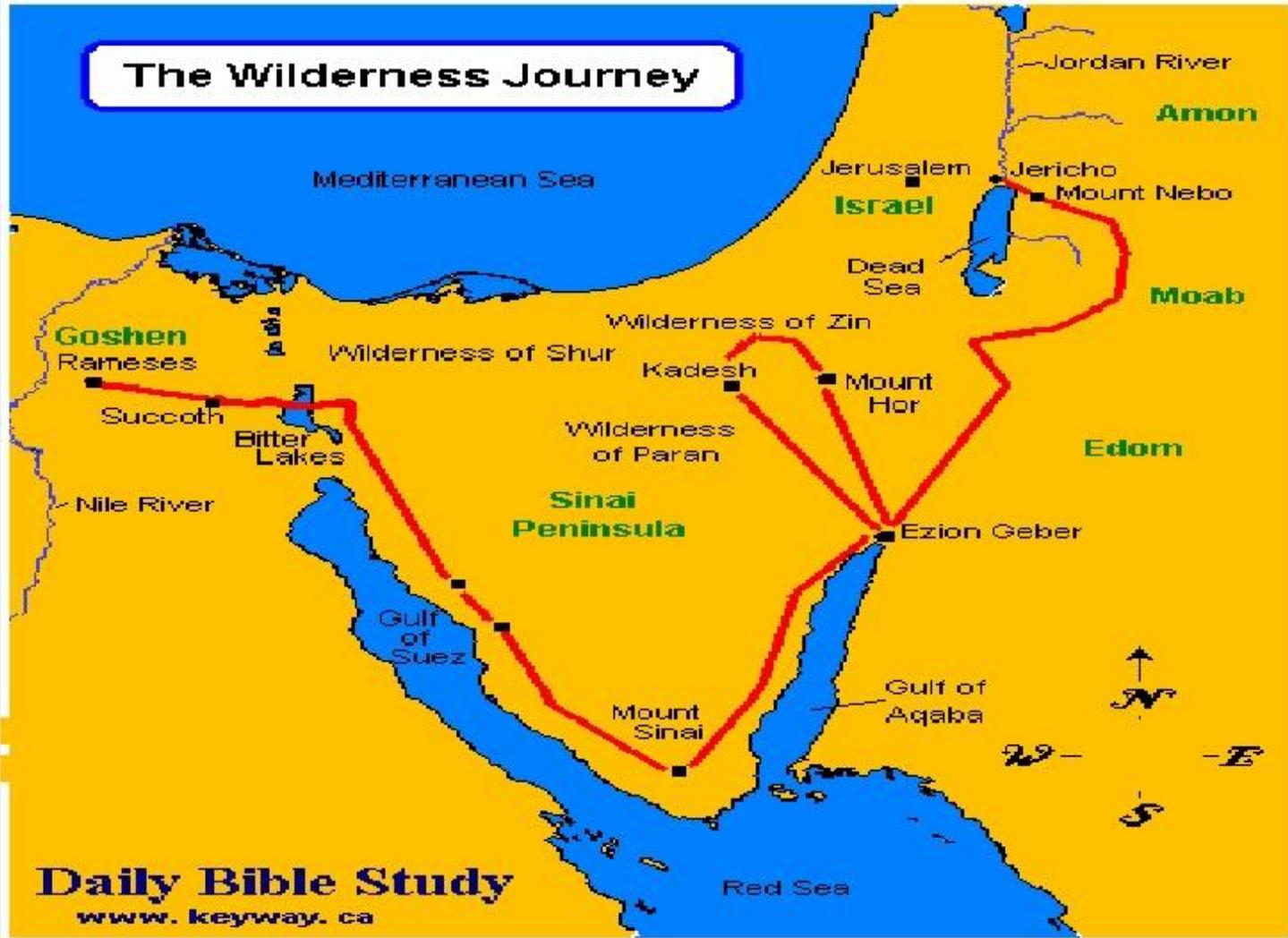


From Egypt to the Promised Land - Part 6

“Are we there yet?”

The Wilderness Journey



Testing the waters, Godafoss Iceland

80 - 100 °C equals 175 - 212°F



Testing the Water - Joshua 3





Israelites Cross the Jordan River

After 40 years in the Wilderness, the children of Israel, under their new leader Joshua, are ready to cross the mighty Jordan River into their new home!

They arrived in the spring, when melting snows from the mountains of Lebanon caused the usually tranquil Jordan to turn into a raging torrent.

The priests, who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant, were commanded by Joshua to step into the Jordan River and immediately the Jordan stopped flowing allowing the Israelites to cross on dry land (as it happened at the Red Sea) into their new home!

American Slaves and Christianity

Most American slaves adopted the Christian Faith.

The slaves re-shaped the stories of the Bible into deeply personal songs, (African-American Spirituals) as a way of dealing with the oppression of their enslavement.

One particular Biblical story that took on special meaning was Israel crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land!

Roll, Jordan, Roll

O Brother / verse 2 O Sister verse 3 O Sinners
You ought t'have been there,
Yes, my Lord!
A-sitting in the kingdom,
To hear Jordan roll. **CHORUS**

Chorus

Roll, Jordan, roll,

Roll, Jordan roll,

**want to go to heaven when I die,
To hear Jordan roll.**

Meaning of the Jordan River in Spirituals

The American theologian James Cone suggests that there are two basic meanings of the Jordan River as a symbol in African American spirituals. First place, the Jordan represented death and resurrection, dying in this world and being taken into heaven!

Sometimes too, the Jordan served as a reminder of freedom that could be had if one was able to cross the Ohio River into freedom!

I Stood on the River Jordan

Verse 1

I stood on the river of Jordan
to see that ship come sailin' over;
stood on the river of Jordan
to see that ship sail by.

Chorus

O moaner don't you weep
when you see that ship come sailin' over,
shout, glory hallelujah,
when you see that ship sail by.

Verse 2

O sister, you better be ready
to see the ship come sailin' over;
brother, you better be ready
to see that ship sail by. Chorus

Verse 3

O preacher, you better be ready
to see the ship come sailin' over;
deacon, you better be ready
to see that ship sail by. Chorus

Oh deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into camp-ground

Deep River

Deep River, my home is over Jordan.

Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into campground.

Deep river, my home is over Jordan

Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into camp-ground.

Oh, don't you want to go, to the *Gospel* feast;

That Promised Land, where all is peace?

Oh, deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into campground.

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

Swing low, sweet chariot

Coming for to carry me home

Swing low, sweet chariot

Coming for to carry me home

I looked over Jordan and what did I see?

(Coming for to carry me home)

A band of angels coming after me

(Coming for to carry me home)

Chorus:

"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" was composed by Wallis Willis, a Choctaw / African American who lived and was set free in the old Indian Territory of present day Oklahoma in 1865.

Some believe that Wallis Willis was inspired by the sight of the Red River where he was forced to work, which reminded him of the Jordan River in the Bible.

This spiritual is based upon the story of the Prophet Elijah being taken up into heaven by the Jordan River (2 Kings 2).

Focus of Slave Theology

For the most part, the slaves looked forward with great anticipation to death and being set free in heaven.

Unlike many who, today, are uncertain if they will be saved, that wasn't a concern for the slaves. Salvation was almost assured! How certain are you of your salvation?

What is the purpose of Christianity?

- Prosperity Gospel
- Make the world a better place (social / liberation)
- Insurance policy?
- Experience a relationship with our Lord that begins in this life and is enjoyed completely in the life to come.