

Are You Prepared to Meet the Lord?

In this weeks reading, from Parashat Beshalach (*Shemot / Exodus 13:17-17:16*), there are quite a few things that happen, Pharaoh lets the people go, the Lord led the people by a pillar of cloud during the day and pillar of fire by night. The Lord hardens Pharaoh's heart again (*14:4-9*) and his army follow the children of Israel to the Red Sea. The Lord divides the sea so the people could cross on dry land (*14:15-22*). The Egyptian army pursued Israel and the Lord destroys the army (*14:23-31*). The people sing a song exalting the Name of the Lord (*15:1-22*). The people travel to Marah and the Lord tested them there (*15:23-26*). The people travel to Elim where there were twelve springs and seventy date palms (*15:27*). They then travel to the wilderness of Sin and the people grumbled against Moshe and Aaron because there was no food (*16:1-3*). The Lord gives the people bread in the morning and meat in the evening to eat (*16:5-16*). The command to rest on the Sabbath is given with the instructions on how to gather the Manna during the end of the week (*16:17-30*). The people journeyed slowly to the mountain of Sinai, arriving at Rephidim where there was no water to drink (*17:1-3*). The people again complained about leaving Egypt (*17:4*), the Lord commands Moshe to strike the rock to make water for the people (*17:5-7*). Amalek fights against Israel and the Lord declares that He will blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. This week's Parashat is significant detailing some important principles that are used throughout the rest of Scripture, the Lord's final deliverance from Egypt and His provision of bread from heaven.

While reading through the first couple verses from the portion, it is interesting to note that Pharaoh let the people go and the Torah describes that the Lord God did not lead the people by the way of the Philistines saying that the people might change their minds and return to Egypt.

ספר שמות פרק יג

יז וַיְהִי כִשְׁלַח פְּרַעֲוֹה אֶת-הָעָם וְלֹא-
נָחַם אֱלֹהִים דְּרֹךְ אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי
קָרוֹב הוּא כִּי | אָמַר אֱלֹהִים פֶּן-יִנָּחַם
הָעָם בְּרֹאֲתָם מִלְחָמָה וְשָׁבוּ מִצְרַיִם:
יח וַיִּסַּב אֱלֹהִים | אֶת-הָעָם דְּרֹךְ הַמִּדְבָּר
דְּבַר יָם-סוּף וַחֲמִשִּׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל
מִצְרַיִם מִצְרַיִם:

Shemot / Exodus 13:17-18

13:17 Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, 'The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.'

13:18 Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt. (NASB)

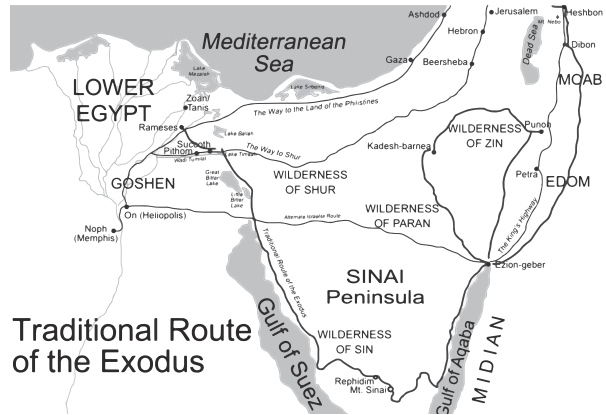
Studying maps of the journey of Israel, the way of the Philistines and the mountain of Sinai seem to be in opposite directions. Sinai is at the bottom of the Sinai Peninsula whereas the way of the Philistines is near the land of Israel. The Lord said the people would be discouraged by war, and thus He leads them by the way of the Red Sea. It is interesting the text is written this way because the Lord told Moshe in Parashat Shemot (*Exodus 1:1-6:1*) that he would return with the people to the mountain (Sinai) to worship

before leading them to the Promised Land in *Shemot / Exodus 3:11-12*.

Shemot / Exodus 3:11-12

3:11 But Moses said to God, 'Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?' 3:12 And He said, 'Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.' (NASB)

If the Lord had planned to bring the people first to Sinai, why mention that they did not travel by the way of the Philistines because they could not handle war at this time? Why do you think Moshe wrote this down like he did in the Torah? Many times while studying these Scriptures, it has crossed my mind that if they would have been faithful and trusted the Lord they could have gone



right up and into the Promised Land. However, the Lord originally wanted the people at Sinai so He could give them His Torah and they could worship before the mountain. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians saying in *Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.* (NASB) We are His and we are created in Christ for good works which the Lord prepared beforehand so we would walk in good works. It is interesting to consider that the Lord has prepared for the people a way of living and worshipping Him beforehand so that they could walk in His ways which is pleasing to Him. Note also the Scriptures say Yeshua the Messiah was slain from the foundation of the world. This "from the foundation of the world" is a type of being prepared before hand. Note how often this is written in the apostolic Writings (*Matthew 13:35, Luke 11:50, John 17:24, Ephesians 1:4, Hebrews 4:3, Hebrews 9:26, 1 Peter 1:20, Revelation 13:8, Revelation 17:8*). The point of the opening verses in the Portion is the Lord could have led Israel right up into the Promised Land coming out of Egypt, however they were not prepared for war physically or spiritually. They also did not know how to live or how to properly worship the Lord. The Lord drew the people to Himself and now they needed to learn how to live in righteousness, justice, and holiness before Him. He was fully equipping them to enter the Promised Land but they had to learn these things; they first needed to live it daily. According to the Scriptures, we are drawn to the Lord through faith in Yeshua the Messiah. Do you think the Lord would lead us directly into battle without first being trained and learning to live out our faith daily like Israel? Is salvation simply fire insurance or is it an opportunity to live righteously in a relationship with the Lord? Are you preparing yourself to meet the Lord by having a relationship with Him today?