

Exodus 17:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel—God's instruction to 'go on before' (עֲבֹר, avor) means Moses must lead despite the danger. Taking elders provides witnesses to the miracle, preventing later accusations that Moses found natural water. The command to take 'thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river' identifies the Nile-striking staff that brought plague. That same rod that brought judgment on Egypt will now bring salvation to Israel—the instrument of wrath becomes instrument of grace. This pictures the cross: what seemed God's judgment on Christ becomes salvation's source for believers. The rod's double use shows God's sovereignty over both judgment and mercy.

Historical Context

The elders served as witnesses and representatives of the entire congregation. Their presence authenticated the miracle and prevented later disputes about whether Moses found natural water.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does leading 'before the people' despite danger model courage through God's command?
2. What does the same rod bringing judgment (Egypt) and grace (Israel) teach about the cross?

Interlinear Text

קְרָב	בְּעֵד	מִשְׁמָר	לְפָנֶיךָ	עֹבֵר	אֶל	יְהוָה	אָמַר	יְיָ	אָמַר
said	And the LORD	H413	unto Moses	H4872	Go on	H5674	before	the people	and take
H559	H3068				H6440		H5971		H3947
אַתָּךְ	מִזְקָנֶיךָ	לִשְׁבָא	רַמְטָךְ	אֲשֶׁר					
H854	H2205	of Israel	H3478	and thy rod	H4294				H834
wherewith thou smotest	H0	H853	the river	H2975	and take	H3947	in thine hand	H3027	and go
H5221									H1980

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