

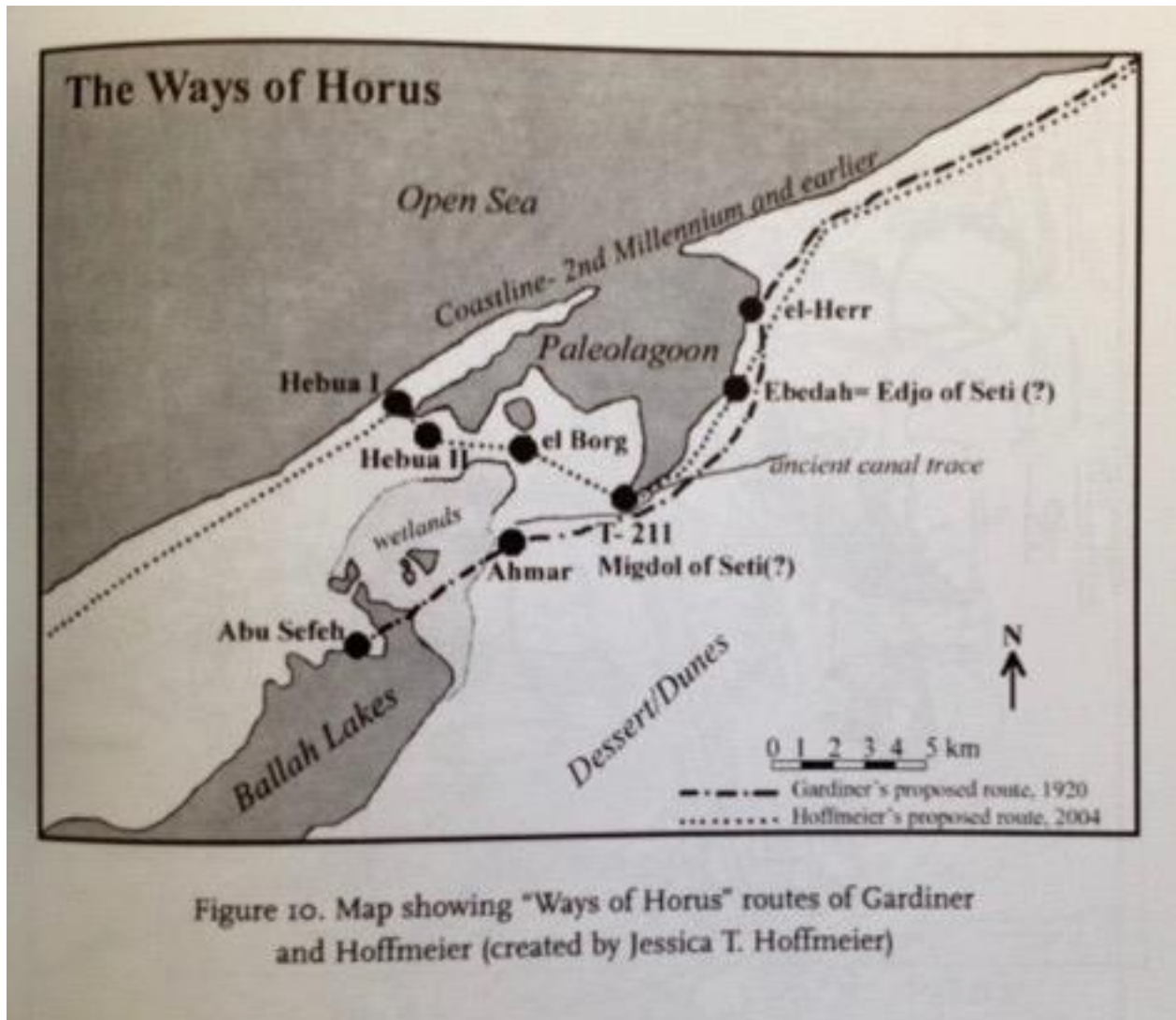
**Reformation Fellowship Notes • October 2, 2016**  
**Teacher: David Crabtree**  
**Handout #15**  
**Exodus 14:13 to 15:21**

**I. Introduction**

- A. Last week we left the Israelites pinned against the Red Sea by the Egyptian army.
  - 1. The Israelites cried out to God.
  - 2. They complained to Moses that he had just brought them out to the desert to die.
    - a) They said they would have been better off had they stayed in Egypt.

**II. Where is the Red Sea?**

- A. The term in Hebrew is *yam suph* (Sea of Reeds).
  - 1. This name appears several times in the OT.
    - a) Most in reference to this event,
    - b) But they do appear in reference to the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba.
  - 2. *Yam* is a term that means a large body of water (salt or fresh; ocean or lake).
  - 3. *Suph* means “reeds.”
    - a) Reeds grow only in fresh water.
- B. Some scholars think that the Red Sea of Exodus is the Gulf of Suez; others think it is the Gulf of Aqaba (Humphries).
  - 1. But the Gulf of Aqaba is too far to fit the narrative.
  - 2. The Gulf of Suez does not fit any of the best guesses with respect to the place names in the text.
- C. In order to fit the best guesses with respect to place names, it is hypothesized that *yam suph* can refer to one of the lakes on the edge of the Sinai.
  - 1. Some favor the Bitter Lakes.
  - 2. Hoffmeier and others think it is the Ballah Lakes.
    - a) I am going to proceed on the assumption that this hypothesis is correct.



