

Bible Basics 2014

Session 9

structure of this talk

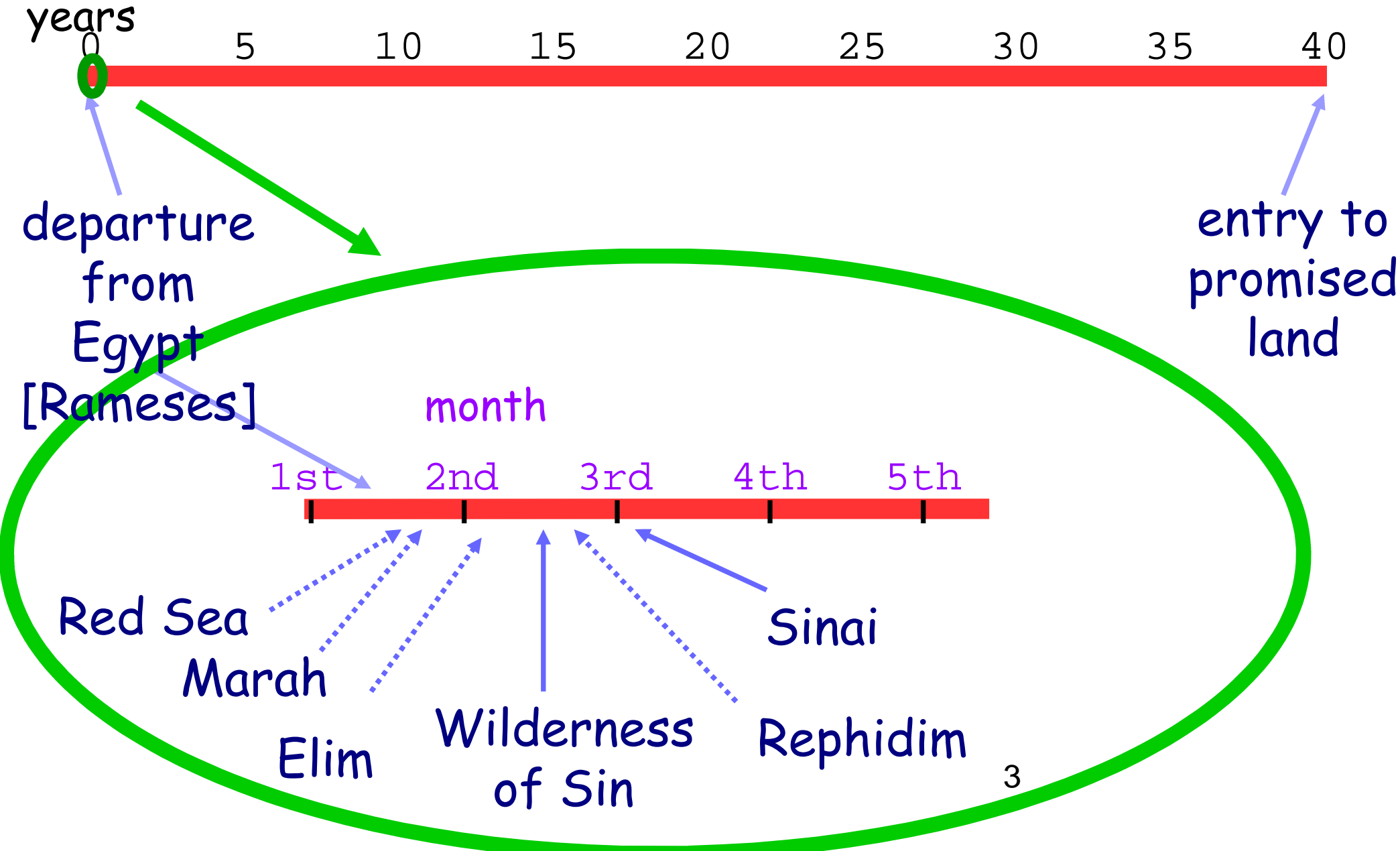
preliminaries & context

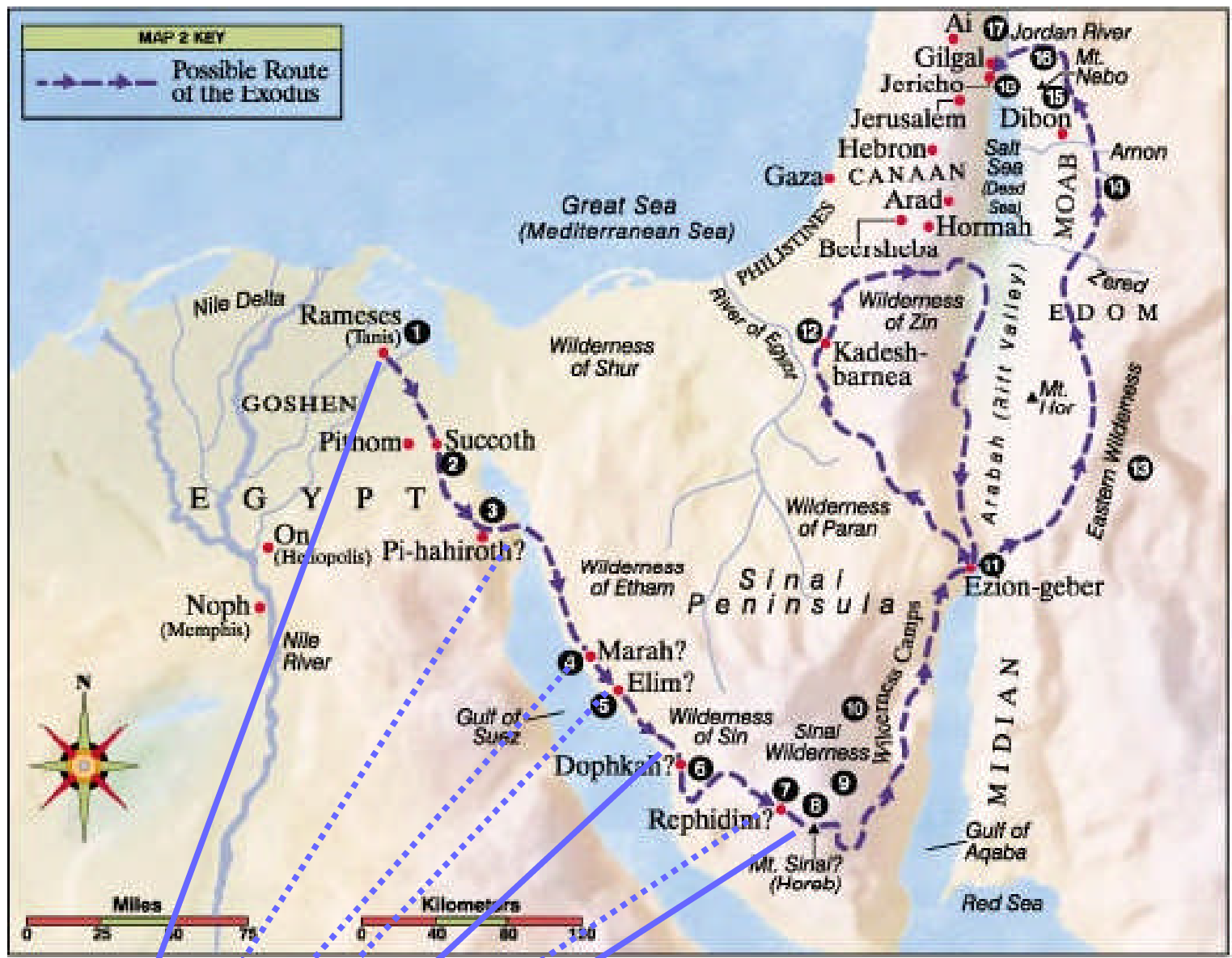
what happened at Rephidim

what the event pictures

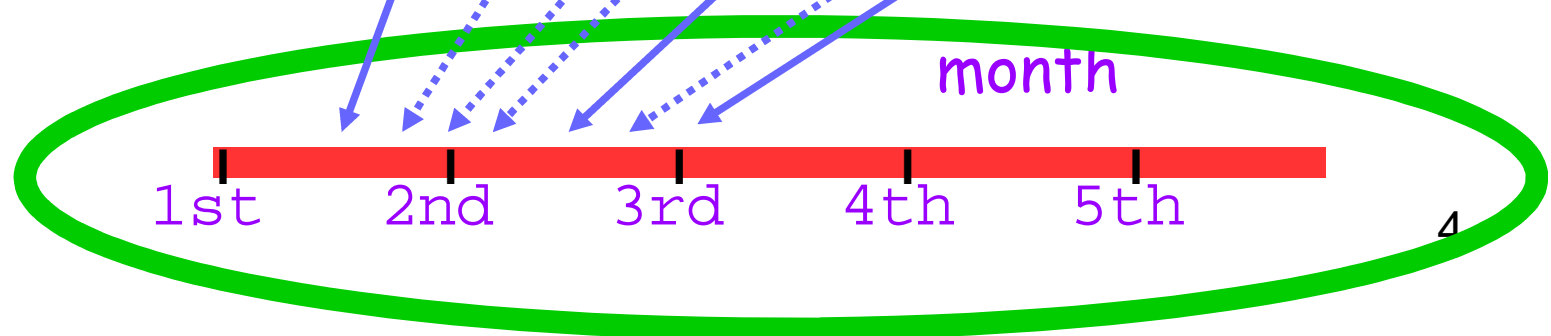
a later event

timeline





possible route



some recent events that they had witnessed

the plagues in Egypt

the death of the firstborn of those who didn't avail
themselves of God's protection

safety for those who did avail themselves of God's
protection

all the people leaving Egypt together

crossing the Red Sea on dry land, Pharaoh's army drowned

undrinkable bitter water made sweet at Marah

refreshment at Elim

grumbling in the Desert of Sin re food - God provided quails
& manna

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preliminaries & context

