

settlement of Gilead. The descendants of Machir, son of Manasseh, were especially prominent in taking this territory, and apparently this was the reason Moses awarded them the land. "Gilead" here is used to apply to the land north of the Yarmuk—the area more often known as Bashan—indicating a broad use of the term.

### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

596. In what sense are the Israelites said to have built the cities in Gilead?
597. Using a good Bible encyclopedia, determine the widest and most narrow sense in which "Gilead" is used.
598. How does this passage of the text help show the probable reason for awarding of a portion of the eastern territory to half of the tribe of Manasseh?

## V. REVIEW OF THE ROUTE FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN (33:1-49)

### A. EGYPT TO SINAI (33:1-15)

#### TEXT

Chapter 33:1. These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. 2. And Moses wrote their going out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord: and these are their journeys according to their goings out. 3. And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptains. 4. For the Egyptians buried all their first born, which the Lord had smitten among them: upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments. 5. And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth. 6. And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which is in the edge of the wilderness. 7. And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pi-hahiroth, which is before Baal-zephon:

and they pitched before Migdol. 8. And they departed from before Pi-Hahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and sent three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah. 9. And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they pitched there. 10. And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea. 11. And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. 12. And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah. 13. And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush. 14. And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink. 15. And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai.

## PARAPHRASE

Chapter 33:1. These are the journeys of the children of Israel, who went out of the land of Egypt, with their armies, under the hand of Moses and Aaron. 2. And Moses wrote their starting places according to their journeys by the command of the Lord, and these are their journeys according to their starting places. 3. And they left Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the next day after the passover the children of Israel started out boldly in the sight of all the Egyptians, 4. while the Egyptians were burying all their first-born whom the Lord had struck down among them; and God executed judgment upon their gods as well. 5. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses, and camped in Succoth. 6. And they journeyed from Succoth, and camped in Etham, which is at the edge of the wilderness. 7. And they journeyed from Etham, and turned back to Pi-hahiroth, which faces Baal-zephon and they camped before Migdol. 8. And they journeyed from before Pi-hahiroth and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness; and they went three days' journey into the wilderness of Etham, and camped at Marah. 9. And they journeyed from Marah and came to Elim; and in Elim

there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; and they camped there. 10. And they journeyed from Elim and camped by the Sea of Reeds. 11. And they journeyed from the Sea of Reeds and camped in the wilderness of Sin. 12. And they journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, and camped at Dophkah. 13. And they journeyed from Dophkah and camped at Alush. 14. And they journeyed from Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink. 15. And they journeyed from Rephidim and camped in the wilderness of Sinai.

### COMMENTARY

At the word of the Lord, Moses set down the progressive list of "journeys", actually, stations, at which the Israelites encamped from the time of leaving Egypt until they reached Canaan. Forty-one names appear in the list, if we include the final mention of Moab. Eleven names appear en route to Sinai, twenty-one on the way to Kadesh, and the final eight on the way to Moab. Many of the places are, understandably, unidentifiable. There can be no way of placing them, since they were never permanent settlements. Many familiar names appear on the list, such as Succoth, the wilderness of Sin and of Sinai, Ezion-geber, Kadesh, Mt. Hor, and the locations in Moab. Many others are totally strange; making it impossible to trace the journey with more than spotty accuracy.

Two dates are mentioned in the process of this listing: Israel left Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month; the death of Aaron is noted on the first day, fifth month, in the fortieth year after the exodus. To what purpose is this detailing? The primary lesson gained certainly is in the demonstration of the leading hand of God in the entire period. Most of the details used to embellish the listed "stations" are to be found in the introductory portion, i. e., verses 3-8. As was so often done by the Old Testament chroniclers and prophets, the people are reminded of the significance of their history, especially the devastating death of the Egyptian first-born. Of special interest is the fact that the account calls our attention to the burial of

the Egyptian dead. Funerary rites were especially important in Egypt, and the concentration of these people upon the rites afforded Israel an excellent period during which to move away on their journey. We are also reminded that the mighty works of the Lord were performed as judgment upon the gods of Egypt. The contrasting picture is obvious: the gods of Egypt had been directly assaulted in the plagues, and their powers to protect the people were bluntly refuted when the firstborn were slain. Israel would point to this fact repeatedly in the future.

### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

599. Why is it impossible to identify many of the "journeys" listed in this chapter?
600. What does the term mean here?
601. How does this section demonstrate the continuing leading hand of God?
602. How did the Egyptian custom of taking care to bury their dead work in favor of the Israelites?
603. Consult a good Bible encyclopedia, and learn how the plagues God sent upon Egypt were direct blows against that nation's gods.
604. What conclusions would we have expected the Egyptians to reach concerning their gods at the death of their firstborn?

### B. SINAI TO MT. HOR vv. 16-37

#### TEXT

Chapter 33:16. And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibroth-hattaavah; 17. And they departed from Kibroth-hattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth. 18. And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched in Rithmah. 19. And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmon-parez. 20. And they departed from Rimmon-parez, and pitched in Libnah. 21. And they removed from Libnah, and pitched at Rissah. 22. And they journeyed from Rissah, and pitched in Kehelathah. 23.

And they went from Kehelathah, and pitched in mount Shapher. 24. And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah. 25. And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth. 26. And they removed from Makheloth, and encamped at Tahath. 27. and departed from Tahath and pitched at Tarah. 28. And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithcah. 29. And they went from Mithcah, and pitched in Hashmonah. 30. And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth. 31. And they departed from Moseroth and pitched in Bene-jaakan. 32. And they removed from Bene-jaakan, and encamped at Hor-hagidgad. 33. And they went from Hor-hagidgad, and pitched in Jotbathah. 34. And they removed from Jotbathah, and encamped at Ebronah. 35. And they departed from Ebronah, and encamped at Ezion-gaber. 36. And they removed from Ezion-gaber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh. 37. And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom.

## PARAPHRASE

Chapter 33:16. And they journeyed from the wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth-hattaavah. 17. And they journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah, and camped at Hazeroth. 18. And they journeyed from Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah. 19. And they journeyed from Rithmah and camped at Rimmon-perez. 19. And they journeyed from Rimmon-perez and camped at Libnah. 21. And they journeyed from Libnah and camped at Rissah. 22. And they journeyed from Rissah and camped at Kehelathah. 23. And they journeyed from Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher. 24. And they journeyed from Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah. 25. And they journeyed from Haradah and camped at Makheloth. 26. And they journeyed from Makheloth and camped at Tahath. 27. And they journeyed from Tahath and camped at Terah. 28. And they journeyed from Terah and camped at Mithkah. 29. And they journeyed from Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah. 30. And they journeyed from Hashmonah and camped at

Moseroth. 31. And they journeyed from Moseroth and camped at Bene-jaakan. 32. And they journeyed from Bene-jaakan and camped at Hor-haggidgad. 33. And they journeyed from Hor-haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah. 34. And they journeyed from Jotbathah and camped at Abronah. 35. And they journeyed from Abronah and camped at Ezion-geber. 36. And they journeyed from Ezion-geber and camped in the wilderness of Zin, that is, Kadesh. 37. And they journeyed from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, at the edge of the land of Edom.

### COMMENTARY

Of all the place-names in this section, thirteen are not given anywhere else in the Old Testament. It is impossible to say whether or not Gray is correct in assigning these places to the total area wandering, as well as that between Sinai and Kadesh (see p. 296, *IB*). In this event, there would have been no attempt to mention the places chronologically, but simply as a composite list from the final two portions of the total journey from Egypt to Canaan. The list is, indeed, longer than necessary for the brief trip from Sinai to Kadesh; and the list covering the final 38½ years is proportionately much too small. Either Moses has listed every point at which the people encamped during the second leg, but has scantily summarized the third; or the stops in the one period were very brief, while in the other they were prolonged.

### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

605. Why are so many of the places mentioned here not to be found anywhere else in the Old Testament?
606. What alternative is there to accepting Moses' arrangement of the place names in chronological order? What evidences would seem to indicate this arrangement by geography rather than chronology?

