
SG020203

The Whole Counsel of God – Exodus 13-18

Got questions? Email Pastor Jason at jasonduff7@gmail.com

(You can download this message as a podcast by searching Jason Duff on iTunes)

Introduction & Overview of the Section – Seven Camping Spots

God is delivering His people. Last week God delivered them out of Egypt by 10 devastating plagues, and now in our section this week, we will see God deliver Egypt out of His people by sending them on a year long camping trip. The trek from Egypt to the promise land should have been a 10 day journey. But God took one whole year to begin to pour into them truths they would need for a lifetime. As we consider this section we will see seven camping spots on their journey, and each stop has much to teach us.

Stop One – Succoth – “Tent Town” – Exodus 12:37-13:19

At this first stop in the journey from Egypt God teaches them that they are pilgrims just passing through on their way to the promise land. This is a great lesson for us, as Peter also calls us strangers and pilgrims, passing through this life, heading toward heaven.

Stop Two – Etham – “He is with us” – Exodus 13:20-22

The second stop is at the edge of the wilderness, at the edge of disaster. And here God wants to teach His people that He is with them. It is at Etham that He gives Israel the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night to guide them through the wilderness.

Stop Three – The Red Sea – Exodus 14:1-31

The third stop is at the Red Sea. Here God has Israel camp between two mountains at their side, and the Red Sea at their back. It was not a very strategic camping spot, but God allowed His people to be put literally between a rock and a hard place, so that His glory might be known to the Egyptians and the Israelis.

Stop Four – Marah – “Bitterness” - Exodus 15:22-26

The fourth stop is at Marah. At Marah there was a great pool of water, the only problem was the water was bitter. The children of Israel complained against Moses and he made the bitter water sweet by adding the tree to the water. There are many implications of why times of bitterness happen in our lives and the role “the tree” (the cross) plays in it.

Stop Five – Elim – Exodus 15:27

The fifth stop was at Elim. Elim had many wells of water. After Father God taught the children of Israel important lessons at Marah with the bitter water, He was (as He always is) faithful to provide not only lessons, but blessings.

Stop Six – The Wilderness of Sin – Exodus 16:1-36

Stop number six just doesn't sound good, and it wasn't. The people started to complain about having nothing to eat. Instead of getting angry at their complaining, God sent a honey cracker like substance they called “Manna”, to the people so they could eat. And as long as they gathered it in the morning, and gathered it daily – it was all they ever needed.

Stop Seven – Rephidim – “Resting Place” - Exodus 17:1-7

The final stop was Rephidim or the “resting place”. But Rephidim had one problem; it had no water, so again the people complained. God had Moses strike the rock and water came out as pure as ever. Later in 1 Cor. 10:4 we are told that Christ was the rock that was stricken. He today still gives out torrents of living water to those who would partake.

Study Notes (not covered in detail on Wednesday Night Bible study)

Exodus 15:1-21 – After God buried the Egyptian army in the Red Sea, Israel breaks out into worship praising God for what He has done. This passage teaches us many things. The first one is how important worship is to our lives. To get our eyes off of ourselves and onto the Lord will produce a joy and a purpose. It creates a throne in our hearts for the Lord to rule over (see verse 2). The other thing this passage teaches us is that our worship is simply a response to what He has done. It is not about what songs we like, or how they are being played. It is not about how we feel or how we are doing with the Lord. We worship Him because He is worthy, and that fact never changes.

Exodus 17:8-16 – After God defeated the Egyptians, the Amalekites were the next people group Israel had to battle. The Amalekites were descendants from Jacob's brother Esau. As the text tells us, Israel had the victory as long as Moses' hands were raised, but when they began to fall, the Amalekites would prevail. Moses outstretched hands was a confession of total dependence upon God. Joshua needed the intercession of Moses, and Moses needed Aaron and Hur. There are many places in the battle we fight everyday for the Kingdom of God. Some of us are called to fight like Joshua, some of us are called to intercede like Moses, and some are called to assist in whatever way they can to see the kingdom of God advance.

Exodus 18:1-27 – In our final chapter of the section we see Moses having a grand family reunion with his wife, sons and father-in-law Jethro. We then see Jethro give Moses some advice about delegating leadership. What wisdom there is in not trying to carry every burden yourself. This is also the first time we see the idea of elders showing up in the Bible. If you will notice, Moses (v20) taught the people, showed them the way they were to walk, and then there were leaders over a thousand, leaders over hundreds, leaders over 50 and leaders over ten to lighten Moses' load, and to use the gifts God had given them.