### III. Exodus 14:13-14

#### A. The Israelites complained to Moses.

1. This is their pattern.
  - a) When they are distressed, they complain to Moses.
    - (1) Moses has demonstrated that he is God's representative.
    - (2) But he is the one they complain to.
      - (a) They don't complain directly to God.
2. Moses responds:
  - a) Don't be afraid.
  - b) Watch God provide salvation for you.
    - (1) These oppressors will be gone forever.
  - c) God will do the fighting.
    - (1) You won't have to lift a finger.

**IV. Exodus 14:15-20**

- A. “Why are you crying out to me?”
1. This is a strange question.
    - a) Isn’t this what God wants?
    - b) And why be cranky about it?
    - c) No indication that Moses (‘you’ is masculine singular) had cried out.
    - d) Sarna: “It is time for action, not for lengthy prayer.”
  2. My solution:
    - a) The people had cried out to the Lord in verse 10.
      - (1) In the context, this was accusatory (fear mixed with anger and indignation).
        - (a) Their comments were directed toward Moses, but it was mistrust of God.
      - b) God addresses Moses as the intermediary.
        - (1) His statement to Moses is meant for all the people.
      - c) God is condemning the faithlessness of the people.
        - (1) There are two ways “to cry out”:
          - (a) Accusatorily, distrustingly
          - (b) Submissive appeal
        - (2) The Israelites were crying out accusatorily.
- B. God reassures Moses that he will provide an escape.
1. “Tell the sons of Israel to go forward.”
    - a) Fear can be paralyzing.
    - b) Just keep going, don’t worry, things are in hand.
  2. This is easy.
    - a) Lift up your staff and divide the sea.
    - b) Israelites will go through on dry land.
    - c) God will harden the hearts of the Egyptians.
      - (1) They will go in after the Israelites.
      - (2) God will be honored—
        - (a) Through Pharaoh and his army.
      - (3) They will know that YHWH is God.
  3. God graciously grants the Israelites some respite in their frightening circumstances.
    - a) God’s angel and the pillar moved between Israelites and Egyptians.
      - (1) The two groups were completely separated all night.

**V. Exodus 14:21-25**

- A. When Moses lifted the staff, the wind began to blow.
1. It blew all night.
  2. It pushed back the sea.

- a) We are given a natural cause for this miracle.
- 3. Waters stood like a wall on both the right and the left.
- B. Israelites went through on dry ground.
- C. Egyptians follow them in.
  - 1. They were intent on catching the Israelites.
  - 2. God brought confusion.
    - a) Splits the water (violence) *baqa'*
      - (1) Like splitting fire wood
      - (2) Language similar to creation (Alter)
    - b) Water was meant to kill the Hebrews, but it is the means of their escape.
      - (1) Water is the death of the Egyptians.
    - c) Chariots go out of control.
      - (1) Egyptians rightly conclude that God is fighting for Israel.
      - (2) "Let us flee from Israel, for the Lord (YHWH) is fighting for them against the Egyptians."
        - (a) They recognize what is happening, but too late.

## VI. Exodus 14:26-31

- A. God instructed Moses to lift his staff again.
  - 1. This is God's way of destroying the Egyptian army.
  - 2. Comparison of fates
    - a) Fate of Egyptians
      - (1) Waters returned and swamped the Egyptians just as they were turning around.
      - (2) All were destroyed.
    - b) Fate of Israelites
      - (1) They go through on dry ground.
      - (2) Walls on both sides
        - (a) The sea serves as protection for the Israelites.
      - (3) Israelites were all saved.
        - (a) They saw the corpses of the Egyptians on the shore.
      - (4) They feared and trusted YHWH and Moses.
        - (a) Once again, this does not seem to be an incontrovertible faith.
        - (b) They will question the goodness of both YHWH and Moses many times in the future.

## VII. Exodus 15:1-21

- A. This song concludes the first section of Exodus.
  - 1. After this comes the narrative about the wandering in the wilderness.
  - 2. The author is stopping to reflect on the significance of what God has done.