what happened at Rephidim

a good start - obedience

between 1 & 2 months after leaving Egypt...

[Exodus 17:1]

Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped in Rephidim ...

- obedient

a crisis

[Exodus 17:1]

... but there was no water for the people to drink.

how had they reacted to previous crises?

-At the Red Sea [Ex 14]

They said to Moses,
"Because there were no
graves in Egypt, have you
taken us away to die in
the wilderness? Why have
you so dealt with us, to
bring us up out of Egypt?
..."

-At Marah [Ex 15]

And the people complained
against Moses, saying, "What
shall we drink?"

-In Wilderness of Sin [Ex 16]

Then the whole congregation
of the children of Israel
complained against Moses and
Aaron in the wilderness.

a crisis

... and what had happened in these previous crises?

-At the Red Sea [Ex 14]

The Lord, through Moses, parted the waters so that the Israelites passed through on dry land. The Egyptians when they tried to do so were drowned as the waters returned.

-At Marah [Ex 15]

The Lord commanded Moses to throw a tree in the water - & it was made sweet & drinkable.

-In Wilderness of Sin [Ex 16]

The Lord provided quails & manna for them to eat.

- so they remembered how the Lord God had miraculously solved previous very recent crises?
- and cried to Him in faith?

reaction to the crisis

[Exodus 17:2]

Therefore the people contended with Moses,
and said, "Give us water, that we may drink."

- refused to be influenced by all that the Lord had done for them
- contended
- ordered Moses, rather than ask him

tempting/testing the Lord

[Exodus 17:2]

So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord?"

