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The Second Stage: Rephidim to Mount Hor

33: 15-40

The second stage - Rephidim to Mount Hor DIG: What impression does this travel log give you of the twists and turns in their journey? How might a list like this help the Wilderness Generation who had not actually experienced the early parts of the journey? How might it affect their belief in the reality of God's power? Why is the LORD so concerned that the Israelites drive out all of the Canaanites?

REFLECT: What parallels do you see in the Exodus and wilderness experiences of the Israelites as compared with the pilgrimage of many who come to faith in Messiah today? What would you add to this list from your own journey with ADONAI? When has He "parted the waters" for you? When has He helped you find "water from a rock?" When has He led you from the desert to the Promised Land?

Once the Tabernacle was completed while the Israelites camped at Mount Sinai (Exodus 25-30), it was taken apart and carried every time the Israelites traveled to a new encampment. There were 40 such journeys (to see link click [Gc](#) - Isra'el's Travel Log).

These were the [three] stages and 40 encampments between the Exodus and the staging area to the Promised Land on the plains of Mo'ab. As the people of Isra'el left the land of Egypt, they divided into groups under the leadership of Moshe and Aaron (Numbers 33:1). Moshe recorded each of the stages of their journey by order of ADONAI; here are the starting-points of each stage (Numbers 33:2). Up to this point, Moses left out such events as the crossing of the Sea of Reeds, the giving of the Torah, and the giving of the manna. **The sages teach that these were so well known that they didn't need to be mentioned.**

11. They left Rephidim and camped in the wilderness of Sinai near Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1-2 and Numbers 33:15). Once again, nothing is said in Numbers 33 about what happened in the wilderness of Sinai. Then again, apparently nothing needed to be said! Just the very mention of the word Sinai was enough to bring to remembrance all the major events that took place there. Of course, the most outstanding event was the giving of

the Torah. Most of the revelation of the Torah was spoken by **the Holy One** and written by **Moshe**. Because of this revelation, **Isra'el** began to “build a house,” so to speak in **the wilderness of Sinai**. That is, **YHVH** entered into a sacred marriage with **Isra'el** in **the wilderness**. In doing so, **He** instructed **Isra'el** to do all the things which are part of setting up a new household: building a house (**the Tabernacle**), providing for intimacy in the marriage (**sacrifices and priests**), and establishing special “family” days (see the commentary on **Leviticus Dw - God's Appointed Times**), and so on. However, all was not joyful for **Isra'el** at **Sinai**. Just as Moses was descending from the mountain and **his** meeting with **God**, **Isra'el** was committing spiritual adultery and worshipping the golden calf. As much as it was not necessary to mention the giving of the Torah here in this travel log, it was also not necessary to mention the golden calf incident (see **Exodus Gq - The Golden Calf Incident**). All **Isra'el** needed to hear was the word “**Sinai**,” and both would have come to **the people's** minds.

12. They left the wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah (Numbers 33:16). According to **Numbers 11**, there was another rebellion at **Kirbroth Hattaavah**. In this rebellion **the people**, once again, complained about **their** food. This time **they** wanted **meat**. In response, it is recorded: **Tell the people, “Dedicate yourselves for tomorrow, and you will eat meat; because you cried in the ears of ADONAI, ‘If only we had meat to eat! We had a good life in Egypt!’ All right, ADONAI is going to give you meat, and you will eat it. You won't eat it just one day, or two days, or five, or ten, or twenty days, but a whole month! - until it comes out of your nose and you hate it! - because you have rejected ADONAI, who is here with you, and distressed Him with your crying and asking, “Why did we ever leave Egypt” (Numbers 11:18-20).**

13. They left Kibroth Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth (Numbers 33:17). The text gives the impression that it was while **they** remained at **Hazeroth**, that **Miryam** and **Aaron** gossiped against **Moses** and challenged **his** right to lead (see **Numbers Bu - The Rebellion of Miryam and Aaron**), and **Miryam** was afflicted with **leprosy** (see **Leviticus Cg - The Test of M'tsora**). In recalling this location, then, **the children of Isra'el** would have remembered **the LORD's** defense of **Moshe** when **He** said: **But it isn't that way with my servant Moshe. He is the only one who is faithful in my entire household. With him I speak face to face and clearly, not in riddles; he sees the image of ADONAI. So why weren't you afraid to criticize my servant Moshe. He is a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth (Numbers 12:3 and 7-8).**⁷⁵⁰

