

**SABBATH-DAY
JOURNEYS; A STUDY OF
THE THIRTY-THIRD
CHAPTER OF NUMBERS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649021727

Sabbath-day journeys; a study of the thirty-third chapter of Numbers by William Justin Harsha

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WILLIAM JUSTIN HARSHA

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A STUDY OF THE THIRTY-THIRD
CHAPTER OF NUMBERS

BY THE
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FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

NEW YORK

CHICAGO

TORONTO

Publishers of Evangelical Literature

FOREWORD

THE thirty-third chapter of Numbers has commonly been regarded as a desert place in the Word. Few Bible students care to tarry long in its apparently dry and unfruitful wastes. The following series of studies is an attempt to show how unfounded this wide-spread opinion is. Every part of God's Word is "profitable," and the chapter referred to is not among the least useful and instructive portions. The significance of Bible names is nowhere shown more clearly. The work of sanctification in the soul is not elsewhere more strikingly portrayed.

It is to be noted that special value is attached to this chapter by the statement of its second verse: "Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord." This catalogue of the stations of Israel in the desert was made in obedience to a direct command of God. It will be observed that just forty-two journeys are mentioned here. This is significant, since forty-two is the number used in Scripture of the period of trial and discipline through which the church or an individual is called upon to pass. Then when we discover that the name of each station is significant, and that, taken in order, the journeys beauti-

fully set forth the whole course of the Christian from sin's bondage to the heavenly Canaan, we are led to understand why this chapter is given so prominent a place in the Word.

The example of our Lord and of His apostles may be pleaded as authority for the method of interpretation employed. Particularly may an appeal be made to 1 Corinthians, the tenth chapter, and most particularly to the sixth verse of the chapter: "Now these things were our examples;" or, as it is rendered in the margin of the Revised Version, "In these things they became figures of us." What befell the Israelites in the desert is a sublime and beautiful panorama of the work of grace in the human heart. All the trials and sufferings, as well as the joys and encouragements, of the Christian's training are here prefigured. It is not to be wondered at that Marah and Elim, Rephidim and Sinai, and many other stations appear repeatedly in the church's hymns and homilies. A closer study should yield added, if not more precious, results.

Thankful acknowledgment is made to Mr. Thomas Bromley, of England, whose little treatise on the desert stations, published nearly a century and a half ago and long since out of print, has been of material aid to the author. Many of his interpretations of names have been adopted, and it is hoped that his devout spirit has been followed. Other names and authorities need scarcely be mentioned. The aim of the book is distinctly practical, and it is hardly possible that any one who takes it into his hands will care to dispute upon fine points of etymology. Out of the storehouse have been drawn "things new and old." Into this small

garner Christian students are invited to enter and take as their need shall be, giving the blessed Master all honor.

Of the forty-two journeys there have been made fifty-two studies. The hope is that a quiet hour on the Sabbath day will be devoted to a careful reading of each section in turn, with a prayerful meditation upon the illustrative passages suggested. This hope prompted the giving of the name to the book. The studies will carry one through a year if pursued in this manner. Yet there is nothing arbitrary in the arrangement. This is not a Sabbath text-book for any given year. The study may be begun at any time and may be prosecuted at any desired rate of speed. The author has had in mind those busy workers who might be able to devote an hour on the Lord's day to following the pilgrims in a pilgrim spirit. He prays that this little book may be a blessing to such, to all, indeed, who take it into their hands, and, warm with this prayer, he sends it forth to its mission under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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