

Come Follow Me

Exodus 14-18



2.5 Million? (Ex. 12.37 & 14.1-3)



The Logistics of events in Ex. 14.1-3, 20-24 and the problem with literal numbers

It's pretty tough to walk close together over rough terrain, so the real column length would more likely be about 100 miles long. This kind of group and sheer mass of people presents specific challenges that are unique to this text. [Exodus 14:1-3](#) describes these people circling back to face their enemies (Ex. 14.1-3). How could such a large group of 2-3 *million people* turn around in such a small area?



"Thousand" אֶלֶף Exodus 12.37

Putting this to a literal count of 2.5 million people, taking אֶלֶף to literally mean 1,000 can make this difficult. The Hebrew word *'elep*, translated as “thousand,” can mean other things. *Eleph* can mean 1,000 or it can mean a company, or a family, or leader. Kitchen writes, “It is plain that in other passages in the Hebrew Bible there are clear examples where *elep* makes no sense if translated “thousand” but good sense if rendered otherwise as “leader” or the like. Kitchen puts Israel’s numbers at around 20K. See: Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, p. 264.



The Egyptians give chase –
Ex. 14.5-9

He “went out with high hand” –
Ex. 14.8, (בְּיָד רָמָה) literally
“with upraised hand,” a
metaphor probably drawn from
the depiction of Ancient Near
Eastern gods who brandished
weapons with upraised hands.

The Israelite
reaction and
Moses'
response – Ex.
14.10-14



Exodus 14.11-14



Dry Ground – Exodus 14.16

- וַיֵּבֹאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם בַּיַּבֵּשָׁה – “And the children of Israel will go in the midst of the sea upon dry ground.” The noun dry ground, *yabāšâ* יַבֵּשָׁה, is the same Hebrew term that is used in the flood and creation stories of the Priestly author (Gen. 1.9,10; 8.14). The term used for “dry ground” that the Yahwist (J) is using in this Exodus narrative is *hārābâ* חָרְבָה, the same word that is used in the J account of the flood narrative. See Exodus 14.12, and Genesis 7.22. (Friedman, *Sources*, p. 143.)



The cloud was
placed between
the Egyptians
and Israel –

Ex. 14.20



The Exodus night crossing



It was a night crossing – Ex. 14.24, 27. Compare to John 6.15-21. Jesus is inviting us to the “New Exodus,” or the crossing over from the world into a way of life with him.



Exodus 15.1-22: The Song of the Sea

The Drama: What Happened When?

Days 1, 2, and 3 were devoted to the beginning acts of the drama: Pre-earth, missions, covenants, the Creation, The King's Combat with Chaos and Death, etc.

During days 4, 5, and 6, while the king remained in the world of the dead, the drama focused on the life and Atonement of the Savior; then on his mission among the dead, and finally on his resurrection.

Day 7, Jehovah (represented by the Ark of the Covenant) and the rescued king, emerged from the Underworld, and joined by the people in a grand procession around the city, then into Solomon's Temple to celebrate the crowning victory of the drama.

Day 8, the festival concluded with a day of sacrificing, feasting, rejoicing, and celebration, representing the fulfillment of Jehovah's covenants and his millennial reign. (Baker & Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend?* P. 300)



Terracotta figurine depicting a woman playing a hand- drum. The pillar base is 14.8 cm. high and 8 cm. in diameter at the bottom, and the total height is 21.8 cm. This unprovenanced artifact probably dates to the eighth-seventh century BCE. Courtesy of the Semitic Museum, Harvard University (Photograph by Carl Andrews).



Drawing of a terracotta figurine of a woman playing a hand-drum; from Shiqmona (near Haifa), probably ninth-eighth centuries B.C.E.

Further reading: TheTorah.com: Prof. Carol Meyers, *Miriam's Song of the Sea: A Women's Victory Performance*. <https://www.thetorah.com/article/miriams-song-of-the-sea-a-womens-victory-performance> Accessed 11.01.2020

Women in the Drama

The scriptures focus on the role men played in the ceremonies, but in her study of “Women in Ancient Israel,” Grace Emmerson insisted that women also played a vital role. She wrote:

It is commonplace to remark that male members only of the community were required to attend the three major annual festivals (Exod. 23.17; Deut. 16.16). But difference of obligation does not necessarily imply inequality, and in this case probably arose from practical considerations attendant on the birth and care of children. Certainly Deuteronomy makes it clear that women were present at the festivals, sharing in the rejoicing (Deut. 12.12), and participating in the sacrifices (Deut. 12.18). The feasts of weeks and booths are specifically mentioned (Deut. 16.10f., 13f.).

Women in the Drama (cont.)

