



The Journey from Slavery to Sinai

- Leaving the Nile River Delta (Land of Goshen), the Israelites find themselves in front a large body of water known in Hebrew as “Yam Suf” when translated into English means “Sea of Reeds.” The Lord parts the water and the journey through the wilderness begins.
- The distance from the Nile River Delta to Mount Sinai is roughly 200 miles and took them three months to complete.

Thinking people ask, “If God’s goal was to get the Israelites to the Promised Land, why didn’t they go straight there?”

When Pharaoh finally let the people go, God did not lead them along the main road that runs through Philistine territory, even though that was the shortest route to the Promised Land. God said, “If the people are faced with a battle, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.” Exodus 13:17 (NLT)

Lessons in Leadership Learned in the Wilderness

I. Effective Leaders _____.

The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. Exodus 18:13 (NIV)

Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, observed the impossible task of Moses attempting to be the sole judge and arbitrator of all disputes among the Israelites. He said to Moses . . .

“What you’re doing is not good. You and your people will wear yourselves out. This is too much work for you. You can’t do it alone! Now listen to me, and I’ll give you some advice.” Exodus 18:17–19 (GW)

2. Effective Leaders _____.

This is the advice that Moses' father-in-law offered:

Look among all the people for capable persons who respect God. They should be trustworthy and not corrupt. Set these persons . . . as judges for the people at all times. They should bring every major dispute to you, but they should decide all of the minor cases themselves . . . They will share your load . . . And all these people will be able to go back to their homes much happier.” Exodus 18:21–23 (CEB)

3. Effective Leaders _____ in the face of opposition.

A major theme in the Exodus story is that the Israelites were regularly complaining.

- About the lack of food

In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death." Exodus 16:2–3 (NIV)

“Manna” is a Hebrew word that means

The manna was like small white seeds. The people would go to gather it, and then grind it in handmills, or crush it between stones. After they cooked it in a pot or made cakes with it, it tasted like bread baked with olive oil.

Numbers 11:7–8 (NCV)

- About the lack of meat

Soon all the Israelites began complaining. They said, “We want meat! We remember the fish we ate for free in Egypt. We also had cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!”

Numbers 11:4–6 (NCV)

The complaining continued

- They complained that Moses was not a good leader.
- They complained about Moses' wife.
- They formed a “Back to Egypt” committee to oust Moses from leadership and return to slavery in Egypt.

Think About It

- Every good leader can expect criticism and opposition.
- When were you last criticized for your leadership?
- How did you feel?
- What did you learn?
- Do you know and acknowledge your limitations?
- Have you learned to share the leadership load?
- Are you willing to listen to your critics, learn from the opposition and stay faithful to the vision?

Major sources for today's teaching: *Moses* by Adam Hamilton; *Taking Advice* by David Owens; *Wilderness University* by Sheldon Boyd.