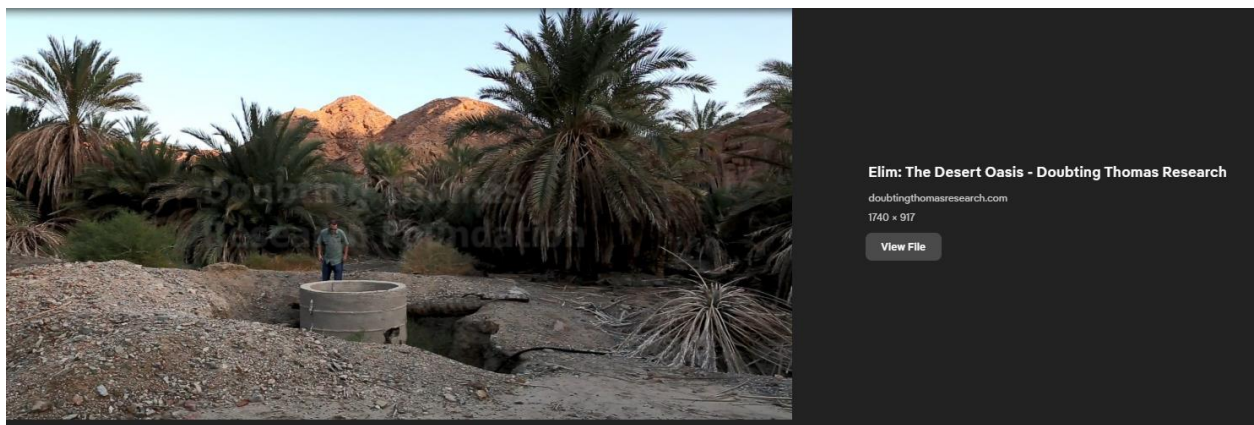
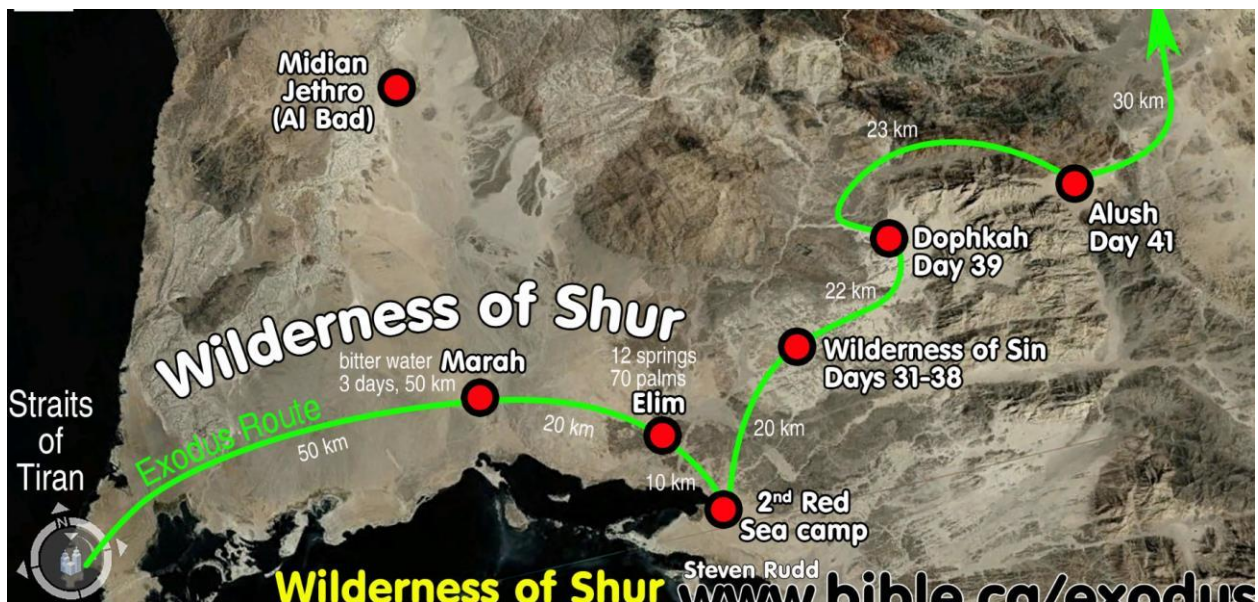


Exodus 16

Read Exodus 16:1-3: Elim had 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees. That sounds a lot better than Marah (meaning complaining), where they had just come from. They just came from the place of bitterness and God made the water sweet. They found the wrong kind of water. It was bitter. The name Elim is actually the plural word for palm trees. Elim was on the edge what is called the Wilderness of Sin. The Wilderness of Sin goes from there to Sinai. The palm tree is a symbol of something that is upright, fruitful, prosperous, full of endurance and flourishing. The palm tree is a special species that can be fruitful in harsh desert conditions. The number of 12 wells of water can relate to righteous governing or oversight.



God is telling us that he wants us to be like a palm tree. Physically, a palm tree is standing tall with its 'arms' raised to the sky. We need to flourish and be fruitful in harsh conditions too. We need to always be near water. The bible compares

water to God's word. We need to provide hope and rest and to attract a thirsty world.

⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1)

Most palms are not fruitful for at least 4 years. The 70 palms of Moses at Elim are described as date palms. They live 60-100 years (good human longevity comparison). Female trees produce fruit, while males provide pollination. The baby trees can come from shoots out of the roots of other trees. They tend to form colonies, like us. They have tolerance to extreme heat and drought (like a bullet-proof faith). Their fruit is one of the highest sources of sugar and energy. It supplies a lot of nutrients and minerals. It is actually a healthier sugar than grains. It is the densest source of calories available in nature. 2,000-year-old seeds from Masada were found and successfully planted. We can have a legacy that outlives our era.

Six seeds were found in 1963 in an earthen jar at the ruins of Masada by a team led by the famous archaeologist Yigal Yadin. The seeds were carefully stored in a drawer at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, Israel. Then, in 2004, after reading about a 1,500-year-old lotus seed that sprouted, Dr. Sarah Sallon had an idea. As the director and founder of the Louis L. Borick Natural Medicine Research Center at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem, Israel, she was interested to learn if ancient folklore about the Judean date palms beneficial health effects could possibly be true. After receiving permission to take three of the six seeds, Dr. Sallon contacted Dr. Elaine Solowey, director of the Center for Sustainable Agriculture at the Arava Institute of Plants. If anyone could bring a 2,000-year-old seed to life, Dr. Solowey could. The agriculturalist carefully washed the seeds in warm water, then immersed them in a second bath containing nutrients and fertilizer made from seaweed. On January 25, 2005, a date that coincided with Tu B'Shevat — the Jewish holiday marking the birthdays of trees — the seeds were planted in pots of specially prepared soil. Six weeks later, one of them sprouted, and the two scientists named the plant "Methuselah" after the oldest person in the Bible. Under Dr. Solowey's care, Methuselah was transplanted from pot to pot, until 2011, when it was big enough to plant directly into the desert. Being a male plant, Methuselah eventually produced pollen, which was used to fertilize female plants of other date palm species. There was no female Judean date palm then in existence, but Dr. Sallon did not give up. Over the next several years, she found 32 well-preserved seeds in archaeological collections, and brought them to Dr. Solowey. Under her

care, six of them sprouted — including one which had been found in a burial cave near Jericho. After several years, that plant, named “Hannah” flowered. Dr. Salowey brushed pollen from Methuselah onto the flowers of Hannah and in 2020 another miracle occurred. Hannah produced dates. Before tasting them Drs. Sallon and Salowey recited the Shehichyanu blessing, thanking God for bringing them to that moment. They cut the first date in half and each took a bite. One thought it tasted sweet like honey; the other thought it also had a nutty flavor. There were 111 dates in that first crop. In 2021 Hannah produced nearly 700 dates, prompting te hope that someday groves of Judean date palms will once again be grown around the world!

God was showing his people some solid examples to be like a palm tree, that keeps close to God’s word. They will be prosperous and fruitful with long lives and a good legacy. Stick together, stay in the word, be thankful. This is in contrast to the burning bush that Moses saw at Sinai. That was a useless thorny bush. It is hard to get near, with no compelling reasons to preserve it. It is believed that the thorny bramble is a species of Hawthorne from Arabia.



The question that God is putting before us is pertaining to what kind of living thing that we will be. Will we yield fruit or pain to others? Are we going to continue as a thorny weed that is painful to be around? Or are we going to become a fruitful palm tree with a great legacy of enriching others on their journeys? The children of Israel are not acting like palms. They are acting like brambles. Now the people

will resort to complaining to Moses and God. They do not trust that their hunger will be satisfied. By the way, thorns burn great, but palms really do not burn.

¹⁷ Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. ¹⁸ For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. ²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. (Philippians 3)

Read Exodus 16:4-36: The desert breaks things down to their essence. God’s tests reveal what is in our heart. Their hunger and thirst concerns reveal that they did not trust God or even want to be alone with him. Their recent high praise for the Red Sea deliverance seems to be pretty circumstantial now.

God answers their complaints for food with manna. It was literally bread from heaven. It was like sweet wafers on the ground early in the morning like frost. They were supposed to gather the wafers each day for today’s sustenance only. They could not store up a week or multiple days’ worth. God gives us our daily bread; and we are not to worry about tomorrow....or rely on stockpiles.

³² Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.” ³⁵ And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. (John 6)

The 40-year wilderness experience is about testing and personal revelation. It is about finding life in God’s circumstances for your life. God said that when the people rejected Moses and his ideas, that they were rejecting God. The manna portion of the test is the notion that God will give me tomorrow what I need, so I don’t have to make a huge pile for a future outage. Solomon tells us to be productive like ants and store for winter, but we still need to take rest in having a bed and food. This is really like the children’s book Green Eggs and Ham. Under what circumstances will you trust me? Is it in heavy provision only? Is it only in Red Sea deliverances where you have no choice? Do you trust me when you cannot see your next meal? This cascades into the tithing theory, etc... Will we give off of the top, rather than the leftovers, in case God does not provide?

Moses also wants the people to see that their beef is with God not Moses and Aaron. The complaints are wearing them out.

God also provides quail that blew in into piles. The people literally were grabbing quail for dinner. Quail meat is a dark meat and is very good. Seeing God in a cloud, providing manna and quail is as supernatural as it gets. We will see that there is no end to the miracles that God could provide and man will reject.

And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' ³¹ But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' " (Luke 16)

⁴ For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. ⁷ For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; ⁸ but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. (Hebrews 6)