

Title: Patterns in the Journey  
Text: Exodus 17: 1-7  
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According to his everlasting covenant promise, God the Father has sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, and Christ Jesus has redeemed each of his elect children from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us.

God is bringing the good news of Christ's accomplished work to each one, sending forth the Spirit of his Son into the hearts of each one, whereby God effectually makes each one alive to cry in faith, Abba, Father.

When we were dead in sins we were in bondage under the law. We served them which by nature are no gods. But, we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, joint-heirs with Christ. We walk by faith, led of the Spirit, on a journey which is sure to end in heavens glory where we shall live with God for all eternity. (Gal 4: 3-7; Rom 8: 15-17)

That is the picture of grace set forth as God delivered the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage through the wilderness to the promised land.

**Proposition:** Through this journey through this world the Lord teaches his child more and more to trust our salvation into Christ's hands.

Since the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, we have seen many patterns develop. We will look at these patterns and see what we can learn from them.

**Title:** Patterns in the Journey

**Divisions:** 1: The pattern of leadership; 2: The pattern of trial; 3: The pattern of provision; 4: The pattern in the congregation

## **I. THE PATTERN OF LEADERSHIP**

**Exodus 17: And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim:....**

### **The Lord Leads His Children**

The way in which the children of Israel went was the way the LORD led them in. What comfort for us, brethren—the Lord leads his dear children along.

Numbers 9: 18: At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. 19: And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not. 20: And *so* it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed. 21: And *so* it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and *that* the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether *it was* by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. 22: Or *whether it were* two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining

thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. 23: At the commandment of the LORD they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

In conversion he leads us out of darkness into the Light of Christ led of the Spirit of God

- Saul of Tarsus
- Jonah. We may try rebel against the way as Jonah did, “But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.” (Jon 1:4)

Isaiah 40: 11: He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Psalm 23: 1: «A Psalm of David.» The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. 2: He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. 3: He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. 4: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. 5: Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 6: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

So the first pattern we see is the pattern of leadership—the Lord leads his dear children.

### **The songwriter wrote:**

In shady, green pastures, so rich and so sweet,  
God leads His dear children along;  
Where the water’s cool flow bathes the weary one’s feet,  
God leads His dear children along.

## **II. THE PATTERN OF TRIAL.**

**Exodus 17: 1:...and *there was no water for the people to drink.***

### **The Lord Leads His Children to the Trial**

Numbers 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 goings 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 of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. 4: For the Egyptians buried all *their* firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments.

Conversion from bondage to liberty, from death to life, is a trial. Deliverance out of bondage is a delight. But it is a trial until you are delivered. God brought them to that trial.

Numbers 33: 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 Pihahiroth, which *is* before Baalzephon: and they pitched before Migdol.

God ordered Moses to turn from the edge of the wilderness to take them down to this place where they were surrounded on all sides. Then the Lord himself hardened Pharaoh's heart to order his army to pursue the children. But God led them to that place. God leads to the trial.

Numbers 33: 8: And they departed from before Pihahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah.

God leads even to the bitter waters.

Numbers 33: 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.

God led them to that place where they had nothing to eat and murmured for bread.

**Numbers 33: 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.**

This is where we are in our text. God led them to the place of no water. God teaches his children that God is able to overcome all by leading us to trails that we cannot overcome.

- In Egypt, God overcame their bondage.
- At Etham, God overcame their enemies—Pharaoh and his army
- At Marah, God overcame their bitterness.
- God brought them back to the Red Sea where they hungered then God overcame their hunger.
- At Rephidim, God overcame their thirst—God is able to overcome and furnish a table in the wilderness.

**BELIEVER, WHAT IS YOUR NEED? GOD IS BIGGER THAN OUR NEED!** God is able to conquer all enemies. But we do not learn that God is able to overcome all our needs until

- God brings us to see our need
- God forces us to see our inability to overcome our need
- God makes us to see that only God overcomes our need.

**GOD LEADS US TO THE TRIAL TO TEACH US OUR INABILITY AND HIS ABILITY.**

**The songwriter wrote:**

Sometimes on the mount where the sun shines so bright,  
God leads His dear children along;  
Sometimes in the valley, in darkest of night,  
God leads His dear children along.

Though sorrows befall us and evils oppose,  
God leads His dear children along;  
Through grace we can conquer, defeat all our foes,  
God leads His dear children along.

**III. THE PATTERN OF GOD'S PROVISION.**

**Christ is our Full Provision and our Provider**

Every step of the way God not only overcame, but he teaches us that Christ is the Provision and our Provider.

Numbers 33: 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 of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

In Egypt, they overcame the bondage BY the lamb--Christ is our Passover—Christ has overcome our sin, our defilement, our chains of spiritual death.

Numbers 33: 7: And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pihahiroth, which *is* before Baalzephon: and they pitched before Migdol.

God opened the Red Sea that they might cross. Christ has born the sea of justice, removed our sin, crushed Satan's head and shall crush him under our feet shortly, Christ is able to turn the heart of the king which every way—Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords.

Numbers 33: 8: And they departed from before Pihahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah.

God overcame their bitterness by the branch being cast in—Christ and him crucified. I am the LORD that healeth thee—Christ is the LORD that healeth thee.

Numbers 33: 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.

Notice, after each of these trials he leads to refreshing—a picture of Christ—twelve fountains of waters and shady palm trees—Christ our Well of Salvation our Shade from the Heat of Judgment and Wrath and trial.

Numbers 33: 10: And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea.

God overcame their hunger. Do remember the provision? The Manna—the Bread—Christ is our full provision of Bread.

Numbers 33: 14: And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink.

**Exodus 17: 5: And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. 6: Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.**

Paul said, that Rock is Christ.

