

LED BY THE LORD



“The Lord Went Before Them” – Exodus 13:21

In this lesson, we are going to examine the importance of God’s leading in the Christian’s life. It is possible for the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ to become so deceived, and self-sufficient in their spiritual walk, to think they have mastered the important aspects of life. For the most part, they think they only need the Lord’s help on the big things, everything else they have nailed down.

So let me begin this lesson with a short story about Albert Einstein and his chauffeur.

After Albert made his famous discovered ($E=MC^2$). Many institutes invited him to lecture on his discovery. His chauffeur attended every presentation. Eventually, the driver sat through enough lectures that he was able to memorize the entire speech; gestures and all.

One day, Albert saw his driver in the garage, conducting the lecture by himself. He was amazed at his accuracy. Albert applauded when he had finished. He was very

impressed. His driver was shocked and a little embarrassed that he was being watched by his boss.

Albert asked his chauffeur if he thought he could do his next lecture. The driver immediately said yes, but he requested a favor. He asked that Albert drive when they go to the next appointment. Albert, without any question, nodded his head, and said yes.

To make a long story short, they went to the next appointment with Albert Einstein at the wheel and his driver conducting the lecture. Everything went well and the lecture ended without a hitch, until someone in the back row raised their hand and asked a question. The driver was shocked. He never considered

that someone would ask a question. There was a long silence while the chauffeur thought on how he was to get out of this situation. Finally he said, "Your question is very easy, even my driver can answer it. I'll have him address your question."

So it is with us. We can easily deceive ourselves into thinking we have mastered certain aspects of life until someone or something throws us a curveball.

In this lesson, we find a delivered nation learning the importance of yielding to God's leadership.

1. Discuss the direction God chose to lead Israel to the Promised Land. In what ways can we apply this principle to our lives? — Exodus 13:17-18.

ANSWER:

Notice how the Lord led Israel.

a. Exodus 13:17-18

"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: ¹⁸ But God led the people about, through **the way of the wilderness of the Red sea**: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt."

b. He led them through the wilderness. He took the longer way. He took the humanly impossible way.

c. He led them to the Red Sea. Why?

- 1) So they would not go back – repent when they faced battle.
- 2) They needed to be hardened and matured in their faith.
- 3) The Red Sea allowed God to display His power and deal with Pharaoh.
- 4) The wilderness gave them a place to organize the nation, receive the Law, and was a place they would be humbled, tried and proven.
- 5) God knows what He is doing when He leads. For some of us it may seem like the wrong way or the long way, but in God's wisdom it is the best way.

2. The Hebrew word for “harnessed” in the KJV is a difficult word to translate. In the NKJV it has been translated, “orderly ranks;” in the ESV “equipped for battle,” and in the YLT “ranks of fifty.” Despite the difficulty in translating this word, our growing understanding of the ancient Hebrew language seems to lean towards it being “ranks” or “ranks of fifty.” **If it is “ranks” or “ranks of fifty,” imagine what it must looked like when 2,000,000 people marched out of Egypt 50 abreast.**

ANSWER:

- a. This portrays the image of long columns of men, women and children marching 50 people abreast. Each column would be approximately 300 feet wide. If the nation were divided into the twelve tribes (as we find later in Scripture), then each column would be 3.7 miles long.
 - b. Imagine the kind of leadership it took for Moses to organize such a march.
3. **Why did Israel carry Joseph’s bones with them?** — Exodus 13:19; Genesis 50:25; Joshua 24:32; Hebrews 11:22
4. **Discuss what impact the details of Psalm 105:37 had on Israel’s 44 day, 465 mile trek to Mt. Sinai.**

ANSWER:

- a. According to Psalm 105:37 — There were no feeble among them. God “brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.”
- b. The Bible tells us that it was a 44 day journey from Goshen to Sinai.

Israel left Goshen on Passover (14th day of the first month) and arrived at the Wilderness of Sin on the 15th day of the second month (Saturday) and arrived at the Wilderness of Sinai on the 1st day of the third month (Friday). This equals 44 days.