14. They left Hazeroth and camped at Rothmah (Numbers 33:18). Not mentioned in

the Scriptures, so this location is unknown. **Rabbi Hertz reminds us that . . . it is exceedingly difficult to identify the exact route of march, more especially as the names were not names of cities, but of conspicuous landmarks. Which have changed with the centuries, and the designation of the temporary landmarks have been forgotten (Rabbi J. H. Hertz, Pentateuch and Haftarah, page 715).**⁷⁵¹

15. They left Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez (Numbers 33:19). Not mentioned in **the Scriptures**, so this location is unknown. The area occupied by these locations below are identified with the desert of Paran, is covered with gravel and contains little vegetation and scant sources of water, fitting the description: **We set out from Sinai and traveled the great and terrible wilderness (Deuteronomy 1:19).**⁷⁵²

16. They left Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah (Numbers 33:20). Not mentioned in **the Scriptures**, so this location is unknown.

17. They left Libnah and camped at Rissah (Numbers 33:21). Not mentioned in **the Scriptures**, so this location is unknown.

18. They left Rissah and camped at Kehelathah (Numbers 33:22). Not mentioned in **the Scriptures**, so this location is unknown.

19. They left Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher (Numbers 33:23). Not mentioned in **the Scriptures**, so this location is unknown.

20. They left Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah (Numbers 33:24). Not mentioned in **the Scriptures**, so this location is unknown.

21. They left Haradah and camped at Makheloth (Numbers 33:25). Not mentioned in **the Scriptures**, so this location is unknown.

22. They left Makheloth and camped at Tahath (Numbers 33:26). Not mentioned in **the Scriptures**, so this location is unknown.

23. They left Tahath and camped at Terah (Numbers 33:27). Not mentioned in **the Scriptures**, so this location is unknown.

24. They left Terah and camped at Mithkah (Numbers 33:28). Not mentioned in **the Scriptures**, so this location is unknown.

25. They left Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah (Numbers 33:29). Not mentioned in

the Scriptures, so this location is unknown.

26. They left Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth (Numbers 33:30). The location of the places mentioned in **verses 30-34** are identical with those in the fragment of **Deuteronomy 10:6-7**. **Mount Hor** is the **death** site of **Aaron** according to **Numbers 33:38** and **Deuteronomy 32:50**. However, **Deuteronomy 10:6** records a variant tradition, that **Aaron died at Moseroth**, which, according to **33:30**, **Isra'el** reached six locations before **Mount Hor**. However, the location of **Mount Hor** is disputed. The traditional site, **Jebel Nabi Harun** near **Petra**, has to be rejected since it is in the heart of **Edom**, far from its border. Some have conjectured **'Imaret el-Khurisheh**, 13 kilometers (8 miles) north of **Kadesh**, in order to be **on the way to Atharim (21:1)** leading from **Kadesh** to **Arsd**, but this site is far to the east of the border of **Edom**. Others have suggested **Jebel Madrah** due west of **Kadesh** near the **Arabah** (the **Jordan rift**), which has the advantage of being close to the **Edomite border** (and possibly being the same name as **Moseroth**), but has inadequate water sources in its vicinity.⁷⁵³

27. They left Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan (Numbers 33:31). The location of the places mentioned in **verses 30-34** are identical with those in the itinerary fragment of **Deuteronomy 10:6-7**.

28. They left Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Haggidgad (Numbers 33:32). The location of the places mentioned in **verses 30-34** are identical with those in the itinerary fragment of **Deuteronomy 10:6-7**.

29. They left Hor Haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah (Numbers 33:33). The location of the places mentioned in **verses 30-34** are identical with those in the itinerary fragment of **Deuteronomy 10:6-7**.

