

# “THE LONG WAY AROUND”

**Text:** Exodus 13:17

**Subject:** “*God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near.*”

- Ever feel that God is taking you the “**long way around**” to get you where you are going?
- Ever find yourself between a rock and a hard place (needing the peace of God?)
- Ever find it difficult to just “**stand still**” because of all that is going on around you?

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Israel has just gathered at a place called Succoth on their way to Etham. (13:20)
2. Succoth was located on the well-traveled route to Canaan.
3. But, somewhere between Succoth and Etham, God took over the leadership of Israel (v. 21)
  - a. In the day time God led by a pillar of a cloud.
  - b. In the nighttime God led by a pillar of fire to give them light.

**(And in v. 13:17 God does something strange to Israel)**

*“God led them not through the way of the Philistines, although that was near.”*

**(In other words)**

1. God leads Israel on a different route than they had intended to go.
2. Israel intended to go northeast on a busy well-traveled road, the shortest route.
3. But instead, God leads them southeast into the wilderness.

**(Notice v. 17 again)**

*“And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near.”*

**(Three Wisdom Discoveries)**

### **I. God Has A Good Plan For You**

**Question:** Why did God lead Israel south into the wilderness (instead of the easy and more direct route)?

**Question:** Why did God lead His people by way of the long and winding road?

**Question:** Why did God take the less convenient path?

**(Two reasons only)**

1. **Because God wanted to be honored.** (Ch. 14:4)

*“And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart that he shall follow after them, and I will be honored upon Pharaoh and upon all his host, that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord.”*

**Fact:** God knew what Pharaoh was thinking. (v.3)

*“For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, they are entangled in the land; the wilderness hath shut them in.”*

- The enemy thought he could overtake Israel.
- Pharaoh thought he had Israel hemmed in.

**(Notice Pharaoh’s words in verse 3)**

- *“They are entangled in the land.” (And) “The wilderness hath shut them in.”*

**Question:** Have you ever been there?

**Fact:** Sometimes you may find yourself **“entangled in the Land”**.

1. In a situation that you cannot quickly change.
2. In a season that is not easy to endure.
3. In a desert that you’ve never traveled through before.

**Fact:** Sometimes you’ll find yourself (like Israel)

**“The wilderness has shut them in.”**

1. You feel “hemmed in”, “fenced in”, “on hold”.
2. You feel surrounded by something “unpleasant”.

**Question:** Why does God allow us to travel this **“less convenient”** path?

**Answer:** 1. So that God will be **honored** in your life! (v. 4)

2. So that God will be **trusted in your heart**.

*(13:17) I’m going to take my people the long way around.”*

(Not the near route through the land of the Philistines.)

**(How come? Why the long way?)**

*(v. 17) “Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.”*

**Question:** Why did God lead Israel by way of the long and winding road, not the shortest route?

**Answer:** (v. 17) He knew what Israel didn’t know.

1. He knew that the Philistines were on the shortcut route (Israel didn’t know this).
2. He knew Israel would be overwhelmed if they got into war with the Philistines.
3. He knew that Israel would get discouraged just after leaving Egypt.
4. He knew that Israel would turn around and want to go back to Egypt .
5. He didn’t want to give them more than they could bear.

**(And the Holy Spirit right here)**

Makes an amazing discovery to your heart and mine! (What is it?)

◆ That in God’s plan, those wilderness **detours**, those unplanned **delays**, those inconvenient **setbacks**, those uncomfortable **seasons**, those unscheduled **interruptions**, and those painful **pit-stops** along the way are really...

- God’s **wisdom** (because He knows things we do not know).
- God’s **protection** (from things we cannot see what would harm us).
- God’s **leading** (in the direction He wants us to go).
- God’s **compassion** (to prove His care for us as we travel through them).
- God’s **opportunity** (to break every power of darkness that hinders your life today).
- I’m not saying God initiates and ordains everything that touches you, things outside of your control,
- But he **will be honored** and He **can be trusted** regardless of where you are!

**(Notice)**

- In Exodus 6:6 God said to Israel: *“I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage.”*

- In Exodus 6:8 God said to Israel: “I will bring you into the Promised Land.”
  1. I’ve brought you out of the slavery of sin.” (**Egypt**)
  2. I’ll bring you into your ultimate destination.” (**Canaan**)

**(But in between)**

Bringing you out – and taking you in, remember the “long way around”.

**1. God Wants To Be “Honored” In Your Life:**

- A. As He breaks the enemies power to keep you entangled in sin and hemmed-in in Egypt
- B. God is honored as he weans us away from self dependence to God dependence.

*“My soul is even as a weaned child.” (Psalm 131:2)*

**Ask:** Have you had any weaning experiences lately?

**Ask:** Are you being weaned, pruned and refined?

**2. God Wants To Be “Trusted” In Your Heart:**

When He maps out a path that is not the easiest, not real convenient, and has some detours along the way.

**Fact:** We all have **Egypt**s in life:

(Things of the world the Lord wants to wean us away from.)

**Fact:** We all have **Pharaoh**s in life:

(People the devil wants to use to discourage us)

**Fact:** We all have **ETHAMS** (detours) in life:

(Seasons when it seems like it’s the “long way” around an unmapped road).

A wilderness, a desert, a bumpy road.

**(But God has a plan)**

- He knows what He is doing in you!
- He knows how much you can handle!
- He knows what is best for you.