- tempting the Lord

the word translated 'tempt' also means 'test' or 'prove'

we tempt or test the Lord when we don't trust Him & act in that way

blaming Moses

[Exodus 17:3]

And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

- weren't willing to acknowledge that it was God who brought them out of Egypt
- rather considered Moses as acting autonomously & with evil intent

stoning Moses

[Exodus 17:4]

So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying,
“What shall I do with this people? They
are almost ready to stone me!”

- ready to murder the man who, on God's instructions, led them out of slavery & interceded with God for them
- Moses does what is best: he speaks to God about it

'the rod with which you struck the river'

[Exodus 17:5]

And the Lord said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go ..."

- rod used to turn the water of River Nile to blood [Ex 7]: the first of the 10 plagues brought on Egypt
- rod used to part waters of Red Sea so that the Israelites could pass safely through
- rod used to return waters of Red Sea to drown the Egyptian pursuers

'strike the rock'

[Exodus 17:6]

And the Lord said to Moses, " ... Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink."

- God's presence on the rock; God was there
- the rock was to be struck with Moses' rod
- a miracle promised
- a flow of water
- refreshment for the people

and God provided

[Exodus 17:6]

And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

- of course, obedience to God essential
- God provided
- marvellous grace yet again to a rebellious people

[Exodus 17:7] Massah & Meribah

So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

- these names emphasise 2 different sorts of sins of the people as noted earlier by Moses
- Massah means testing
- Meribah means strife, contention, quarrelling
- the names remain as a permanent memorial to the contentious & rebellious attitude of God's people

[Exodus 17:2]

Why do you contend with me?

Why do you tempt the Lord?

'is the Lord among us?'

[Exodus 17:7]

... they tempted the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

- God had promised to be with them
- He was showing that He was with them by fire & cloud

[Exodus 13:21,22: And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.]

- a permanent visual reminder of His presence - which they ignored

some lessons for us

God hates strife, contention & quarrelling among His people

when in difficulty always remember what God has done for you in the past

God has promised to be with us always; we must trust Him

God graciously provides for all our needs

God was not pleased with them: sins damage our day-to-day relationship with Him & He may not be 'with us' in our activities

structure of this talk

preliminaries & context

what happened at Rephidim

what the event pictures

the Rock

the New Testament interpretation

[1 Corinthians 10:1-5]

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

- the Rock pictures Christ

rock struck by the rod

- the rock was smitten by Moses' rod - the rod that was used at the Red Sea to bring judgment on the Egyptians & salvation to the Israelites
- Christ was smitten by the rod of God's judgment

[Isaiah 53:4,10]

We esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ...

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief.

- the smiting speaks of Calvary
- God judged Christ

for us

Christ suffered, smitten by God, for us

[Isaiah 53:4-6]

We esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God,
and afflicted.

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He
was bruised for our iniquities; the
chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and
by His stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have
turned, every one, to his own way; and the
Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

rock struck by the rod and water flowed out

[Exodus 17:6]

“... you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.”

- Christ suffered, smitten by God, for us
- because Christ bore the judgment due to us, God's grace can now flow out for us bringing life, refreshment & spiritual blessing
- the Lord Jesus tells us what the flow of water symbolises

rivers of living water

[John 7:37-39]

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

- the flowing of the water after the rock is struck pictures the possession of the Holy Spirit given after the death, resurrection & glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ

'I will send Him to you'

the Lord Jesus said:

[John 16:7]

"If I do not go away, the Helper [or Comforter] will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."

