat:	Ararat (in modern Turkey), where Noah's ark came to rest (Gen. 8:4)
Mt. Carmel:	Carmel, where Elijah was victorious over the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:9-42)
Mt. Ebal:	Ebal (opposite Mt. Gerizim), where Moses commanded that an altar be built after the Hebrew entered the Promised Land
Mt. Gerizim:	Gerizim, where Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:20)
Mt. Gilboa:	Gilboa, where King Saul and his sons were killed in a battle with the Philistines (1 Chr. 10:1, 8)
Mt. Hermon:	Hermon, a mountain range that marked the northern limit of the conquest of Canaan (Josh. 11:3, 17).
Mt. Lebanon:	Lebanon, source of cedar wood for Solomon's temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 5:14, 18)
Mt. Olivet:	Olivet, or Mt. of Olives, where Jesus gave the discourse on His Second Coming (Matt. 24:3)
Mt. Pisgah:	Pisgah, or Nebo, where Moses viewed the Promised Land.
Mt. Sinai:	Sinai, or Horeb (near Egypt), where the Law was given to Moses (Ex. 19:2-25).

(Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts, p. 62)

F. Hymns and Songs

The earliest recorded song in the Bible is referred to as the Song of Moses (see Ex. 15). This hymn was sung by the people to celebrate God's miraculous deliverance of the Hebrews from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:3-30), and Moses sang again just before his death. Other significant hymns and songs in the Old Testament include the following:

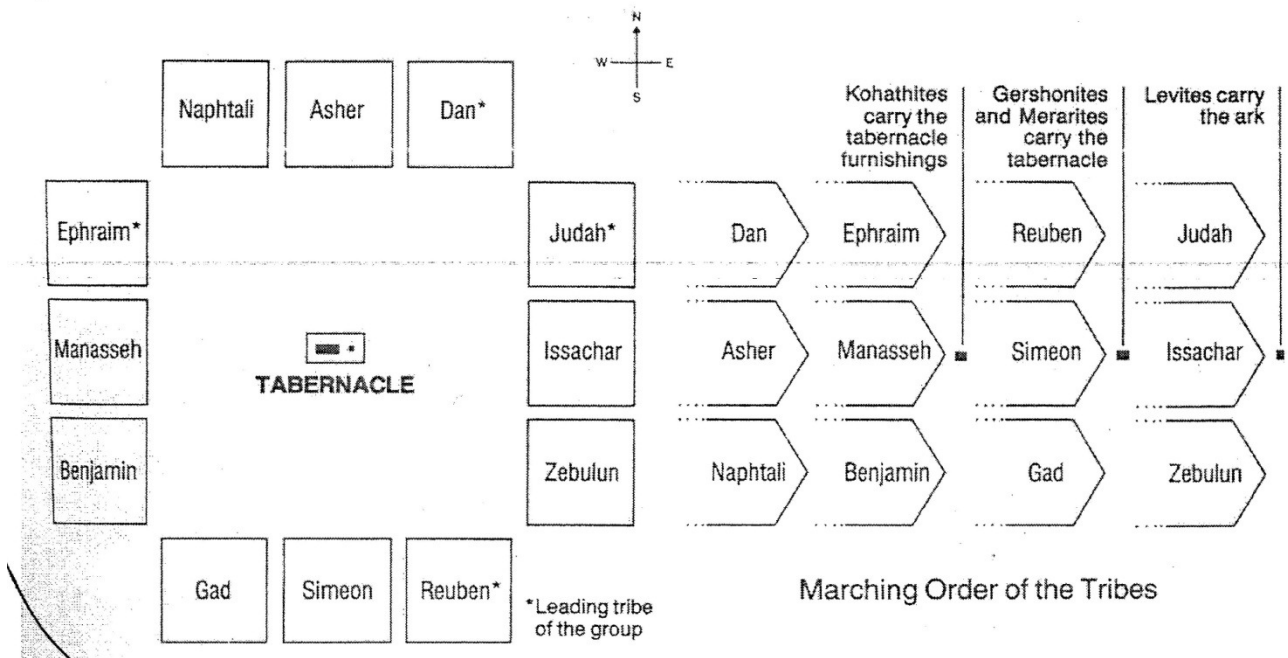
Personality	Description	Biblical Reference
Israelites	Sung by the people as they dug life-saving wells in the wilderness	Num. 21:14-18
Moses	A song of praise to God by Moses just before his death	Deut. 32:1-44
Deborah and Barak	A victory song after Israel's defeat of the Canaanites	Judg. 5:1-31