### C. MT. HOR TO THE JORDAN vv. 38-49

#### TEXT

Chapter 33:38. And Aaron the priest went up into mount

Hor at the commandment of the Lord, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month. 39. And Aaron was a hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor. 40. And king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel. 41. And they departed from mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah, 42. And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon. 43. And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth. 44. And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ije-abarim, in the border of Moab. 45. And they departed from Iim, and pitched in Dibon-gad. 46. And they removed from Dibon-gad, and encamped in Almon-diblathaim. 47. And they removed from Almon-diblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. 48. And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho. 49. And they pitched by Jordan, from Beth-jesimoth even unto Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab.

## PARAPHRASE

Chapter 33:38. Then Aaron the priest went up to Mount Hor upon the command of the Lord, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month. 39. Now Aaron was one hundred twenty-three years of age when he died on Mount Hor. 40. And the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev in the land of Canaan, learned of the coming of the children of Israel. 41. Then they journeyed from Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah. 42. And they journeyed from Zalmonah and camped at Punon. 43. And they journeyed from Punon and camped at Oboth. 44. And they journeyed from Oboth and camped at Iyeabarim, near the border of Moab. 45. And they journeyed from Iyim and camped at Dibon-gad. 46. And they journeyed from Dibon-gad and camped at Almon-diblathaim. 47. And they journeyed from Almon-diblathaim and camped in the mountains of Abarim, before

Nebo. 48. And they journeyed from the mountains of Abarim and camped in the plains of Moab near the Jordan, opposite Jericho. 49. And they camped by the Jordan, from Beth-jeshimoth as far as Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab.

### COMMENTARY

The death of Aaron was a notable event in the history of Israel. Although he had not always been just what God wanted him to be, as when he participated in the affair of the golden calf (Ex. 32) and joined Miriam in seditious talk against Moses, we should see the man in his proper perspective, not remembering these incidents only, but knowing him as the spokesman for Moses before Pharaoh; as the conscientious high priest who faithfully performed his duties before a murmuring, complaining people; as the brother and intimate companion of Moses who must often have served as counselor, confidante and commiserator with the great man of God in whose shadow Aaron was required to live.

Since Aaron's death occurred "in the fortieth year," it is clear that God intended for the entire time taken up by the travels, from Egypt to Canaan, to be included in the forty years specified as punishment for the rebellion at Kadesh. In actual time, one and one-half years had been taken in the period from the exodus to Kadesh, and additional time was required to march around Edom, through Moab into the Abarim, and to overcome the eastern tribes of Gilead. Three years older than Moses, he had been 83 years of age when he stood before Pharaoh (Ex. 7:7).

Arad the Canaanite is mentioned here because he had previously opposed Israel, at their coming to the southern edge of Canaan (21:1-3), imposing a defeat upon them and taking a number of captives. He made no move against Israel in this situation, however. The people left the area soon, and all conflict was avoided.

From the scene of Aaron's death, the Israelites began their march around Edom, since the latter people had refused passage



through their land (20:14-21), coming to Zalmonah at the southeastern extremity of Edom. They then worked their way in a generally northward direction to the eastern side of Moab, removing later to the area of the Abarim and the northern plains of Moab at Abel-shittim. From this point they took their time to cross the Jordan. There can be no doubt that the Israelites made camp at many unnamed locations—camping perhaps for a few days or for extended periods of time. To reconstruct their travels completely and accurately, even if all the unnamed stations were also supplied, would be impossible. We have quite enough information, however, to show us that God's words to the people were accurately fulfilled.

#### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

607. Evaluate the life of Aaron as a man, as a spokesman for Moses, as a priest, and as a leader of the people, showing his strengths and weaknesses.
608. Cite a half-dozen instances in which Aaron had stood firm for the cause and the word of the Lord.
609. Why does the Bible tell us of the wrongdoings of Aaron?
610. What do we conclude from the fact that Aaron died "in the fortieth year"? Reconstruct a chronology of the period from Egypt to Abel-shittim, showing how the forty years are accounted for in the divisions of the trip.
611. Consult a reliable map of the area of the wandering, and trace the travels of Israel in regard to the known places where they encamped.
612. Is it possible that we are not given the names of every location where the Israelites stopped during their journeys?
613. If there are omissions in this list, how much would we be helped if the list were complete?