- the Holy Spirit is the Helper or Comforter
- He could only come if the Lord Jesus went away
- the Lord Jesus would send Him

'the water I shall give'

the Lord Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at Sychar's Well:

[John 4:14]

"Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

- 'I shall give': the gift of Christ to the believer
- 'in him': within the believer's being
- 'a fountain of water springing up': the Holy Spirit's constant presence with a never-ending supply of His activity & power
- 'will never thirst': He gives lasting satisfaction²⁷

'... that followed them'

[1 Corinthians 10:4]

They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

- provision for their complete journey
- God provides for our complete journey
- we always have Christ's presence
- we always have the Holy Spirit

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what the event pictures

a later event

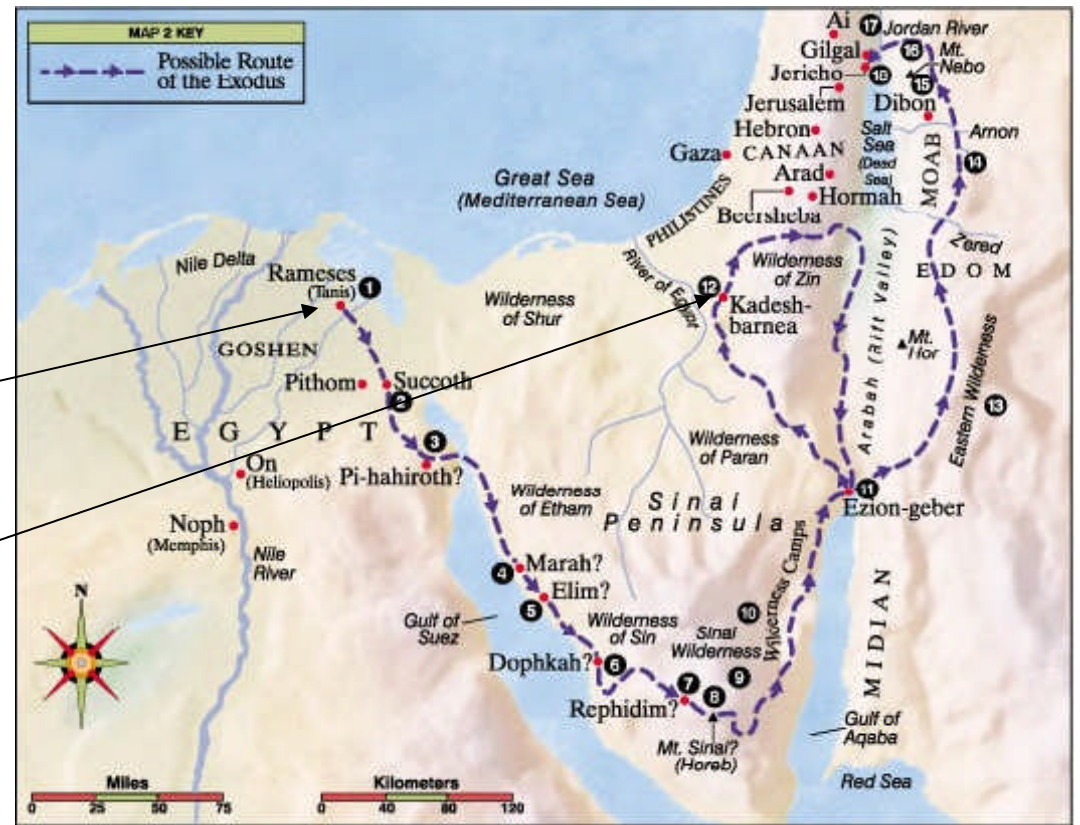
Kadesh-Barnea

the Israelites' journey
through the wilderness

from Egypt

to Kadesh-Barnea

approx 1½ years



years

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40

departure
from
Egypt

at Kadesh-Barnea

entry to
promised
land

30

at Kadesh-Barnea

from Kadesh-Barnea Moses sent out the spies to the
Promised Land

the spies reported a land flowing with milk & honey
... but also with fortified cities & giants

the people rebelled & refused to go into the land

God was angry

[Numbers 14:29-31]

The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised.

the Israelites' journey through the wilderness
may be split into 3 distinct sections

the journey

from Egypt

to Kadesh-Barnea

approx $1\frac{1}{2}$ years

from Kadesh-Barnea

to Kadesh-Barnea

approx 38 years

from Kadesh-Barnea

to Promised Land

a few months

years

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40

departure
from
Egypt

at Kadesh-Barnea

entry to
promised
land

32



at Kadesh-Barnea again

going on 39 years from the incident at Rephidim &
38 years from their rebellion at Kadesh-Barnea

this is a different generation of Israelites

almost all the adults of the previous generation had
died in the wilderness as promised by the Lord

at Kadesh-Barnea again

[Numbers 20:2-13]