Israelite Women	A song to celebrate David's defeat of Goliath	1 Sam. 18:6-7
Levite Singers	A song of praise at the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem	2 Chr. 5:12-14
Levite Singers	A song of praise, presented as a marching song as the army of Israel prepared for battle	2 Chr. 20:20-23
Levite Singers	A song at the temple restoration ceremony during Hezekiah's reign	2 Chr. 29:25-30

(Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts, p. 64-65)

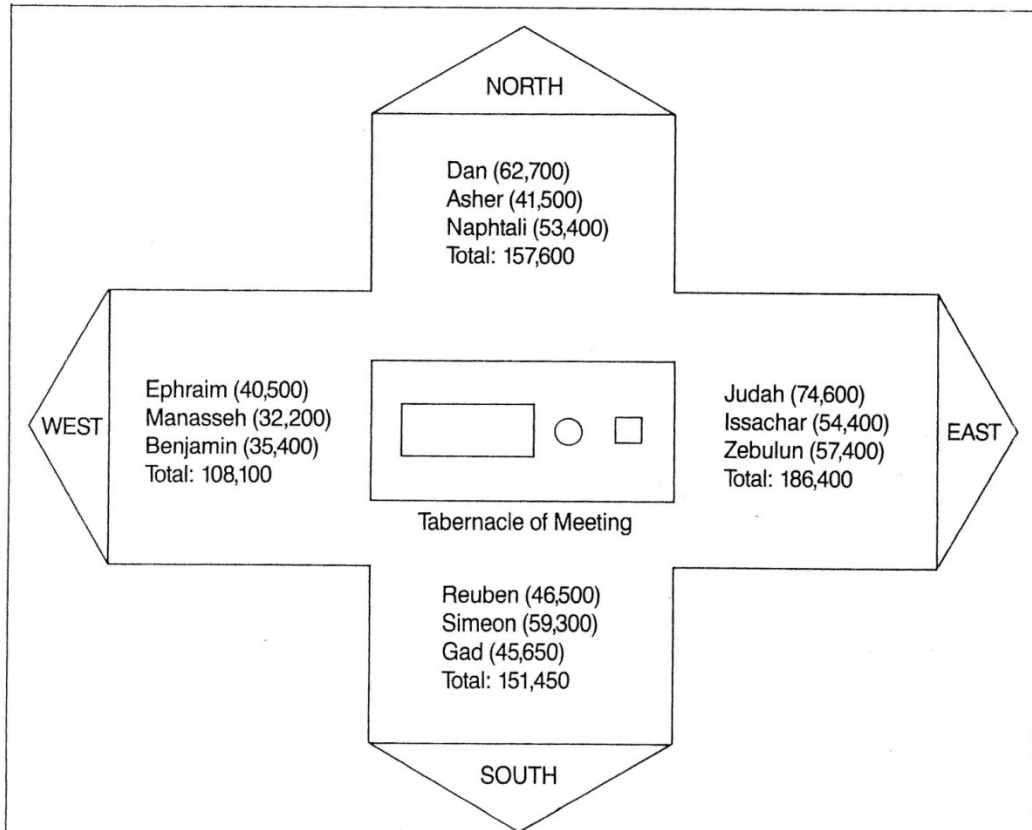
G. Encampment of the Tribes of Israel

Numbers 2:1-31; 10:11-33



(Bible Visual Resource Book, p.35)

Placement of Tribes in the Israelite Encampment



(Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts, p. 54)

H. Kadesh Barrea: See Number 13-14. Note 14:11-38

II. So What?

In difficult times, God leads His people and He leads them for a purpose. See Deut. 8:2 and Ps. 139:10.

Discussion Questions:

1. Using Moses as an example, what do you think are the criteria God uses when choosing a leader for His People?
2. Have there been any "wilderness wanderings" in your life? What caused them? What allowed you "out"?