

The LORD Was Going Before Them

Exodus 13:17-22

Exodus 13:1-16 gives more instructions about keeping the Passover Feast. We pick up the narrative with verse 17. The most important bit of information is that the true leader of the migration was not Moses, but Yahweh. He was going to be with them every step of the proposed journey to the Promised Land, and He would determine the direction, the exact route, the speed and the challenges to be faced or avoided.

I. **The Players – Those Who Make History**

- A. Yahweh will stay with His people until the last enemy is defeated. (4th point)
- B. The Patriarchs (Abraham through Joseph) will join the Exodus in Spirit.
- C. Pharaoh will keep close watch on the Israelites' movements.
- D. The Philistines stand ready to disrupt the journey to Canaan.
- E. Moses and Aaron will shepherd the people into and through the wilderness.
- F. Though late in joining you and I are players in the great migration.

II. **The Route – the Only Workable Path**

- A. The Sinai peninsula had northern, central and southern crossing routes.
- B. None of them were perfect, but the northern one was the most direct way to Canaan.
- C. God sent them by the longest route as part of their nation-training.
- C. The Israelites were not yet soldiers, not yet relying on the Lord.
- D. The journey required a stop at the camp of the Lord. (Horeb)
- E. God's route involves the Bible, Christ the way, and sanctification.

III. **The Bones of Joseph - What God Has in Mind**

- A. Joseph believed he was part of an everlasting nation meant to bless the whole world.
- B. Egypt's greatest prime minister desired no monument in Egypt.
- C. The only thing Egypt gave him was a coffin suitable for travel.
- D. He wanted to bear witness to God's unending care for His people no matter their condition.
- E. Moses understood that Joseph represented removal, resurrection, reunion and reward.

IV. **The Pillars – Cloud by Day, Fire by Night**

- A. These cloud columns would be similar to the cloud from a nuclear explosion, very high.
- B. The cloud is the Shekinah, the cloud that surrounds God when He is visibly present.
- C. The pillar of fire is also the Shekinah filled with lightning and flames to pierce the darkness.
- D. God is present, going ahead to prepare the way and covering the travelers with His care.
- E. Today, we pilgrims are led by God's Word and Spirit.