There was no water

The people contended with
Moses

Moses & Aaron fell on
their faces at the entrance
to the tabernacle

The glory of the Lord
appeared to them

The Lord told Moses to
take Aaron's rod & speak
to the rock - the rock
would yield water

Moses took the rod

Moses & Aaron called the
people & Moses said:

"Hear now, you rebels!

Must we bring water for
you out of this rock?"

Moses struck the rock
twice with his rod

Water flowed out

Meribah

don't get confused ... this was also called
Meribah [strife, contention]

[Numbers 20:13]

This was the water of Meribah, because the
children of Israel contended with the Lord.

at Kadesh-Barnea

[Numbers 20:12]

Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron,
“Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in
the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore
you shall not bring this assembly into the land
which I have given them.”

- this was disobedience by Moses

but there were more issues than that, including:

- the rod to be seen was Aaron's rod (the rod of priesthood), not Moses' rod (the rod of judgment)
- striking this rock damages the fundamental picture that God gives us

Moses was told to take Aaron's rod & speak to the rock [presumably with Aaron's rod in his hand] **the**
Instead he struck the rock using his own rod **rods**

Moses' rod was the rod used when God judged Pharaoh & the Egyptian army at the Red Sea (Ex 14)

Moses' rod was the rod used by Moses to strike the rock at Rephidim

the rod of judgment

Aaron's rod was the rod that blossomed & produced fruit after Korah had rebelled & tried to claim the priesthood for himself (Num 16,17)

Aaron's rod was the rod of priesthood- a picture of God's grace which brings fruit out of death

³⁷
the rod of priestly grace

striking this rock was wrong
because Christ died once for all

[Hebrews 7:27]

who [Christ, our High Priest] does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

[Hebrews 9:26]

Now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

[Hebrews 10:10]

By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ³⁸ once for all.

contrasting pictures

Rephidim [Ex 17]

Christ was smitten once

God judged Christ

the work of redemption was accomplished - once, for all time

Kadesh-Barnea [Num 20]

that Moses wasn't to take his rod (the rod of judgment) & smite the rock shows that Christ does not need to be smitten again

that Moses was to take Aaron's rod (the rod of priesthood) reminds us of the truth that our Saviour is now in the presence of God serving as our Great High Priest

comments from other scriptures

Psalm 105:40-42 - The Lord provided because He remembered His promise

Psalm 78:15,16,20 - The Lord provided, yet they rebelled

Deut 9:22 - They provoked the Lord to wrath

Deut 6:16 - Don't tempt/test the Lord

Psalm 95:8 - Don't harden your hearts when you hear Him

Psalm 81:7 - The Lord tested them

Psalm 114:7,8 - A reason for trembling before God

Isaiah 48:20,21 - The Lord redeems & leads His people

a brief summary: the incident at Rephidim

the children of Israel:

- didn't trust God when in crisis
- ignored all that He had done for them in recent crises
- tested the Lord
- contended with Moses, God's chosen leader
- blamed Moses & wanted to kill him

the Lord God:

- in His grace supplied their needs then & throughout the journey

a brief summary: what the event pictures

'the rock was Christ'
struck by Moses' rod: the smiting
of Christ at Calvary by God
God judged Christ
because Christ bore the judgment
due to us, God's grace can now
flow out for us bringing life
the flow of water symbolises the
Holy Spirit
the Holy Spirit is freely given in
God's grace to all who will 'drink'

John 7:38,39

**"He who believes
in Me, as the
Scripture has
said, out of his
heart will flow
rivers of living
water." But this
He spoke
concerning the
Spirit.**