Going Deeper (think it over or discuss with your family)

#1 – As you read through the seven places the children of Israel camped at during their march toward Sinai (see other side of the study guide), what lessons do you need to come away with in your walk with the Lord?

#2 – Carefully read both chapters 17 and 18. What do these chapters teach you about could be your role in ministry?

Exodus 13-15

“Journey through the Wilderness – part one”

The Book of Exodus can be divided into 3 sections

#1 - Exodus 1-4 – God Develops His Man

- It is the story of the background and calling of Moses

#2 - Exodus 5-24 – God Delivers His people

- By bringing them out of Egypt
- By setting them apart in the wilderness
- By giving to them His law

#3 - Exodus 25-40 – God Dwells with His Saints

- The design of the tabernacle
 - The building of the tabernacle
- Just a guess but you might hear that again

The 10 Plagues have just concluded and the people of Egypt were more than ready for the nation of Israel to leave

- In fact they kicked them out quick – no good bye parties, no fan farewell

You see it back in chapter 12:33 – “The Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, ‘We shall all be dead’” – Exodus 12:33

- Enough is enough – get out now

And God had prepared them for this event

- for He told them in chapter 12 – eat the Passover meal ready to go
 - staff in hand, bags packed – robes girded
- And so as they left – in reality the scene was 3 million backpackers – leaving the nation of Egypt for what should have been a 10 day hike
 - Ten days was the approximate journey length from Egypt to Canaan

But when it is all said and done – it will be 40 years until they get there

- now the most of that time was their own fault, they did not trust the Lord to give them the land and God judged that generation
 - but the first year of that journey was God’s fault
 - or let me say it another way– it was God’s plan

You see - Instead of sending the Israelites straight to the promise land, God sent them on a one year trek through the wilderness, and had them camp along the way at seven specific camp sights –

Exodus Route Map – not the fastest way

Now the question is why????

- Well, understand it was a relatively easy thing for God to deliver His children out of Egypt
 - A few plagues, some changed hearts and wham they are on their way out
- It was a relatively easy thing for God to deliver His children out of Egypt
 - It was a far greater task to deliver Egypt out of the hearts of His kids

You see they had been in bondage for over 400 years

- and as they lived in Egypt, though they stayed true to the God of their fathers
 - It was impossible for that worldly culture, that pagan society to not permeate their ideas, their values, and simply what they were trusting in
 - And so God sent them camping to teach them lesson, to change their hearts and their minds – and I pray as we look at these tonight that the same thing will happen in us
- We are going to start working our way through seven spots they went camping and the lessons God taught them at each point

Camp Spot #1 – Succoth – Exodus 12:37-13:16

- The first stop on the way out of Egypt was a place called - **Succoth – literally means “tent town”**

While living in Egypt even though they were slaves, they had their homes, their permanent dwellings

- and now they are in the wilderness – sleeping under the stars, living in tents in tent town
 - and God instructed them to do so, because He was teaching them the lesson – that they were sojourners, passing through on their way to the promise land
- The Egyptians were into their stuff, they were into their dwellings – it was about getting what you can now – they even thought you could take it with you if you study the pharaohs

But this mentality might be that of the Egyptians, but it can not be the mentality of a child of God

- you see the Bible makes it clear – Hebrews chapter 11, the hall of faith
 - that those who are disciples of God – those who are living for the Lord – treat this world differently
- They are able like Abraham to leave their homeland, just because God said to
 - They are able like Moses to give up the luxuries of Egypt, just to be with the people of God

“They were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.” – Hebrews 11:13-16

- They were looking for something else, they realized they were made for a different place – different priorities

And with each of these camping spots we could camp out and teach a whole study on them

- but it is something we need to consider
 - this life only makes sense

- you are only effective in this life – when you view it through the lens of the next – an eternal perspective
- I don't have to be fulfilled here, life doesn't have to be fair here – I don't need to be recognized here
 - Because I was made for another place
 - A place whose builder and maker is God, a place where He will set everything right

