

“¹⁷When 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.’ ¹⁸So* God led them in a roundabout way through the wilderness toward the Red Sea. Thus the Israelites left Egypt like an army ready for battle.” – EXODUS 13:17-18

[*“So” = NLT, NKJV, NIV, CEB; “But” =RSV, KJV, ESV – Therefore = NASB]

WHY DIDN'T GOD LEAD THE ISRAELITES ON THE EASIEST, QUICKEST ROUTE TO THE PROMISED LAND?

The Principle: God’s ways are not our ways and we often can’t or won’t understand our seemingly wandering route while we are in the midst of our struggles.

1. God _____ things the Israelites didn’t know (v. 17)

“‘My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,’ says the Lord. ‘And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.’” – ISAIAH 55:8-9

- The shortest way wasn’t the _____ way
- The Israelites weren’t _____ for the challenges and the obstacles that lie ahead

2. The Israelites weren’t _____ ready for the things that lie ahead (v. 17)

“If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you.” – EXODUS 15:26

- Getting the Israelites _____ of Egypt was one thing
- Getting _____ out of the Israelites was another

“It took one day to get the Hebrews out of Egypt; it took forty years to get Egypt out of the Hebrews.”

3. The Israelites weren’t _____ ready for the things that lie ahead (v. 18)

“²⁰The Israelites left Succoth and camped at Etham on the edge of the wilderness. ²¹The Lord went ahead of them. He guided them during the day with a pillar of cloud, and he provided light at night with a pillar of fire. This allowed them to travel by day or by night. ²²And the Lord did not remove the pillar of cloud or pillar of fire from its place in front of the people.” – EXODUS 13:20-22

- They needed to be assured of God’s _____
- They needed to believe in God’s _____
- They needed to experience God’s _____

GRACE IN UNCERTAINTY → THE PROMISE

But GOD assure us that He **HAS, IS, and WILL** continue to be at work accomplishing His purposes in us **as He protects us, prepares us, and provides for us in the battles we face**

“Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.” – DEUTERONOMY 31:6

“And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.” – PHILIPPIANS 1:6

*Scripture references are from the New Living Translation (NLT) of the Bible.