**II. God has Great Peace For You**

**Fact:** In Exodus 14:5, Pharaoh re-evaluates his release of the Israelites (Pharaoh’s slaves)

**Fact:** In v. 6, he assembles his army

**Fact:** In v. 7, he prepares 600 chosen chariots.

**Fact:** In v. 8, he pursues the people of God.

**Fact:** In v. 9, Pharaoh’s army overtakes the Israelites in Baalzephon

**(In other words)**

**Hemmed in on all four sides**

1. On one side is the mountain range of Baalzephon (impossible to cross over).
2. On the other side were the vast sand dunes (where no traveler could survive).
3. Before Israel is the deep Red Sea.
4. Behind Israel is an enemy of 200,000 footmen.

**(And you think you have problems)**

**Question:** How does Israel respond to the unexpected?

**Answer:** Three ways that are corrected by God. (Ch. 14)

**Reaction: #1 Fear** (v. 10) *“And they were sore afraid.”*

**Reaction: #2 Blame** (v. 11) *“Moses, you led us out here in the wilderness, it’s your fault.”*

**Reaction: #3 Despair** (v. 12) *“It would have been better to serve the Egyptians than to die out here.”*

**(What’s happening here?)**

1. Israel panics and loses focus on God!
2. Israel fails to see from God’s point of view!
3. Israel needs a word from the Lord!

**Question:** Why does God allow this to Israel, and record it in our Bibles?

**Answer:** I Corinthians 10:11: *“Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition.”*

**(In other words)**

1. The experiences of Israel are typical of our experiences.
2. What Israel went through, we go through.
3. So, the more we learn about Israel, the more we will learn how to handle our seasons (when in between a rock and a hard place.)

**Question:** What’s the word of the Lord to Israel, you and me?

**Answer:** It’s a three-fold admonition in Exodus 14:13

**1. “Fear Not”**

Fear defined is: anxiety over a real or possible danger or pain.

A. **God told Abraham:** *“Fear not, I am thy shield and exceeding great reward.”*  
(Genesis 15:1)

B. **God told Joshua:** *“Fear not, neither be thou dismayed.”* (Joshua 8:1)

C. **God told Gideon:** *“Fear not, for thou shalt not die.”* (Judges 6:23)

D. **God told Solomon:** *“Fear not, for God will be with you and will not fail thee.”*  
(I Chron 28:20)

E. **Jesus tells you:** *“Fear not little flock, for it is your father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”* (Luke 12:32)

**2. “Stand Still”**

**Fact:** In v. 15 God said *“Go forward!”*

**Fact:** In v. 13, God says *“Stand still!”*

**Question:** The command to **“stand still”** is a military term. It means:

- To stand by until you receive further orders from the Lord.
- Don’t act until God reveals to you what to do.
- Stand firm and believe for victory as you move ahead.

**3. “See The Salvation Of The Lord”**

(Or, instead of fret, stew or worry; concentrate on God, not your circumstances, and see what God will do.)

**Question:** Are you losing perspective?

**Question:** Is God too small in your eyes?

**Question:** Is your focus only on the immediate, not God’s long range intention for you?

**Question:** Are you trying to change something or someone that is out of your control?

**(I discover something here)**

That when a believer fails to “stand still” and hear from God, they begin to fear, blame, despair, murmur, complain and react from the flesh, not the spirit.

**III. God Has Wonderful Power For You**

**Question:** What happens when you fear not, **stand still** and believe God will be God?

1. **“There was “Interference”** (v. 19, 20)
  - a. The angel which went before Israel changed positions (and removed behind Israel).
  - b. The pillar of the cloud which went before Israel changed positions (removed behind Israel) and both stood between Israel and the enemy.

**(Why?) To remind us of something about the Lord.**

- That God is between you and your circumstances.
- That God is over your circumstances.
- That God is very present in adverse circumstances.

2. **There was “Intervention”** (v. 21-31)
  - a. The Lord caused the Red Sea to open.
  - b. The Lord dried out the ground to walk on.
  - c. The Lord troubled the Egyptians. (v. 24)
  - d. The Lord took off the chariot wheels. (v. 25)
  - e. The Lord overthrew the enemy in the sea. (v. 27)
  - f. The Lord won a total and complete victory. (v. 28)
  - g. The Lord saved Israel and Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done. (v 30, 31)

**(What’s the big deal?) The big deal is...**

- As God delivered Israel and redeemed them from Egypt when blood was applied to the doorposts,
- So we have been redeemed from Satan’s power that enslaved us to sin.

**(In other words)**

(Israel delivered from Egypt is a type or a shadow.)

- God overthrew Egypt and broke its power once and for all.
- So Jesus has broken Satan’s power to enslave you to any sin (once and for all).

**Conclusion**

(What I am saying)

1. God has a **plan** so don’t resent the long way around journeys.
2. God has a **peace**, so fear not, stand still and see what God will do.
3. God has a **power**, so come and be saved and delivered from every habit, sin and smell of Egypt by the power of Jesus’ name.
  - Total emancipation is God’s plan for you.
  - Total freedom from sin’s power is God’s will for you.

(And Never Forget This)

♦ **“No one is so good that they don’t need the grace of God, and no one is so bad that they can’t receive the grace of God.” (REPEAT)**

Bill Kirk