Israel was taught in Succoth, that they were just passing through this life

- And they were taught that there – one because they were living in tents – a activity they would repeat each year (we will get to that when we study the feasts of Israel, in Leviticus)
 - It kept them realizing they were made to live elsewhere forever – this life was temporary
- They were taught it through their living arrangements, and they were taught it because God instituted the Passover there

For the rest of their national History –they were to keep this feast to remind them that God sent them out to the promise land – as He would do again

- They were to keep the Passover – and they were to dedicate the firstborn to the Lord
 - Their lives were not their own – they were dedicated to God for a higher purpose than the affairs of this life
 - This life that they were just passing through
- Important lesson for them, important for us

Camping Spot #2 – Etham – Exodus 13:17-22

- Israel moves from Succoth to Etham

Now Etham was on the edge of the wilderness

- On the edge of disaster
 - Because, understand when the Bible talks about wilderness

It is not talking about some mountains and flowing streams, bald eagles soaring over head

- The wilderness they were facing was a barren, desolate, foreboding desert
 - They are literally taking 3 million people into disaster
- And knowing this God has them camp at Etham

What is interesting about this, is when you translate the name, it means, Etham = “He is with us”

- And God began to teach them that lesson not just with the name of the camp site, but by what He did there as well
 - You see it was at Etham that God began to lead His people with the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night
 - And by this God was ministering – I am with you, I am leading you – I know you are on the brink of disaster, the brink of the wilderness – but you do not have to fear, for I am with you

And friends, this again is a good lesson for us as well

- Because after God teaches us that we are just passing through, He often brings us to the wilderness in our lives, to the brink of disaster
 - And we wonder what are we doing Lord, where are we going
 - And God ministers to us this important truth – I am with you, I will guide you

David said in Psalm 23...

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and the Your staff they comfort me” – Psalm 23:4

David said I don't have to be afraid

- and the reason, because You are with me
 - such an important lesson for all of us to learn
 - the Lord is with us and the Lord wants to walk us through those times we are on the edge of disaster, the edge of the wilderness

And You know not only is that comforting to me, that the Lord will be with us, but how the Lord choose to guide the people through the wilderness is really interesting to me as well

- during the day – it was a cloud
 - during the night – a pillar of fire

Sometimes we wonder how we discern where God is leading in our lives

- how do we know what He is really going to do

During the day – a cloud

- Now let me remind you they are in a desert, and if you have ever been to a desert region – it is warm, in fact, it is hot
 - And all of sudden a cloud appears – where do the people want to move – under the cloud – why – because it's cool, because it makes sense – it was what they wanted to do

Jason – are you saying – God leads us in what we want to do?

- sometimes, yes

David wrote in psalm 37 – **“delight yourself in the Lord and what.... He will give you the desire of you heart” – Psalm 37:4**

- As you are walking with the Lord, as you are delighting in Him – now if you are walking in the flesh, then last thing you want to lead you is your deceitfully wicked heart

But as you are delighting in Him, surrendered to Him, and a decision comes before you – what do I do, (people beat themselves up trying to discover what God has for them)

- Hey – where is it cool? Where is the shade? – Where do you want to go? What do you want to do?
 - If it lines up with Scripture – godly counsel doesn't point you in different direction – go for it – follow the cloud
 - By day a cloud – however...

By night – a pillar of fire

- you see God certainly leads us through circumstances and what we want to do as we are delighting in Him
 - but He also leads by fire in our lives as well
 - He also leads by extreme trials out of our control

The boss says, you are fired. The girlfriend says, pack sand mister, we are over!

- And we think – Lord why have You abandoned me? Why have You forsaken me
 - Have you ever thought, maybe He hasn't.
 - Maybe He is leading you just as you want Him to, but instead of using a cloud, oh I like fluffy clouds
- Now He is using some fire.

God is still leading in our lives today, He is still moving us in His direction if we are willing to see it

- Sometimes He leads through what we want to do, and sometimes is just a fiery trial
 - But in either case the lesson is the same
- When we are on the edge of the wilderness, the edge of disaster
 - We need to camp at Etham and realize, even though we have never been this way before – He is with us, so I do not have to be afraid!