- c. The total trip was 465 miles. It took 24 days for them to travel 490 km (304 miles) to the Red Sea. They spent 8 days camping on a beach waiting for Pharaoh's army to come. After the Red Sea, it took Israel 20 more days to travel 260 km (161 miles). They marched an averaged of 12.6 miles a day.
- d. To understand this distance. An ancient infantry with ox drawn carts could march 25 miles a day (30-miles if they use horses). In the days of Jesus, the Roman army required its troops to be able to march 18.1 miles in a five hour time period. So for Israel to march an average of 12.6 miles a day was within reason.

5. Discuss the impact that Exodus 12:37-38 had on Israel's wilderness march.

ANSWER:

- a. Exodus 12:38 states that a mixed multitude left Egypt with them

“And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.”

This multitude later became a problem and were the first to become dissatisfied. (See – Numbers 11:4).

- b. Israel's first stop on their journey was at Succoth (tents). They moved as they were led by God from Ramses to Succoth – Exodus 12:37

“And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children.”

That is, they moved from a city (Ramses) to a place without houses (Succoth) and they dwelt in tents.

As Abraham “looked for a **city** which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10)

or as other saints looked forward to

“They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a **city**.” (Heb. 11:16)

“For they now have no continuing **city**, but they sought one to come.”

- 6. Using the following passages, discuss ten ways the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night typifies the Holy Spirit's leading.** — Exodus 13:21-22; Nehemiah 9:12; John 14:16; 16:13; Psalm 105:39; Eph. 4:30; Ex 33:9;

ANSWER:

- a. Exodus 13:21-22

“And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: ²² He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”

This was the visible sign of God's presence.

Nehemiah says in Neh. 9:12 “God leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go.”

b. 10 ways the cloud typifies the Holy Spirit in our life.

- 1) The cloud was not given until after Israel was delivered
 - a. First Israel slay the Lamb. This was followed by their deliverance from the land of Egypt. Then the cloud appears.
 - b. A similar pattern occurred in the New Testament. First we trust the blood of the Lamb and are delivered from our sins. Simultaneously we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit
- 2) The cloud was a gracious gift. There is no word about the people asking for the Guide. It came to them as a provision of mercy. Much like Jesus promised before He left His disciples.

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” – John 14:16

- 3) The cloud gave guidance through their wilderness journey.

Exodus 13:21-22

“And the LORD went before them . . . ²² He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”

John 16:13 “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will **guide** you into all truth:

Rom. 8:14 For as many as are **led** by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

- 4) The cloud gave light

“And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: ²² He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people” Ex 13:21-22

The Holy Spirit light the way for us.

- 5) The cloud gave a covering – Psalm 105:39

“He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.”

So too does the Holy Spirit Eph. 4:30 “We are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

- 6) God spoke from the cloud – Ex 33:9

Ex. 33:9 And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses.

Num. 12:5 And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

Psa. 99:7 He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.

Rev. 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches

7. The Cloud was darkness to Egypt

Ex. 14:20 And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

John 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

8) It rested on the tabernacle – Exodus 40:33-35

“And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. ³⁴ Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”

9) The cloud was never taken away even when Israel was weak and wayward. Neh 9:19

“Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.”

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” John 14:16

10) It will fall again upon Israel – Isaiah 4:6

“When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. ⁵ And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. ⁶ And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.”

Edwin Orr, a professor of Church history has described the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit during the Welsh Revivals of the nineteenth century.

When the Holy Spirit leads change will happen. As people sought to be filled with the Spirit, they did all they could to confess their wrong doing and to make restitution. But it unexpectedly created serious problems for the shipyards along the coast of Wales.

Over the years workers had stolen all kinds of things, from wheelbarrows to hammers. However, as people sought to be right with God they started to return what they had taken, with the result that soon the shipyards of Wales were overwhelmed with returned property.

There were such huge piles of returned tools that several of the yards put up signs that read,

"If you have been led by God To return what you have stolen, Please know that the management Forgives you and wishes you to keep what you have taken."