



## **FROM MOUNT SINAI TO THE LAND OF PROMISE**

**Reading: Exodus 20 & Joshua 1**

### **Israel at Mount Sinai**

The children of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai in the third month after leaving Egypt (Exodus 19:1). Here the people were organised into a nation. They were to be *“a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”*, acknowledging Yahweh as their God and Ruler (Exodus 19:4-6). While they were gathered there at the Mount, God pronounced the ten commandments to the nation. These ten commandments became the basis of the covenant that God made with Israel (Exodus 20:1-17; 24:1-8).

### **The Tabernacle and Worship**

Moses was called up into the mountain by God and given the “pattern” or plans for the Tabernacle, the place where God would dwell among His people (Exodus 25:8). The intricate details are recorded in Exodus 25-31.

The Tabernacle was a temporary place of worship set up in the midst of the camp of the children of Israel during their journey through the wilderness. In reading through Exodus to Deuteronomy we find many details regarding the way that Israel were to approach God in worship. All the materials used and the furniture, as well as the sacrifices and offerings pointed forward by type or symbol to the method of acceptable worship and approach to God through the Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10:1-7).

### **The Journey from Mt Sinai to the Promised Land**

After nearly a year camped at Mount Sinai, the children of Israel set out towards the Promised Land (Numbers 10:11). Within a few months they were at Kadesh-Barnea on the southern border of the land. From here twelve spies were sent to view the land and report back to Moses. They all reported that it certainly was a good land, “flowing with milk and honey”, but impossible to conquer because the people they saw were giants and the city walls were very great (Numbers 13:27-33).

Although two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, encouraged the people to have faith and go forward, trusting in God to help them, the evil report of the other ten spies weakened the people’s faith and resolve.

Because of their lack of faith in God’s ability to overthrow their enemies Israel was condemned to spend forty years in the wilderness, while all that older generation, who had seen God’s great works—the opening of the Red Sea, the miraculous provision of food and water—but failed to believe Him, died. However Joshua and Caleb, the only two faithful spies, were told that they would enter into the land because of their faith (Numbers 13–14).

### **Lessons from the Wilderness Journey**

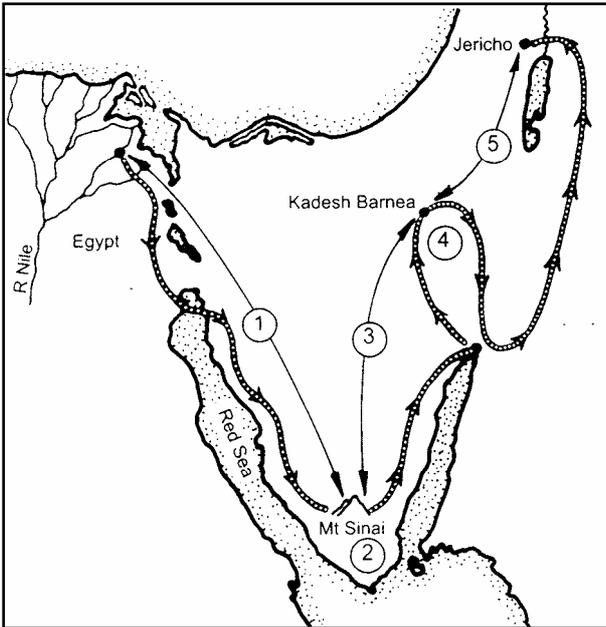
In the New Testament many lessons are taught from Israel’s 40 years journey through the wilderness to the Land of Promise. Paul draws on incidents from this journey to warn the disciples not to stumble through lack of faith as Israel did on many occasions. He concludes: *“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come”* (1 Corinthians 10:1-11).

Israel passed through the Red Sea, leaving the bondage of Egypt behind them, and commenced their journey to the Promised Land. Likewise when a person is baptised he is freed from bondage to sin and commences his journey towards the Kingdom of God (Romans 6:16-18, 22).

We will only enter the Kingdom when Jesus Christ returns if we remain faithful. We must take care not to be distracted by the ways of the world about us, and the many cares of this life, as many in Israel were, and so perished short of their goal and died in the wilderness. We are told that *“they could not enter in because of unbelief”* (Hebrews 3:7-19). We must have faith and trust in God to care for us and follow His ways, even though at times we may face many difficult trials.