Camping Spot #3 – Red Sea – Exodus chapter 14

- **Read the chapter**
 - I want you to notice first of all that God tells them to camp in this place – God sets this up
 - And what a place it was
- The region around the Red Sea was Mountainous
 - On one side you had Pi Hahiroth – and cavernous mountain of considerable size
 - On the other side – Migdol – another Mountain both unsurpassable with 3 million people many of which women and children
 - And behind you – the Red Sea
- This was not the most strategic camping spot

Picture of possible beach head

The staff here at Vista used to go fishing together once a year. We would head up to this cabin above Bishop that the Frazee family owned and spend a couple of days hanging out – it was great – but the first year was so cold - 10 degrees when we got there, in the afternoon. Now the older pastors when dividing up the rooms asked me the new guy, and Scott Cunningham if we wanted to sleep in a bed. I said, no way – you guys are old – you get the bed – no we insist they said – okay. So time came to go to bed and we went toward the room and asked one more time – no you go ahead. Well – what they didn't tell us is there was no heater in that room. In fact there was only one in the whole cabin. A little space heater in the living room. So these guys are all huddled around this heater in the living and they had shut our door to conserve the space needed to heat. I woke up in the middle of the night colder than I had ever

been in my life. They put both the youth pastors back there, and for the first time in my life I considered snuggling with a man. I was so cold

- It was not a strategic camping spot
 - But that was my fault – I should have known

But with the children of Israel – this was the Lord's design

- God put them, told them to go to this camping spot
 - And what I want us to consider this is why

Why would God tell His kids to camp in a place that would make them sitting ducks?

- Why would God not just allow, but orchestrate this whole thing in their lives?
 - I want you to consider two reasons

As we keep reading we see the deliverance of the Lord once again – God parts the sea, Israel crosses over on dry land, and then as the Egyptian Army begins its chase – the sea closes in on them

- And when we get to verse 31 of this chapter it says...
 - Israel saw, they feared the Lord (developed a great respect) and believed Moses His servant

You see as we have seen earlier – the people of Israel knew the Lord

- they knew about Him, they were familiar with the stories
 - they believed He was real and trusted their lives to Him
- But it is painfully clear – that though they knew Him, intellectually – they did not know Him intimately
 - They had not really tasted and seen that the Lord was good
 - They did not fear the Lord (no respect, no awe)
 - They did not believe Moses His servant

God puts Israel in a box by the Red Sea – Why?

#1 – So Israel would know Him

- It is just a reality of life that when everything is okay, when there is very little trouble
 - We don't really go deep in our relationship with the Lord
 - And though we know Him, though we can relate the stories – we don't know Him, we have no fear, no awe
- And so God brings situations in our lives to develop that in us

Being at Vista you don't learn to walk by faith – one of the most wonderful lessons of being here this past year has been seeing the Lord work – when the job was suddenly not available – when we couldn't make the bills, at the end of the month – and then someone came in and wanted to give an offering for the end of the year

And you come away with those types of experiences knowing God and being able to trust the Lord in deeper ways, because you know Him in deeper ways

- So too with the Israelites, they never imagined how God wasn't going to work through this situation, but must have thought there is no way –

I love verses 13-15

- I don't think Moses even knew what the Lord was going to do

- Stand and see the deliverance of the Lord, (come on Lord, come through)
- Why are you crying to Me – tell them to move forward
 - Which way – forward to the sea – that doesn't make sense – there is no way
 - Forward into the mountains, we can't climb, there isn't a way
 - Forward into the army, they will cut us down
 - Lord there isn't a way!

And then God made a way, where there wasn't a way

- And Israel comes away with a deeper and greater understanding of who the Lord is
 - It reminds me of a story in John chap 11

Jesus was walking along the shore and someone came to Him and said “come quickly – Lazarus is dying. And the Lord lingered 2 days, until Lazarus had died

- and when He goes to the tomb, Mary and Martha were broken
 - You are the healer – You could have saved him
 - and oh how they must have wondered – why

To make matters worse Jesus says to them “I am glad for your sakes I was not here”

- what in the world? – You are glad for me that my brother died – what in the world
 - but Jesus knew what He was going to do – that He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead
- You see, God had put them in an impossible situation, and He did it for the same reason, that Israel was up against the Red Sea
 - When the day opened they knew Jesus as healer, the teacher, but when the sun would go down that evening – they would know Him in a completely new way as the Resurrection and the Life

And so God will do with you and with me

- He will allow situations to develop in my life, in your life
 - That we think, how is this going to come together? There is no way!
- He is allowing it to show His power, that you would know Him deeper than you ever have before

But there was another reason, God put them into this situation – verse 3-4

God puts Israel in a box by the Red Sea – Why?

