

Exodus 13:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.

Analysis

The alternative route 'led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea' seems indirect but serves purposes—testing, training, revealing dependence on God. The phrase 'the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt' has ambiguous Hebrew ('chamushim,' חָמוּשִׁים) meaning either 'armed' or 'organized by fifties.' Either way, it indicates order, not chaos. Wilderness path produces dependence that prosperity route wouldn't.

Historical Context

The Red Sea route through the Sinai wilderness avoided immediate military conflict but presented logistical challenges—water, food, travel. This wilderness became Israel's training ground.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How has God's 'indirect' path in your life served purposes that a direct route wouldn't accomplish?
2. What does the wilderness route teach about spiritual formation requiring dependence rather than self-sufficiency?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵלֶּכָּה בְּ	אֶת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	הָעָם	דֶּרֶךְ	הַמִּדְבָּר	יָם
about	But God	H853 the people	through the way	of the wilderness	sea
H5437	H430	H5971	H1870	H4057	H3220
וּפָנִי	וַיִּחַמְשׁוּ יָם	עָלָה וּ	בָנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	מִן הָאָרֶץ
of the Red	harnessed	went up	and the children	of Israel	out of the land
H5488	H2571	H5927	H1121	H3478	H776
מִצְרָיִם:					
of Egypt					
H4714					

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 14:2 (References Israel): Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea.

Deuteronomy 32:10 (Parallel theme): He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.