

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' (עָבַר, *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

וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה	אֶל	מֹשֶׁה	עֲבֹר	לִפְנֵי	הָעָם	וְקַח
said	And the LORD	H413	unto Moses	Go on	before	the people	and take
H559	H3068		H4872	H5674	H6440	H5971	H3947
אֶתְּךָ	מִזִּקְנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וּמִטֶּבֶל	אֶשֶׁר			
H854	with thee of the elders	of Israel	and thy rod	H834			
	H2205	H3478	H4294				
הִכָּה יָתָּה	בְּיָדְךָ	וְהֵלַכְתָּ:	וְקַח	הַיָּרְדֵּן	אֶת	בֹּ	
wherewith thou smotest	in thine hand	and go	and take	the river			
H5221	H3027	H1980	H3947	H2975			

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