

CORE STUDY #6

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Passage: Exodus 12:33-41, 13:17-22

Themes: God's promises fulfilled, provision, guidance, faith

Background and Summary: Following the death of all the firstborn Egyptian sons, the Israelites are finally given permission to leave Egypt. They quickly gather all that they possess, including articles of silver and gold and clothing from the Egyptians. The traveling Israelites must have been an amazing site to see. It is thought that over 2 million people left Egypt! Israel's deliverance occurs exactly 430 years after Israel entered Egypt. God leads the people into the wilderness by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Leader's Preparation: Using your '*UCM Leader's Guide*' (pp. 22-23 or pp. 27-33), ask some observation questions.

- Ask the who, why, what, where questions if appropriate.
- What type of literature is it?
- What is going on in these verses?
- Key words or phrases: Are there any words, history or cultural issues that you don't understand but may be important to the overall understanding of the passage?

Introductory Question: If you were planning to go on a long hike, before leaving, what items would you pack and what sort of information would you want to have?

Discussion Questions (selection to choose from):

1. Why do you think God allows the Israelites to plunder the Egyptians (12:35,36)? After discussing, read Exodus 3:21-22 and Genesis 15:14.

- *God is teaching the Egyptians and Israelites that He is the Lord.*
- *God made sure that the Israelites hard-earned wages are paid and that the Egyptians provide for their journey.*

2. Who are the "other people" / "mixed multitude" that leave with the Israelites and why (12:38)? What connection could this have to Christian salvation? Read Romans 1:16

- *They could be slaves, people in the lowest grades of society, partly natives and partly foreigners, or those who were willing to leave their country that was damaged by the plagues. Others possibly left out of curiosity or out of love to the Israelites and their religion.*

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- *Right from the beginning of God's saving act, there are those among the Israelites who were not Israelites. The Exodus was available to anyone who would repent and come to God. This is similar to the salvation of the Gentiles in the New Testament.*

3. The Israelites are not well prepared for the journey ahead (12:39). What is God asking of them?

- *God wants the Israelites to trust Him and depend on Him.*

4. Why does God choose to lead Israel from Egypt through the wilderness, rather than by the shorter journey through the land of the Philistines (13:17-18)? What does this say about God's guidance in our lives?

- *The Philistines are powerful and the Israelites are not prepared for war.*
- *It is God's plan that the Egyptians be drowned in the Red sea.*
- *The Israelites are to be humbled and proved through the difficulties of the wilderness.*
- *God's way is the right way, though at times it seems odd.*

5. God leads Israel out of Egypt (13:21-22). What does this say about God's character in times that we feel lost or abandoned?

To know where to go, all the people had to do was to follow the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire. When we find ourselves "in the wilderness" God will not abandon us, but will take care to lead us through it.

6. Obviously God is not guiding us today in the same physical way that he guided the Israelites. Seen any pillars of cloud and fire recently? So how does God guide us today? Read Acts 20:22 and John 8:12

God guides us today by his Spirit that lives in all who confess in Jesus. In other words, if you abide in Christ, you have received the Holy Spirit, and He is guiding you. It is up to you to learn how to listen and be in tune with His leading.

Response Question: Take time for each person to share a time in their life when they felt God's guidance. In what ways did God lead you?