This may well represent an advance on **earlier law in the direction of equality**, a feature which seems to be characteristic of Deuteronomy. This book presents women as participants in the covenant ceremony (Deut. 29.10-13), and consequently under full obligation to observe Yahweh's law (Deut. 31.12). Equally with men they could be held guilty of transgressing the covenant, for which the penalty was death (Deut. 17.2-5). The evidence suggests that it was deuteronomic law which first explicitly brought them within the covenant. **The view that women are fully accountable before Yahweh continues in the postexilic period** (2 Chron. 15f.; Neh. 8.2). ...

Though the examples are few, there are several instances in the Old Testament of women in encounter with God.

(Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend to the Hill of the Lord?* p. 125)



Source: Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend to the Hill of the Lord?*

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²⁵⁰ For further discussion of women in the ceremony, see the chapter called, “Act 1, Scene 2: The Royal Wedding in Psalm 45”; and the discussion of Psalm 34 in the chapter called, “Act 2, Scene 7, Jehovah Conquers Death and Hell.”

²⁵¹ Emmerson, “Women in Ancient Israel,” 371-94. This is an exceptionally insightful article which deals with many facets of the woman’s position in ancient Israel. The above quotes are taken from pages 378-79. On page 382 she writes, “Still more significantly, the imagery of marriage is considered appropriate to describe both Yahweh’s love relationship with Israel (Hos. 1-3; Jer. 2.2), and Israel’s joy when redeemed by the Lord (Isa. 62.4f.). Here is the Israelite ideal of marriage, from which in practice many no doubt fell short. The crude idea of ownership is entirely inappropriate here, as it is also in Jer. 31.32. To suggest that a wife was little better than a slave is certainly incorrect.”

The Creation and the Battle with the Sea

- 12 For God is my King of old,
working salvation in the midst of the earth.
- 13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength:
thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.
- 14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces,
and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.
- 15 Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood:
thou driedst up mighty rivers.
- 16 The day is thine, the night also is thine:
thou hast prepared the light and the sun.
- 17 Thou hast set all the borders of the earth:
thou hast made summer and winter (Psalm 74:12-17).

Marah: Where wood meets water

The LORD shewed him a tree, *which* when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet...

(Ex. 15.25)

וַיַּעַן אֶל-יְהוָה וַיִּזְרֶהוּ יְהוָה עֵץ – And he cried to Yahweh, and he (Yahweh) showed him a tree (**‘ēš, a “tree,” or “wood,” or a “staff.”**)

I see a connection between the “tree” or “staff” and the word for counsel in Hebrew, **‘ēšâ - עֵצָה**, a word that can be seen as connected to the temple, trees, making plans, and the Divine Council.



A Lack of food – Exodus 16

Manna arrives – Ex. 16.14-36.



וְהִכִּיתָ בַצֹּר

Exodus 17.6

"Thou shalt
smite the
rock!"





I am that bread of life! (John 6.48)

Living Water
John 4.13-14





Exodus 17.8-13

Preparations

Jethro "rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel" - Ex. 18.9

"I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods!" - Ex. 18.11

Jethro, Aaron, and "all the elders of Israel" ate bread before God – Ex. 18.12

This ceremonial meal may have possessed a judicial function. In the ancient Near East, treaties and pacts were often ratified by the involved parties participating in a solemn meal. This is also seen in the narrative of Abimelech and Isaac, as seen in Genesis 26.30, and between Jacob and Laban in Genesis 31.54. This may be connected to the meal in Exodus 24.5,11 as well as the [D&C 27](#) and [Revelation 19.6-9](#), where it discusses "The Marriage Supper of the Lamb."

Jethro, Aaron,
and "all the
elders of Israel"
ate bread
before God –
Ex. 18.12



Moses “sat to judge... from morning until evening”

Ex. 18.13



“Thou wilt surely wear away” – Ex. 18.18

“We generally see the need for Moses to apply the delegation dimension, and we note how both we and those we serve—including family—can “wear away.” Moses was hearing every case! Worse still, however, this pattern kept him from his real duties, which were to “teach them ordinances and laws, and ... shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do” (Ex. 18:20). The original Twelve were counseled that they were not to “serve tables” (see Acts 6:1–4). **Actually, serving tables is easy. It is visible, measurable, and do-able—compared to opening up the nations of the world to missionary work or to keeping wolves out of the flock.** But if the Twelve were drawn away from their scriptural and constitutional duties, the whole Church would suffer. **Being drawn away can happen to all of us, almost without our knowing it.** Elder Neal A. Maxwell, “Wisdom and Order,” *Ensign*, June 1994, 41–42.