- B. Famous passage
  - 1. It is known by various names.
    - a) Song of Moses (sometimes confused with Song of Moses in Deuteronomy)
    - b) Song of Miriam
    - c) Song of the Sea
  - 2. It is alluded to in other parts of the Bible.
    - a) Isaiah 51:9-10
    - b) Revelation 15:3
  - 3. It marks the end of the Exodus proper.
    - a) Narrative moves on to wilderness and Sinai.
- C. Older language
  - 1. I don't have the knowledge to assess this claim.
- D. The song is in the form of a poem of praise of greatness.
  - 1. The Egyptian equivalent is written in praise of the pharaoh who does superhuman things (Sarna, p.76).
  - 2. This song is focused on God alone.
- E. The song has three parts.
  - 1. God as victor over Pharaoh (verses 1-10)
  - 2. Incomparability of God (verses 11-13)
  - 3. Impact of this event on the peoples of the world (verses 14-end)
- F. In the time of the second temple, this *shirah* was sung every Sabbath during the afternoon offering.
  - 1. It was also read on the seventh day of Passover.
- G. It is generally thought that this was sung antiphonally.
  - 1. Men and women sang different parts?
  - 2. We will see why people think this at the end of the chapter.

### VIII. Exodus 15:1-10

- A. Who wrote this song?
  - 1. "I will sing."
    - a) Sarna says, "The first person formulation can refer only to Moses."
- B. The song appears to be the Israelites' thank you to YHWH.
  - 1. It alternates between two themes.

- a) God is amazing and worthy of our praise.
- b) God demonstrated his power by defeating the enemy.

C. What God did

1. God threw Pharaoh's chariots, his army, and his best officers into the sea.
2. They are covered by the deep.
  - a) "The deep" suggests the open sea.
    - (1) This could have implications for the location of the Reed Sea.
    - (2) It could be a poetic tie to mythological accounts.
3. God's power is great and triumphant.
  - a) He defeats all those who are against him.
4. God controls the elements.
  - a) Even the deeps do as he says.
5. God's enemy considers himself an automatic victor.
  - a) Pharaoh was confident of victory.
  - b) But God destroyed him.
    - (1) With God's breath his enemy was destroyed by the sea.

D. God deserves the highest praise for destroying the Egyptians.

1. God is the force acting on my behalf.
2. God is the object of my praise.
3. God became my savior.
  - a) God as savior is a big theme of Exodus.
  - b) God responded when the Israelites cried out (Exodus 2:23).
    - (1) He had already set things in motion to help them.
  - c) Verse 2 is repeated in Isaiah 12:2 and Psalms 118:14.
4. YHWH has claim to Israel's sole allegiance.
  - a) The God of their fathers
5. YHWH is a warrior.
  - a) This depicts God in combat against forces of oppression.
    - (1) This motif is used elsewhere, especially Revelation.

**IX. Exodus 15:11-13**

A. God is incomparable.

1. Incomparably holy
2. Incomparably awesome
3. Incomparably wonder working
4. The earth swallowed his enemies for him.
5. His people were redeemed—

- a) In his faithful commitment to them.
- 6. His people were led to his holy habitation.
  - a) Probably Mt. Sinai
    - (1) Psalm 78:54 says, “He brought them to his holy realm, the mountain His right hand had acquired.”
    - (2) In Exodus 3:12, God told Moses that after the Exodus the people would worship God at the mount in the wilderness.

## X. Exodus 15:14-18

- A. This section talks about the impact of this event on the peoples of Canaan.
  - 1. It starts with the most formidable nation,
  - 2. Then presents each nation in the order the Israelites encountered them.
    - a) Ammonites are strangely omitted (Sarna, p.81).
- B. All the inhabitants of Canaan have heard what happened in Egypt, and they are afraid.
  - 1. They are frozen in fear.
  - 2. Until the Israelites come
    - a) *knh* can mean “to buy”
      - (1) If this is the meaning here, it matches verse 13.
    - b) *knh* can mean “to create.”
      - (1) Deuteronomy 32:6 says that God created Israel.
- C. God is going to place his people, Israel, in the mountain of his inheritance.
  - 1. This appears to be Sinai, but the people won’t be planted there.
  - 2. It could be the temple on Zion, but God did not make this.
  - 3. It must ultimately refer to the heavenly kingdom—
    - a) Where YHWH will reign forever and ever.

## XI. Exodus 15:19-21

- A. Context in which this song was composed
  - 1. A brief restatement of what happened when God saved the people of Israel from the approaching army
- B. How it was performed
  - 1. Miriam took timbrels and sang in response and danced.

## XII. Conclusion

- A. God can do the impossible.
  - 1. The Israelites were trapped in an impossible situation.
    - a) Pharaoh was the most powerful man in the world.
    - b) The Israelites were not prepared to defend themselves.
      - (1) They could not flee.

- c) But God miraculously saved them.
  - (1) It was but a little demonstration of his power.
- 2. This is proof that God can save his people.
  - a) God has promised that he will bring ultimate salvation to his people.
  - b) He can do it.
- B. Dare we celebrate?
  - 1. The Israelites had a huge celebration.
  - 2. Three days later they have no water.
  - 3. I find little to celebrate.
    - a) Victories are always followed by something to take the shine away.
    - b) That doesn't mean we can't celebrate,
      - (1) But the celebrations are always of temporary victories.
    - c) Only in the life to come can there be a celebration of an eternal victory.