**Israel's Journey from Egypt to the Promised Land**



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|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Egypt to Sinai                | Exodus 12-19                 |
| 2. Israel at Sinai               | Exodus 19 to Numbers 10      |
| 3. Mt Sinai to Kadesh            | Numbers 10-14                |
| 4. Israel 38 years in wilderness | Numbers 15-19                |
| 5. From Kadesh to Jordan         | Numbers 20 to Deuteronomy 34 |

**Israel Finally Enter the Land under Joshua**

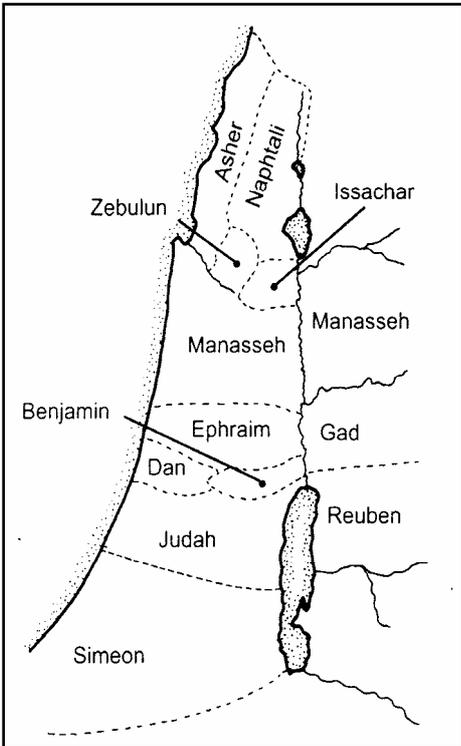
The account of those forty years, and in particular the events of the last year, are recorded from Numbers 15 through to the end of Deuteronomy. The Book of Deuteronomy records the last words of Moses to Israel, spoken at the very border of the Land of Canaan as the people waited to cross over. God would not allow Aaron and Moses to enter the land because they had allowed themselves to be provoked by the constant complaining of the people and sinned

against God (see Numbers 20:1-13). Although Moses was not permitted to enter in, God miraculously showed him all the land from the heights of Mount Nebo before his death (Deuteronomy 34).

The nation mourned the death of Moses for a whole month, after which they crossed the Jordan River and entered into the land of Canaan under their new leader, Joshua.

**Joshua—Israel's Next Leader**

The man appointed by God to lead Israel into the Land of Promise was Joshua (Numbers 27:15-23). He had been a faithful companion to Moses throughout the forty years in the wilderness, and after the death of Moses became Israel's leader.



**Territory given to the Twelve Tribes**

Joshua had proved his faithfulness and courage during the forty years wanderings in the wilderness. He had led Israel to victory against the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-16), and was one of the two faithful spies who had placed complete confidence in God's ability to overcome all their enemies (Numbers 14:6-10).

Now with God's encouragement to "*be strong and of a good courage*" (Joshua 1:5-9) he led Israel over the River Jordan into the Land. The river was in flood but God miraculously stopped its natural flow into the Dead Sea, causing it to bank up some distance upstream, so that the people could cross over on dry land (Joshua 3:14-17).

It was exactly forty years from the day that Israel left Egypt at the time of the Passover until they entered the land of Canaan (Joshua 5:10). Once Israel were in the land Joshua, guided still by God, led them in battle to overthrow the inhabitants of Canaan so that Israel could inherit the land God had chosen for Abraham and his seed. These campaigns are set out in the first twelve chapters of the book of Joshua, while the remainder of the book describes the various areas allocated by lot for the twelve tribes to dwell in.



**Summary Points**

1. At Mount Sinai Israel were given the Law, including the ten commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), which became the basis of the covenant that God made with Israel (Exodus 24).
2. The Tabernacle and its associated worship in the wilderness revealed in its ritual the way of acceptable approach and worship of God. In all these types or figures the great anti-type was to be seen in the Lord Jesus Christ. The priesthood of Aaron foreshadowed Christ as our High Priest in heaven now, through whom we can approach God in prayer.
3. Israel's deliverance from the bondage of Egypt to commence their journey towards the Promised Land foreshadows the disciple's deliverance from the bondage of sin through baptism and the commencement of a new life in Christ, walking towards God's Kingdom (Romans 6:17-18, 22).
4. After forty years in the wilderness and after the death of Moses, Joshua was selected by God to lead the children of Israel into the land of Israel.

**Lesson 13 - Questions**

1. At Mt Sinai God organised Israel into a nation. What kind of a nation were they to be?
2. How many commandments did God give Israel at Mount Sinai?
3. How many spies were sent out by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan?
4. Who were the two faithful spies?
5. How long did the children of Israel wander in the wilderness and why?
6. What lessons can the disciple today learn from Israel's journey through the wilderness?
7. Who led Israel after the death of Moses?