#1 – So Israel would know Him

#2 – So the World would know Him

- you see the whole deliverance of the Jews was a huge lesson to the people of Egypt of how their gods compared with the true and living God
 - And although God had shown Himself strong against their gods and even Pharaoh
 - They still had their army – and God was going to show His might and His power to the Egyptians

Now think that through to its logical conclusion

- God put Israel into a predicament, so that the worldly people might see He is God
 - God does that? - certainly

Maybe you remember the story in Acts 28 where Paul is shipwrecked, and he is on the beach, gathering wood, but then Paul was bit by a snake. The people thought you must be a real sinner, avoiding shipwreck just to be bit, but then Paul just then shook it off, and the people were amazed – because they had friends bit with the snake and they did not shake it off and it opened a door for ministry for Paul

And the same thing is true for you

- you have friends who have lost children, you have friends with marital problems, they go through the same things you and I do
 - but when they see you, not panicking, not despairing, but clinging to Jesus
 - that is something they don't understand and a door to ministry opens up
 - and it opened up because God allowed you to be in a tight place, just like He is doing with Israel in Exodus chapter 14

Well, that is not fair

- It's not fair that God can put me in a tight spot just to bring Him glory – that doesn't sound fair
 - Well, there is another option
 - you can join the Egyptians drowning fruitlessly in sea
 - when you put it that way, I'm glad to be an object lesson

By the way – some liberal scholars try to say that this idea of the Red Sea is a mistranslation, and what is really meant here is the Reed Sea

You see there is a marsh area not far from the Red Sea where the water is only a few inches deep and in order to avoid miracles in the Bible, they teach that God caused the wind to blow and dried up the four inches of water for the Jews and that was this

- And of course I think that is ridiculous,
 - They have found much evidence off the coast of that beach I showed you earlier of the events we read about in the Scripture

Sea Bed Picture - First of all there is a flat path right off that beach head of about ½ mile wide fairly shallow water, compared to the 3,000 and 5,000 foot trench to the north and south

Wagon Wheel 01, 02, 03 – then on the sea floor they have found chariot wheels that match the design of the times all over the bottom of the sea, along with bones of humans and horses right next to each other – Human Horse Bones Pic

- but more than that – if you want to believe that the Red Sea crossing was actually the Reed Sea crossing so you can avoid miracles, this interpretation doesn't help you

- It would be an even greater miracle for God to drown the entire Egyptian army in 4 inches of water

Anyway – God brings a great deliverance to the people – why – why put them in this place where they have no way out

- One – so they would know the greatness of God
 - Israel needed to trust in the Lord in greater way in their lives, they knew Him up here, but it was to taste and see the Lord was good
- One for the Israelis, but two, for the Egyptians – they saw this and glorified the God of Israel

Sometime God puts us in difficult circumstances, He just does

- and sometimes it is for our benefit, that we might know the Lord like we never had before
 - but sometime is also so your friends, those who watch your life might see you trust the Lord through that difficult time and they would give God glory

The 15th chapter is the song of Moses as he gives glory to God for all He has done – [read 15:1-21](#)

- This is a great worship song
 - It talks not about us – which is most worship songs today if you notice – this is how I feel, these are my needs

This song is about the Lord – and I love it – a man of war – He fights – it makes me want to rap with Dominic Baily – “with all of His might.. enemies frightened as triumph cries - A shout of victory, over his enemies and he'll go forth - The Lord is like a man war, his light will shatter the darkness from night as triumph cries”

- I love it, I love this song of Moses
 - But the one thing I want to draw your attention to before we close is down in verse 20, Miriam gets into the action
 - She goes out with all the women, now that could be a million person choir, and she starts to bang on the tambourine and worship God
 - And this is good
- But it could have been great if it was on the other side of the Red Sea

You see on the other side – Miriam was doubting, coming against Moses

- and that is humanly understandable
 - but we have a few times in our lives where greatness can occur, but it will be on the other side of the Red Sea, where faith is all we have to go on
- This was good, but great – trust the Lord when He is your only hope – that is true greatness