30. They left Jotbathah and camped at Abronah (Numbers 33:34). The location of the places mentioned in **verses 30-34** are identical with those in the itinerary fragment of **Deuteronomy 10:6-7**.⁷⁵⁴

31. They left Abronah and camped at Ezion-Geber (Numbers 33:35). There were no particularly outstanding memories about **Ezion-Geber**, other than it was the place where there was a minor directional adjustment. From there **the Israelites** were to circumvent the **Edomites** and travel through **Mo'ab** as they headed north.⁷⁵⁵ However, historically it was very important. When fleeing **Pharaoh's** chariots, just when **the Israelites** were on the brink of escape when **ADONAI** said to **Moses**, "Tell the **Israelites** to turn back (that is northward toward **Ramses**, or in the general direction that **they** had come) and camp near

Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the Red Sea, directly opposite (or east of) **Ba'al Zephon (Exodus 14:1-2)**. Archeologists have discovered the remains of chariot wheels at **Ezion-Geber** at the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba (see **Exodus Cf - Moses Took the Bones of Joseph with Him**). **King Solomon also built ships at Ezion-Geber, which is near Elath in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea (First Kings 9:26)**. **Amenhotep II** had **his** spies looking on the scene to see where **the Isrealites** were going and **he** expected **them** to move up the coastal route and through the land of the Philistines. But when **the Jews** doubled back, **Pharaoh** must have thought that **Isra'el's God** was a poor general because **He** took **them** to a place where there was no retreat. **Pharaoh** thought **the Israelites were wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert (Exodus 14:3)**. **Pharaoh** concluded that **he** had the advantage and then decided to attack (see **Exodus Ch - The LORD Will Fight For You, You Need Only To Be Still**).

32. They left Ezion Geber and camped at Kadesh, in the wilderness of Tzin (Numbers 33:36, also see 33:11). Apparently, there were two places called **Kadesh**. One was in the wilderness of Paran; the other was the one referred to here, in **the wilderness of Tzin**. Several things happened here, things that both **Moses** and **the people** would rather have forgotten. First, **Miryam died and was buried there** (see **Dc - The Death of Miryam**). After that, as if **her death** was not enough for **Moshe** to handle, **and there was no water for the congregation; and they assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron (20:2-3)**. Because of this, **Moshe**, once again, went to **the LORD**. **God** gave **him** specific instructions about how to solve the problem. **ADONAI** told **Moses** that **he** was merely to **speak to that rock and it would pour out its water**. But in **his** frustration with **the people**, **Moshe** raised his hand and hit the rock twice with his staff. As a result of **his** disobedience, **ADONAI** said to **Moshe**, **"Because you did not trust in Me enough to demonstrate My holiness to the people of Isra'el, you will not bring these people into the Land I have promised them"** (20:12). **Moshe** would only be allowed to see **the Promised Land** before **his** death.



33. They left Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, on the border of Edom. Each stage ends with a significant event. And here, at the end of the second stage, we read: At ADONAI's command Aaron the priest went up Mount Hor, where he died on the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. Aaron was a hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor (see [Df - The Death of Aaron](#)). This was quite a significant event, for the Bible says that when he died the entire nation mourned him for thirty days (20:29). The Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev of Canaan, heard that the Israelites were coming, foreshadowing the beginning of the Canaanite war (Numbers 33:37-40 also see 33:30).

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, praise **You** that **You** delight in going ahead of your children, guiding and helping them. Wherever **the Israelites** went, **You** were right there with **them**. **ADONAI** went before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead the way and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light. So they could travel both day and night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night never departed from the people (Exodus 13:21-22). Today, **You** guide **Your** children, not with a pillar of cloud or of fire, but with **Your Ruach Ha'Kodesh**, living inside of those who love **You**. Praise **You** that you never leave me. Anywhere I go, I can always count on **You** going with me to help and to guide. For **God Himself** has said: **I will never leave you or forsake you, so that with confidence we say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear"** (Hebrews 13:5c-6a). This is such a fantastic promise.*

*Thank **You** that anywhere I go, you can see me to watch over and to protect me. Even in **the dark** of night, **You** are still able to see me clearly. **Your** eyes are always watching with love and care. **You** are there with me even if I climb mountains or fly across the ocean. **Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, ADONAI, You know all about it. You***

hemmed me in behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from Your Ruach? Where can I flee from Your presence? If I go up to heaven, You are there, and if I make my bed in Sheol, look, You are there too. If I take the wings of the dawn and settle on the other side of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand lays hold of me. If I say, "Surely darkness covers me, night keeps light at a distance from me," even darkness is not dark for You, and night is as bright as day - darkness and light are alike (Psalms 139:4-12). You are such an absolutely wonderful and fantastic heavenly **Father!** It is a joy to love and to please **You!** In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen