Exodus Chapter Thirteen

Exodus Chapter 13

Exodus chapter thirteen is divided into five sections: (1) Introductory statement of the sanctification or consecration of the firstborn (1-2). (2) Importance of observing the feast of unleavened bread (3-10). (3) Regulations for the sanctification of firstborn (11-13). (4) Sanctification of the firstborn in relation to the Exodus (14-16). (5) The Lord leads the Israelites to the Red Sea (17-22).

Exodus 13:1-16 is a single unit and deals with the consecration and redemption of the firstborn as well as presenting new regulations with regards to the feast of unleavened bread. This section emphasizes the Lord’s right to the firstborn in Israel and that the Israelites were to acknowledge this right. It emphasizes that because of the Lord’s redemption of the Israelites, the latter is obligated to set apart their firstborn children and those from their flocks for the Lord’s service.

Exodus 13:17-22 begins a section that ends in Exodus 19:25, which deals with the wilderness journey of the Israelites while under the Lord’s guidance and direction.


Exodus 13:1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me.” (NASB95)

These two verses state the solemn obligation of the Israelites to hand down to their firstborn children what the Lord had done for them in delivering them from slavery to the Egyptians. Since the Lord spared the firstborn children of the Israelites and the firstborn of their flocks, the Israelites were obligated to dedicate to the Lord their firstborn children and those from their flocks.

Exodus 13:3-10: Importance of Observing the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Exodus 13:3 Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery; for by a powerful hand the Lord brought you out from this place. And nothing leavened shall be eaten. 4 On this day in the month of Abib, you are about to go forth. 5 It shall be when the Lord brings you to the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall observe this rite in this month.” (NASB95)
Verse 3 records Moses commanding the Israelites as they were leaving Egypt to remember this day when the Lord delivered them from the bondage of Egypt. The reason he teaches them is that the Lord delivered them by His omnipotence, which was demonstrated through the ten plagues. This verse emphasizes with the Israelites that they were a redeemed people who were once slaves. It emphasizes that the Lord intervened in all of their lives by delivering them from their slavery in Egypt.

The command “And nothing leavened shall be eaten” is a reference to the feast of unleavened bread, which was first mentioned in Exodus 12:15-20, which records the Lord giving Moses and Aaron instructions with regards to this feast, which was to be a national celebration of Israel’s redemption from Egypt.

The Passover and the feast of unleavened bread were closely connected and constituted a single unit. The feast of unleavened bread was to be for seven days according to Exodus 12:15, from the fifteenth to the twenty-first of the month (Lev. 23:6; Num. 28:17). The removal of leaven from each home signifies the removal of evil. It speaks of sanctification.

Leaven was not to be found in the house. It is a substance such as yeast that is used to produce fermentation in dough. It produces a gas that lightens dough or batter. Leaven in the word of God speaks of evil (1 Cor. 5:6b-8; Gal. 5:9). Evil is anything that denies the grace of God such as legalism.

Verse 5 records that the Israelites were to observe the feast of unleavened bread when the Lord brought them into the land Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, which is a reference to one of the promises contained in the Abrahamic Covenant. The promise of the land of Canaan is often called by theologians the “Palestinian Covenant.”

The “Palestinian” covenant is in fact an extension of the “Abrahamic” covenant, which is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3. Like the “Abrahamic” covenant, the “Palestinian” covenant that the Lord established with Abram denoted the Lord’s gracious undertaking for the benefit of Abram and his descendants. Like the “Abrahamic” covenant, the “Palestinian” covenant was “unconditional” meaning that its fulfillment was totally and completely dependent upon the Lord’s faithfulness.

Genesis 13:14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward 15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. 16 I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.” (NASB95)
The Lord’s promise of land to Abram and his descendants in Genesis 13:14-17 is an “extension” upon His promise to Abram in Genesis 12:1 and is thus related to the “Abrahamic” covenant. The “Palestinian” covenant was a confirmation and enlargement of the original “Abrahamic” covenant and amplified the land features of the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18).

The “Palestinian” covenant was confirmed to Isaac (Gen. 26:3-4) and Jacob (Gen. 35:12), reiterated to Moses (Ex. 6:2-8) who described the geographical boundaries of the land in Numbers 34:1-12 and who prophesied the fulfillment of this covenant during the millennium in Deuteronomy 30:1-9.

The land grant under the “Palestinian” covenant: (1) Most of the land in Turkey (2) Most of East Africa (3) Saudi Arabia (4) Yemen (5) Oman and Red Sea (6) Syria (7) Iraq (8) Jordan. The land grant has boundaries on the Mediterranean, on Aegean Sea, on Euphrates River and the Nile River.

Deuteronomy 30:1-10 describes seven features of the “Palestinian” covenant: (1) The nation will be plucked off the land for its unfaithfulness (Deut. 28:63-68; 30:1-3). (2) There will be a future repentance of Israel (Deut. 28:63-68; 30:1-3). (3) Israel’s Messiah will return (Deut. 30:3-6). (4) Israel will be restored to the land (Deut. 30:5). (5) Israel will be converted as a nation (Deut. 30:4-8; cf. Rm. 11:26-27). (6) Israel’s enemies will be judged (Deut. 30:7). (7) The nation will then receive her full blessing (Deut. 30:9).

The Lord promises that this land would be given to Abram’s descendants and this promise was fulfilled to a certain extent by Israel under Joshua (Josh. 21:43-45; cf. 13:1-7) and David and Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:20-25; Neh. 9:8).

The prophets of Israel prophesied of the “Palestinian” covenant’s literal and ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 16:14-16; 23:3-8; 31:8, 31-37; Ezek. 11:17-21; 20:33-38; 34:11-16; 39:25-29; Hos. 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).

During the millennial reign of Christ, the northern boundary of Israel will extend from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River (47:15-17), incorporating much of modern Lebanon and Syria. The eastern border will extend south from the Euphrates River, incorporating the Golan Heights and portions of Syria almost up to Damascus, and continue south to where the Jordan River leaves the Sea of Galilee. The river will be the eastern border to the Dead Sea’s southern end (47:18). From there the southern border will go westward, incorporating the Negev and parts of Sinai all the way along the Brook of Egypt (the modern Wadi-el-Arish) to the point where it reaches the Mediterranean Sea (47:19), the western border (47:20). Although the land will have twelve tribal divisions, these subdivisions will differ from those in the Book of Joshua.

Ezekiel 48:1-7 describes the northern subdivisions for seven of the twelve tribes. From the north to the south they will be: (1) Dan (48:1) (2) Asher (48:2) (3)

The term “Canaanite” denotes those individuals descended from Canaan who lived in the land west of the Jordan River before the conquest of Joshua and whose western border was the Mediterranean Sea, especially in the lower and coastal regions (Gen. 13:12; Num. 33:51). The northern border of the land of the Canaanites went as far as Sidon, which is 120 miles north of Jerusalem and the southern border extended to Gerar, which is about 11 miles south-southeast of Gaza, which was on the coast 50 miles southeast of Jerusalem. The Canaanites who lived in the highland regions were often called “Amorite.”

At times the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, were called “Canaanites” but strictly speaking the nations who dwelt on the coasts or river lowlands were called “Canaanite” (Nm. 13:29).

The Canaanites were descendants of Noah’s son Ham. They were actually composed of seven nations (Deut. 7:1) and were idolatrous (Deut. 29:17), involved in the occult (Deut. 18:9-10) and gross immorality (Lev. 18), which archaeology confirms. They were under a divine curse (Genesis 9:24-27).

Discoveries at the ancient Ugarit, north of Tyre and Sidon, have revealed Canaanite religion promoted child sacrifice, idolatry, prostitution in the name of religion and all kinds of occultic and immoral practices. Therefore, it was an act of justice in the Lord dispossessing the Amorites, also known as the Canaanite.

The Lord does not dispossess and judge a nation immediately until He has given it grace in the sense of giving it a sufficient amount of time to repent. Once a nation has completely rejected God’s grace and every opportunity to repent and accept Christ as Savior, it will become totally and completely saturated with evil (see Lev. 18:24-28; 20:23) and then the Lord sends judgment.

The Lord used the nation of Israel under Joshua to pour out His judgment upon the Canaanites for their immoral degeneracy (Gen. 15:16; 19:5; Lev. 18; 20; Deut. 12:31). The Canaanites were defeated on the battlefield, destroyed, or integrated with other nations or enslaved to Israel (Gen. 14:1-16; 15:18-21; Ex. 3:7-10; Deut. 1-3; Josh. 10-19). Therefore, Genesis 9:24-29 sets the stage or lays the foundation for Israel’s foreign policy in the land (Deut. 20:16-18).

“Canaan” is the more ancient name of Palestine, apparently derived from Hurrian, meaning, “belonging to the land of red purple,” the dye the early
Canaanites or Phoenician traders peddled far and wide. It was obtained from the murex shells found on the Mediterranean (Phoenician) coast”.¹

The land of Canaan was west of the Jordan River before the conquest by Joshua, which had the Mediterranean Sea as its eastern border and whose position served as the route of two major highways between Egypt and the Western coast of the Arabian Peninsula to Mesopotamia and Asia Minor (with connections to India and Europe respectively).

The natural boundaries of Canaan as expressed in the Bible extend from the Negev in the South to the northern reaches of the Lebanon Range in Syria and the land west of the range and of the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

In Genesis 10:19, Moses defines the borders of the Canaanites because it is this land that the Lord will dispossess for Israel and fulfill the prophecy of Noah in Genesis 9:24-25 regarding Canaan. The northern border of the land of the Canaanites went as far as Sidon, which is 120 miles north of Jerusalem and the southern border extended to Gerar, which is about 11 miles south-southeast of Gaza, which was on the coast 50 miles southeast of Jerusalem.

The “Hittites” were present in the land of Canaan during the time of Abraham according to Genesis 15:19-21 and they reached the zenith of their power sometime later and still possessed great power at the time of Solomon a thousand years later according to 2 Chronicles 1:17.

The “Amorite” means literally “the Westerner,” and thus the name Amorites is generally supposed to mean “western highlanders” (cf. Num 13:29; Deut 1:7-20; Josh 10:6), or “tall ones” (cf. Amos 2:9; see also Num 13:33; Deut 2:10). The Amorites were so prominent that their name seems sometimes to be used for Canaanites in general (e.g., Josh 24:8). In Abraham’s day the Amorites lived west of the Dead Sea, in Hazazon-tamar (Gen 14:7), “that is Engedi” (2 Chron 20:2) and about Hebron (Gen 14:13, cf. 13:18).

The “Perizzites” refers to a tribe of people who inhabited the mountainous region eventually taken over by the tribes of Ephraim and Judah (cf. Josh. 11:3; 17:5; Judg. 1:4f.) and because they were related to the Canaanites, the term “Perizzites” often refers to this entire group (cf. Gen. 13:7; 34:30).

The “Jebusite” settled in “Jebus,” which is the name of Jerusalem when this tribe held it (Josh. 15:63; Judg. 19:10) and it wasn’t until David’s reign that they were finally driven out (2 Sam. 5:6-7; cf. 1 Kings 9:20).

The “Hivites” settled in the land of Canaan and was displaced by Israel under Joshua (Ex. 3:8, 17; 13:5; 23:23; 33:2; 34:11; Deut. 7:1; Josh. 9:1).

Genesis 34:2 records that they were in the land of Shechem and according to Genesis 36:2, Esau took a Hivite for a wife and 1 Kings 9:20 records that Solomon

1 Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament, page 54, AMG Publishers
used them as builders. Judges 3:3 records that they settled in the foothills of Lebanon.

In Exodus 13:5, the phrase "a land flowing with milk and honey" first appeared in Exodus 3:8 and describes the goodness of God’s provision for His people in Canaan (cf. 3:17; 13:5). It indicates that the Israelite flocks will thrive in the land of Canaan and is a place where honey bees were abundant.

Exodus 13:6 “For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened shall be seen among you, nor shall any leaven be seen among you in all your borders. 8 You shall tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me
when I came out of Egypt.’ 9 And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt. 10 Therefore, you shall keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year.” (NASB95)

Exodus 13:6-7 echo Exodus 12:14-20. The former reiterates the latter and in fact condenses it. In verse 8, Moses teaches the Israelites that when they observed the feast of unleavened bread they were to communicate to their sons what the Lord did for them. In verse 9, he teaches that the observance of this feast was to continually remind the Israelites of the Lord delivering them from slavery in Egypt. In verse 10, he says that this great deliverance was to be observed by them annually in the ceremony of the seven-day festival of unleavened bread.

Exodus 13:11-13: Regulations for Sanctification of Firstborn

Exodus 13:11 “Now when the Lord brings you to the land of the Canaanite, as He swore to you and to your fathers, and gives it to you, 12 you shall devote to the Lord the first offspring of every womb, and the first offspring of every beast that you own; the males belong to the Lord. 13 But every first offspring of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck; and every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.” (NASB95)

This paragraph teaches that the Israelites were to dedicate to the Lord their firstborn sons as well as the firstborn male of every beast they own when they enter the land of Canaan. The animals are included since they benefitted from the deliverance in Egypt and were spared because of the blood of the Passover lamb that was spread on the doorpost and lintel of every Israelite home.

The NET Bible has the following comment on verse 12, “It was once assumed by some scholars that child sacrifice lay behind this text in the earlier days, but that the priests and prophets removed those themes. Apart from the fact that there is absolutely no evidence for anything like that, the Law forbade child sacrifice, and always used child sacrifice as the sample of what not to do in conformity with the pagans (e.g., Deut 12:31). Besides, how absurd would it be for Yahweh to redeem the firstborn from death and then ask Israel to kill them. See further B. Jacob, Exodus, 371.”

In verse 13, the first offspring of a donkey was to be redeemed with a lamb. If it was not redeemed its neck was to be broken. Donkeys were considered

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ceremonially unclean animals (Leviticus 11:2-4), thus they could not be sacrificed but they could be redeemed by a lamb.

Douglas Stuart writes “The ruling in v. 13 about breaking the neck of an unredeemed donkey (used here as an example, not as the only instance of its type) may seem odd at first glance, but it was entirely within the principles of the redemption system. A firstborn animal could not simply be kept from God for one’s own use—either for working or for eating. It belonged to God, so if it was not redeemed, it must be destroyed. God did not want people to waste the time of the priests and Levites at the central sanctuary by having people bring unneeded animals to them for destruction. The people could destroy the animals themselves. But by no means could anyone say, “Since God doesn’t need this, I’ll keep it and use it for myself.” God decided what to use and what to destroy of what belonged to him. This regulation clarifies the process in the case of animals of no use to the sanctuary.”

In verse 13, the firstborn of man was to be redeemed. Numbers 18:15-16 teaches that the firstborn of man was to be redeemed by their fathers and the redemption price was five shekels in silver.

*Exodus 13:14-16: Sanctification of Firstborn in Relation to the Exodus*

**Exodus 13:14** “And it shall be when your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What is this?’ then you shall say to him, ‘With a powerful hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. 15 It came about, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the Lord killed every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore, I sacrifice to the Lord the males, the first offspring of every womb, but every firstborn of my sons I redeem.’ 16 So it shall serve as a sign on your hand and as phylacteries on your forehead, for with a powerful hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.” (NASB95)

These verses emphasize with the Israelites that they were responsible to explain to their children the reason for the dedication and redemption of the firstborn. They were expected to teach the children that these practices were directly related to the Lord delivering them as a nation from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. This deliverance constitutes their identity as a people.

Verse 14 repeats much of what was said in verses 3 and 9 and verse 16 echoes much of what was said in verse 9. Verse 15 summarizes Israel’s deliverance and presents the reason why the Israelites dedicate the firstborn males to the Lord.

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Exodus 13:17-22: The Lord Leads the Israelites to Red Sea

Exodus 3:17 Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, “The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.” 18 Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt. 19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, “God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you.” (NASB95)

The NET Bible has the following comment, “This short section (vv. 17–22) marks the beginning of the journey of the Israelites toward the sea and Sinai. The emphasis here is on the leading of Yahweh – but this leading is manifested in a unique, supernatural way – unlikely to be repeated with these phenomena. Although a primary application of such a passage would be difficult, the general principle is clear: God, by his clear revelation, leads his people to the fulfillment of the promise. This section has three short parts: the leading to the sea (17–18), the bones of Joseph (19), and the leading by the cloud and pillar (20–22).”

Exodus 13:17-18 reveal that the Lord did not lead the Israelites by the way of the land of the Philistines even though it was near. Rather He led them by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea. The reason stated is that the Lord wanted to avoid a possible military confrontation with Egyptian guards which might encourage the Israelites to run back to Egypt.

These verses reveal that the first reason why the Lord took Israel by this route was the presence of the Philistines on the Asian coast of the Mediterranean, which is on Egypt’s northeast border. So this verse demonstrates that the Lord knew that at this point, Israel was not yet ready to have a military confrontation. It also clearly implies that Israel would have been defeated easily militarily if God did not take this irregular route.

John Hannah writes, “The shortest route to the land of Canaan was through the territory of the Philistines in the direction of Beersheba and the Negeb. It led along the Mediterranean Sea, the military road of the Egyptians. But the route chosen by God was southeastward toward the Sinai to avoid possible military confrontations with Egyptian guards who might encourage the people to return to Egypt.”

Commenting on the Philistines in this verse, the NET Bible writes, “The term Philistines has been viewed by modern scholarship as an anachronism, since the Philistines were not believed to have settled in the region until the reign of

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Rameses III (in which case the term would not fit either the early or the late view of the exodus). But the OT clearly refers to Philistines in the days of the patriarchs. The people there in the earlier period may have been Semites, judging from their names, or they may have been migrants from Crete in the early time. The Philistines after the exodus were of Greek origin. The danger of warfare at this time was clearly with Canaanitish tribes. For further details, see K. A. Kitchen, “The Philistines,” *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, 53–54; J. M. Grintz, “The Immigration of the First Philistines in the Inscriptions,” *Tarbiz* 17 (1945): 32–42, and *Tarbiz* 19 (1947): 64; and E. Hindson, *The Philistines and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 39–59."

Stuart has the following comment, he writes, “No definitive documentation of Philistine military strength at the time of the exodus has survived from the ancient world. We know, however, that the Philistines were so daunting a fighting force at the time of the conquest, forty years later and beyond, that even at Joshua’s death their territory remained unconquered (cf. Josh 13:1–5). We also know that they were bold enough to attack Egypt proper in an effort to capture territory in the days of Ramses III, that is, about 1188 BC, suggesting that they considered themselves at that time—considerably after the Israelites had entered Canaan—potentially able to defeat even the Egyptians, depending on the circumstances. Accordingly, God did not want his people to try to enter Canaan directly by the well-established coastal road from Egypt, the *Via Maris*, even though that was by far the shortest and easiest route from the point of view of travel time and theoretical convenience. The Via Maris led right through the heart of Philistine territory. Based on their behavior as recorded in Judges and 1 Samuel, the Philistines were looking to expand their territorial control and would hardly have been willing to let the Israelites enter Canaan, on which they themselves had designs, without an all-out fight. By contrast, according to the Merneptah Stela, Israel was not yet regarded as a nation but merely as a people group even as late as 1230 BC, a fact that may be taken as confirming the consistent biblical indications of their relative weakness militarily and politically. At least that is the sort of scenario that comports precisely with the picture painted here in Exodus and in the books of Judges and 1 Samuel. Could God have destroyed the Philistines on behalf of the Israelites? Of course. But the Philistines had so far done nothing to the Israelites and so were not in the same category as the Egyptians, who well deserved the punishment they had already received and were about to receive more of (i.e., their defeat at the Red Sea). Moreover, the Philistines were latecomers to Palestine, as compared to the Amorites/Canaanites, and therefore did not fall under the blanket condemnation of the “sin of the Amorites” that God had announced to Abraham in Gen 15:16 as the

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basis for the conquest of Canaan. So the Philistines were to be dealt with later rather than immediately; it was not part of God’s plan that they should be fought and subdued at this early stage. He therefore did not call Israel to try to conquer Philistine territory, and had they tried on their own to do so, they would surely have been defeated, just as happened when they tried later, on their own, to defeat the Canaanites (Num 14:44–45).”

Exodus 13:19 records that Moses on behalf of the Israelites made good on the promise that Joseph made the sons of Israel swear to him when they left Egypt, namely that his bones would be transported to the land of promise when they left Egypt. This promise appears in Genesis 50:24-25.

Genesis 50:24-25 contain the last words of Joseph, which were spoken in faith in the promises of God.

**Genesis 50:24** Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.” (NASB95)

“Brothers” is the noun `ach, which does “not” refer to his half-brothers, the sons of Leah, Bilhah, Zilpah and nor does it refer to his full brother Benjamin since that would indicate that Joseph died before his brothers, many of whom were much older than him, which seems highly unlikely. Rather, the term `ach, “brothers” refers to the Israelite people as a whole, which is confirmed in Genesis 50:25 by the expression, “sons of Israel.”

Joseph’s statement “I am about to die” links him with the death of the other patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac. Like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Joseph’s last concern was concerning the fulfillment of the promises of God (See Genesis 24:1-7; 28:1-4; 47:29-31).

In the Hebrew text, the expression “God will surely take care of you” is composed of the following: (1) Noun Elohim, “God” (2) Qal infinitive absolute compliment form of the verb paqadh, “to intervene” (3) 3rd person masculine singular qal imperfect form of the verb paqadh (4) Preposition `eth, “for” (5) 2nd person masculine plural pronominal suffix, “all of you.”

The term paqadh means, “to intervene” indicating that Joseph is assuring the Israelites that God would intervene for them in order to fulfill His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give them the land of Canaan.

The infinitive absolute form of the verb paqadh stands before the finite verb of the same root, paqadh in order to intensify the certainty or force of the verbal idea, thus Joseph is predicting that God “would surely intervene” on behalf of the Israelites. This construction literally reads in the Hebrew, “intervening, He will intervene” but to the Hebrew mind, it means, “He will surely intervene.”

Therefore, Joseph is communicating to his family in emphatic terms that God would intervene on their behalf in the future to deliver them and bring them back to the land of Canaan.

Joseph’s statement “God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which he promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob” is a reference to the Exodus from Egypt, which would fulfill the prophecy given to Abraham, recorded in Genesis 15:12-16.

Joseph is also referring to the “Palestinian” covenant, which the Lord established with Abraham and confirmed to both Isaac and Jacob and was a confirmation and enlargement of the original “Abrahamic” covenant and amplified the land features of the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18).

**Genesis 50:25** Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here.” (NASB95)

By making the Israelites swear to him that they would bury his bones in Canaan, Joseph was expressing his confidence and faith in God’s promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give them the land of Canaan and looks forward in faith to the Exodus, which was prophesied to Abraham in Genesis 15:12-16.

**Hebrews 11:22** By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones. (NASB95)

Exodus 13:19 records that Moses fulfilled this oath and buried Joseph’s remains at Shechem in the land Jacob had given him as a gift (See Genesis 48:21-22; Joshua 24:32).

**Exodus 13:20** Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. (NASB95)

In our study of Exodus 12:37 we noted that “Succoth” was a city near the eastern end of the Wadi Tumilat. This location marked Israel’s first stop after leaving Rameses in their exodus deliverance. Tell el-Maskhutah, a border fortress site, near Lake Timsah, is identified as the modern site of Succoth.

Like Succoth, the exact location of “Etham” is not certain. However, Exodus 13:20 does say that it was on the edge of the desert.

C. deWit comments on this, he writes, “Camp of the Israelites somewhere on the isthmus of Suez (Ex. 13:20; Nu. 33:6–7), about whose precise location scholars differ. Müller suggested a connection with the name of the Egyp. god Atum; Naville proposed Edom; Clidat, Gauthier, Bourdon, Lagrange, Abel and Montet would connect it with the Old Egyp. word for ‘fort’ (ḥtm), a name which was given to several places; but none of these suggestions seems very likely. The Old Egyp. ḥtm seems rather to designate the frontier-city of Sile.”8

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Exodus 13:21 The Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. 22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people. (NASB95)
The pillar of cloud during the day and the pillar of fire at night was a visible manifestation of the Lord’s presence in the camp of the Israelites. This visible manifestation was to guide and protect the Israelites and also would comfort them. The NET Bible has the following comment “God chose to guide the people with a pillar of cloud in the day and one of fire at night, or, as a pillar of cloud and fire, since they represented his presence. God had already appeared to Moses in the fire of the bush, and so here again is revelation with fire. Whatever the exact nature of these things, they formed direct, visible revelations from God, who was guiding the people in a clear and unambiguous way. Both clouds and fire would again and again represent the presence of God in his power and majesty, guiding and protecting his people, by judging their enemies.”

Stuart writes “Moses introduced here the special visible symbol of God’s presence to guide and protect the Israelites in the wilderness, the pillar of cloud/fire. The somewhat repetitious language of these verses in describing the pillar should not lead to the conclusion that there were two separate pillars. From Exod 14:24 (“the Lord looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army”), 14:19–20 (“the pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side”), 40:38 (“fire was in the cloud by night”), and Num 14:14 (“that your cloud stays over them, and that you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night”) it is clear that there was only one cloudlike pillar, which represented God’s presence, and that it appeared as a great column of dark cloud when viewed during the bright sunlit day but as a column of fire when viewed at night. This is consistent with the descriptions of the cloud that covered the top of Mount Sinai as described in Exod 24:15–18. That cloud was dark to Moses, who was permitted to enter it, but appeared as a blazing fire to the other Israelites, who were not. It is common sense to assume that by day in the hot wilderness of Egypt and the Sinai peninsula, a cloud would seem welcome and comforting and that by night a fire would seem the same, providing light to see by and perhaps some warmth, as well as a terrifying barrier if it were positioned between the Israelites and a potential enemy. The text, however, does not say that the cloud provided a shade over the heads of the Israelites. Rather, it went ahead of them to lead them—representing God’s leadership as they moved through unknown territory. Looking at a cloud ahead of one is pleasant and easy on a bright, hot day; looking at a comforting fire is similar at night. That was the main function of the pillar—a way of allowing the Israelites to look at God so as to be able to follow him without actually seeing him in his very person (33:20; cf. John 1:18; 1 John 4:12). The pillar-cloud was a

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manifestation of Yahweh himself, not merely something he sent them. By reason of being guided by the pillar, the Israelites knew all day every day that God was present with them. Here was a supernatural, huge, and visible reminder that Yahweh was at the head of his people as they marched or encamped, whether by day or by night.”