

Numbers 9:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

When the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days (ובְּאַרְיכָה קָשְׁתָה עַל־) uv'ha'arich he'anan al-hamishkan yamim rabbim)—Arich (to lengthen, prolong) tests patience differently than constant movement. Extended waiting (yamim rabbim, many days) requires endurance, faith that God hasn't forgotten. The temptation to move ahead of God's timing is universal (Abraham and Hagar, Genesis 16).

Then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not (וְשִׁמְרָה בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת יְהָה וְלֹא יָפֻעוּ) veshameru veney-yisra'el et-mishmeret YHWH velo yisa'u)—Shamar (to keep, guard, observe) plus mishmeret (charge, duty, watch) emphasizes vigilant obedience. Lo yisa'u (and not they journeyed)—active obedience in staying put. Waiting is obedience.

Historical Context

Some encampments lasted months or even years. Kadesh-Barnea, for instance, became an extended dwelling after the rebellion of Numbers 13-14. Learning to wait on God's timing—neither running ahead nor lagging behind—was essential training for a people entering Canaan, where battles required precise divine timing (e.g., Joshua 6).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Why is waiting on God's timing often harder than active service, and how does this test faith differently?
2. What does Israel's patient waiting despite prolonged delay teach about trusting God's purposes even when His reasons remain hidden?

Interlinear Text

רָאָב יָמִים יָמִים	בְּמִשְׁכָּן	עַל	בְּעַנְתָּן	וְבְּפָאָר יְהִי	רָאָב יָמִים
tarried long	And when the cloud	H5921	upon the tabernacle	days	many
H748	H6051		H4908	H3117	H7227
וְשִׁמְרָה	בְּנֵי	לְשָׁבָא לְ	מִשְׁמָתְךָ תַּתְּאַת	יְהִי הַ	לְאַל
kept	then the children	of Israel	H853	the charge	of the LORD
H8104	H1121	H3478	H4931	H3068	H3808
!עַל!					
and journeyed					
H5265					

Additional Cross-References

Zechariah 3:7 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.