

# Liquid Grace

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.**

**~Hebrews 3:12 (NASB)**

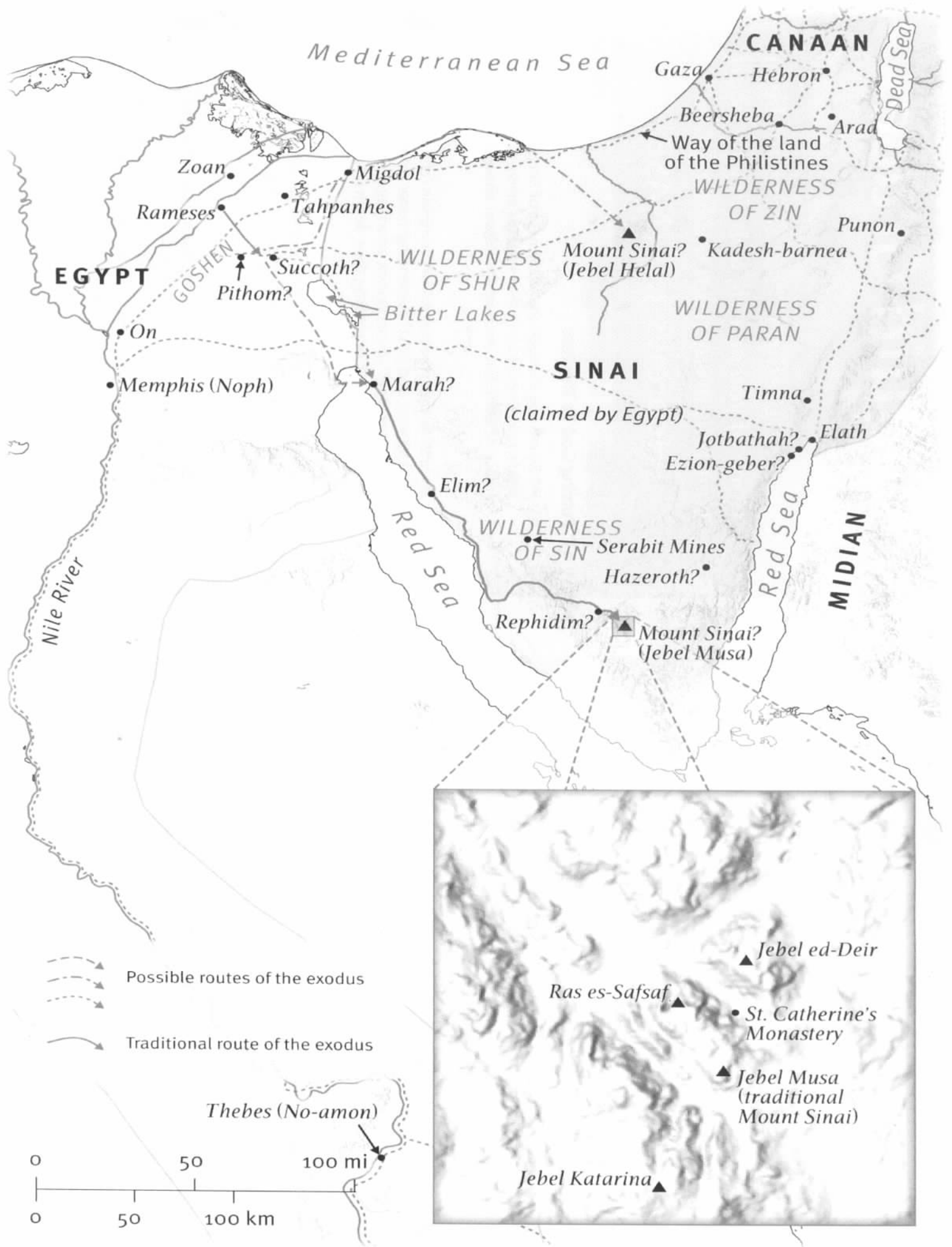
## 1) Putting God To The Test

- A) While moving through the wilderness of Sin (see map inside fold, Exodus 16:1), the Israelites arrive at Rephidim (place of rest), but once again without enough water (17:1).
- B) Incredibly, the Israelites AGAIN complain (cf. 14:11-12, 15:24, 16:2) against God (17:2) demanding water from Moses, and “quarreling” (more violent word) against him, even accusing him/God of plotting their death (17:3).
- C) Moses is clearly rattled by the increasingly violent actions of the people, and cries out to God for help in fear of his own life (17:4).
- D) This contentious exchange represents something very important for Israel. Up to now, God has been testing His people, seeking their obedience (cf. 16:4). But here at Rephidim, the people “quarrel” (a legal term for “argumentation which finds fault and seeks justice from another”) against God. They are testing Him! Their charge? Is God truly in our midst (17:2-4, 7). How will God respond to this kind of violent arrogance?!

## 2) God Answers His Accusers

- A) The Lord answers Moses’ worried cries, instructing him to “pass before the people” with some of Israel’s most influential leaders (17:5). Rather than move away from the violent brewing mob, Moses is told to go place himself in harm’s way in front of all of them!
- B) God also tells Moses to be sure to take the staff with which he struck the Nile for the first of the powerful plagues against Egypt (7:17, 20). Everyone would see Moses, but they would also see his staff, a powerful visual reminder.
- C) God instructs Moses further, telling him to go to a rock near Horeb\* where God will be standing (17:6). When Moses sees God standing upon the Rock, he is to strike the rock and water will flow for His people.
- D) Moses does all God commands, and the people drink the water which comes from the Rock. The place is named “Massah” (to test) and “Meribah” (to argue, dispute), because the people tested God, wondering if he was protecting, providing, and present in their lives (17:7).
- E) In the same way, God protects, provides, and is present in our lives through “the Rock” from the desert, Jesus Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:1-4).

\* You’ll remember that Horeb is the location where God appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush (Exodus 3:1-6). The location is important for two reasons. First, Horeb is outside of Rephidim, and God is leading the people there to do a miracle. But more importantly, he is leading Moses there to remind him of the last time Moses was there. There is a subtext to Israel’s complaints of Moses’ own complaints and cries to God with which God is also dealing. As Moses walks with the staff, he was walking on the holy ground of Horeb, a tremendous reminder of where he had been to where he was standing again. Secondly, Horeb is very close to Sinai, the mountain of God. The narrative is moving us ever closer to Sinai, to the place where God will manifest Himself to His people in profound and miraculous ways. From the Wilderness of Sin, to Rephidim, and now to Horeb. We are inching closer to Sinai, and a climactic portion of the story. Will the Israelites pull it together and obey God before they arrive at His mountain? Will we (as God’s people) obey God as we draw (every day) closer to the ultimate “mountain of God” (Zion/Heaven)? Like the Israelites, we draw closer to God each day (physically and spiritually), as He tests us for our own blessing and maturity, and to His own glory.



**EGYPT**

**CANAAN**

**SINAI**  
(claimed by Egypt)

**MIDIAN**

Possible routes of the exodus

Traditional route of the exodus

Thebes (No-amon)