A rock is an unlikely thing to give water. Christ is despised and rejected of men with no form nor comeliness about him to make men desire him.

Yet God stood on that Rock. God first trusted Christ. 'God was in Christ' (2 Cor. 5:19). 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father' (John 14:9). With the sin of his people laid on him Christ our Rock stood between God and his people.

The rock was smitten by God in justice according to the law pictured in Moses' rod smiting the rock. Christ was smitten for a rebellious, sinful, undeserving people, as we are. He was smitten for a thirsty people that could not quench their thirst—dead in sins. But God had mercy upon us, as he did those that day with Moses. God bruised his Son in place of his people. God satisfied God!

Thereby, God gave us Water, Life from Christ our Rock. 'With his stripes we are healed.'

- Christ is our Righteousness
- Christ is our Sanctification
- Christ is our Peace with God

The rock followed them (1 Cor. 10:4) That is what we see in this full provision. Christ is our salvation and our provider in this journey. As dry as the desert was, the desert could not dry up that rock. Christ leads us through the wilderness, over the hills and valleys, all the way to Canaan.

Believer, do you thirst after righteousness? Do you have fears? Do you want assurance that God is able to furnish a table for us in this wilderness? God is able to overcome and furnish a table in the wilderness. And that full provision and provider is Christ Jesus the Rock Smitten, our Fountain of Life, our Provider.

#### **The songwriters refrain:**

Some through the waters, some through the flood,  
Some through the fire, but all through the blood;  
Some through great sorrow, but God gives a song,  
In the night season and all the day long.

#### **IV. THE PATTERN IN THE CONGREGATION**

**Exodus 17: 2: Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? 3: And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? 4: And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.**

##### **A Pattern of Rebellion**

Over and over they saw the faithfulness of the Lord, yet over and over they rebelled and murmured, they provoked God in their unbelief---v7 **And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?**

##### **A Pattern of Faith**

Remember, Moses was not without unbelief or without sin—neither is any believer—you and me included. When God called Moses to deliver his word Moses made objection after objection. God answered them all. Finally, Moses even asked God to send someone else—**“and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses”**. But the Lord provided in mercy, the Lord sent Aaron to talk for Moses. On another occasion, Moses came down out of the mount and threw the tablets on the ground and broke it when he saw their rebellion. Years later, they were murmuring for water again and Moses got very angry at their murmuring, he said, **“Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice”**. God corrected him for that. But God saved Moses in Christ.

Peter saw Moses with God in the Mt. of Transfiguration. So we see that Moses was not without sin and unbelief, just as we are.

But God sustained this pattern of faith in Moses, Moses was led of the Spirit of God. This is the pattern of the child of God by God's grace, by his Spirit. By faith, he repeatedly reminded those who murmured—**v2: Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?** By faith, Moses repeatedly turned to the Lord—**v4: And Moses cried unto the LORD,...**

The Spirit of God through Paul gives us a word of warning and encouragement.

Hebrews 3: 8: Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10: Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. 11: So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) 12: Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13: But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14: For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; 15: While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16: For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17: But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18: And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19: So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

1 Corinthians 10: 11: Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

### **What is the purpose of all this trial and deliverance?**

God was preparing Israel to build him an elaborate tabernacle, God's house. God calls his child to use us to build his house. The Lord's house is more than a house of sticks and stones—natural buildings are just furniture whereby God teaches us to trust Christ—his house is of living stones, his elect, called out and fitted together through his gospel.

I can't begin to explain it, but I see a little bit of the manifold wisdom of God in choosing to save through the gospel—In choosing to use nobodies to confound the wise. Not only does God call out his sheep thereby, but God teaches us, who he has already called.

When God brings a family of believers together, God first teaches us that God can build his house without us. We are taught the Power and Wisdom of God—Christ Jesus—as God leads us to the trials then shows us that GOD ALONE IS ABLE. He has, is and shall overcome everyone and everything which is everyone and everything that you and I have absolutely no ability to overcome. God continually teaches us our full salvation is Christ who accomplished salvation for us. And that Christ is our Head, our Provider, our Sustainer in this journey. That is how he magnifies his glory to us and makes us useful in the process.

Notice, God did not bring them out and tell them to start building his house. They had to be led through these trials first. God brought us together around 7 years ago.

He has brought us to a few trials and delivered us. They might not appear to be great trials to our brethren who have been together longer than us but they have been great trials to us.

Every time one member or one family is touched with a trial, even you that have not been in that trial, have been taught by it. Each of God's children is touched and taught with the trials of the other.

Moses was touched and taught with each family's trials as they journeyed along. I have been touched with each trial you have faced. Thereby, God is teaching me that God is able, teaching me more of Christ, to preach this gospel and remind you he is able.

Do you see how God has and is teaching us together that he is able to overcome every need we have? Do you see the wisdom of God in that? What wisdom!

**Illustration:** Usain Bolt's coach told him this week in the Olympics, "It's not how you start the race it is how you end it."

There is some truth to that--If any man turn back my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But it does matter how we run this race. Hebrews 12: 1-3 tells us how.

- We are to run this race, "Laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,"—most of which is unbelief
- "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us"—God set the course and put the hurdles in the way to teach us patience—Waiting on the Lord is believing him, whether sitting still or moving, whether at the bitter wells or at the wells of Elim.
- We are to run "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;"—not looking to the enemy, to the bitterness, to the hunger, to the thirst—"looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."
- We are to run reminded of the victory—"Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

God is leading.

Isaiah 30: 20: And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: 21: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

The journey is as sure.

Nehemiah 9:21: Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not....

The end is sure. He delivered them into the land he promised. So shall he do for those who trust him. The songwriter wrote...

Away from the mire, and away from the clay,  
God leads His dear children along;  
Away up in glory, eternity's day,  
God leads His dear children along.

Amen!