

September 24th, 2023

# All the Way My Savior Leads Me

Exodus 13:17-22

## The Gospel in the OT

This morning we resume our narrative of Israel's exodus from Egypt. If you are new to this series, what we have seen again and again is that the Exodus account is the gospel in the OT. It is both true history and a foreshadowing of what Jesus Christ would accomplish for us. Israel was in slavery to Egypt, just as man is in slavery to sin. Pharaoh would not let Israel go, just as the sinner is in bondage to Satan. It was only when the Lamb was slain that Israel was set free, so it is with the sinner, Jesus the Lamb of God shed His blood to set the captives free.

## The Lamb who leads

What we see this in our passage this morning is that Israel was not freed and then left to themselves. There was a long terrifying journey in front of them to the Promised Land, and the Lamb that freed them was now going to be the Lamb that led them all the way home. So it is in the Christian life loved ones. Jesus did not save you *only* to leave the rest of the journey up to you. That's not good news. That's not gospel. Our freedom from sin is only good news, if Christ leads us all the way home to glory. And that's *precisely* what our passage is about. The LORD who veils Himself in this pillar of cloud and fire is leading Israel all the way to the promised land. The work He began He will finish. Jesus Christ has promised in John 17:12 "I kept them in your name...I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost." Jesus led the Hebrews all the way to

the Promised Land, and He will lead us all the way to the True and Better Promised Land. How does Jesus lead us? What path does Jesus leads us in?

## I. A Predestined Path

### Exegetical

Note the repetition in our passage. In the middle of v.17 we read “*God did not lead them*” that way, v.18 “*But God led the people*” this other way. And then again in v.21 “*And the LORD went before them...to lead them along the way.*” The LORD *led them* by this pillar of cloud and fire. Moses tells Israel later in Deuteronomy 1:33 the Lord “went before you in the way to seek you out a place to pitch your tents, in fire by night and in the cloud by day, *to show you by what way you should go.*” So don’t miss this: it wasn’t Moses that lead Israel through the wilderness. It was Yahweh. Again, Numbers 9:17-18 says “...whenever the cloud lifted<sup>1</sup>...the people of Israel set out, and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the people of Israel camped. *At the command of the LORD the people of Israel set out, and at the command of the LORD they camped.*” And this Divinely determined path is all spelled out in detail in Numbers 33. Go look at it later. According to my reckoning the LORD moved Israel 43 times. 43 times the glory cloud lifted and descended from Rameses to the Jordan River. Every stop on Israel’s journey was chosen by God, determined by God, predestined by God. Not by chance, not by luck, not by the will of man but by Jehovah God Himself.

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<sup>1</sup> “...from over the tent, after that...”

## Dogma

Here's our **first principle**: *The Christian's path is pre-determined by God Himself.* Proverbs 16:9 "The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps." Proverbs 20:24 "A man's steps are from the LORD; how then can man understand his way?" Psalm 37:23 "The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way."

## Informatory Use

One of the distinctives of Reformed Theology is that God is absolutely sovereign. He's not partly sovereign. He's not mostly sovereign. He's absolutely, comprehensively, unequivocally sovereign. We experience God's sovereignty particularly in His providence. Listen to how the Heidelberg Catechism puts it in Q. 27 "What do you understand by the providence of God?" A. Providence is the almighty and ever present power of God by which he upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures, and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty—*all things, in fact, come to us not by chance but from his fatherly hand.*"

## Consolatory Use

Dear congregation, God did not *merely* choose you unto salvation—John 15:16 "You did not choose me, but I chose you..."—*but* He has chosen the exact path that your feet would take. He's done this with every one of His children. Over 300 years before King Josiah was born we read "O altar, altar, thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who make offerings on you, and human bones shall be burned on you'" (1 Kings 13:2). Likewise God told the

prophet Jeremiah “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). The Apostle Paul also knew this truth saying that God had set him apart before he was even born to preach Christ among the Gentiles (Galatians 1:15-16). Loved one, the LORD predetermined your path through this life. Every detail was planned, every trial carefully weighed. The Psalmist says “in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them” (Psalm 139:16).

### **Elenctic Use**

But you might say “I’m not an important person. God only determines the paths of important people.” Dear child of God, if God did not spare His only Son but gave Him up for us all, then every Christian is important to Him, precious to Him, dear to Him. Isaiah 43:4 “Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life.” God exchanged Christ’s life for your life. You are precious to Him, and He will not neglect you. Just as Josiah, Jeremiah and Paul’s life was carefully planned God, just as God determined every step of Israel’s journey, so your life, your whole life—cradle to the grave—has been predestined by God. Your life has not been left to chance, but to Christ. That’s our **first principle**: *The Christian’s path is pre-determined by God Himself.*

## II. A Precious Path

### Exegetical

Please look at v.17-18 “When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, “Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.” *But God led the people* around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.”<sup>2</sup> This was about a 1,200 mile detour. Imagine if we were taking a road trip to Burns, Oregon--about 200 miles to the West of us. But instead of going West—the direct route—we go South through Winnemucca Nevada; and then South West to Sacramento, Californian; and then turn North to Portland, Oregon; finally to turn East to Burns. A 200 mile trip would turn into a 1500 mile trip. Similarly, from Egypt to the Promised Land was a straight shot East 200-250 miles, versus the 1500 miles or so they ended up traveling. Why did God lead them the long way? There are several reasons, but the reason mentioned here was that Israel would have to go through Philistine country. Like Egypt, the Philistines belonged to the Seed of the Serpent, and that meant war.<sup>3</sup> But that raises the question: so what? The Promised Land was filled with Canaanites

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<sup>2</sup> Apparently in the plundering of Egypt they obtained weapons of war. They left Egypt equipped for battle. (Though God gave them what they needed, He knew they would still not be up to the task.) This is a *type* of what God does for us. When God brought You us of Egypt, He equipped us with mighty weapons. This is what Ephesians 6 is all about. John Bunyan says here: “Christ himself is the Christian's armory. When he puts on Christ, he is then completely armed from head to foot. Are his loins girt about with truth ? Christ is the truth. Has he on the breastplate of righteousness? Christ is our righteousness. Are his feet shod with the gospel of peace? Christ is our peace. Does he take the shield of faith, and helmet of salvation? Christ is that shield, and all our salvation. Does he take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God? Christ is the Word of God. Thus he puts on the Lord Jesus Christ.” John Bunyan, *The Works of John Bunyan Vol. 3*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), pg.110

<sup>3</sup> This would especially be frightening because there were giants among them. There was Goliath 1 Samuel 17:4; Lahmi 1 Chronicles 20:5; Ishbi-Benob 2 Samuel 21:16-17; and Saph is mentioned in 2 Samuel 21:18-22.

that they would have to fight. Why would God delay the inevitable? Because He was mindful of Israel's weak faith. v.18 says they would see war and change their mind and return to Egypt. The LORD in His tender mercy and pity condescends to Israel's weakness. Instead of taking the shorter route, He accommodates Himself to their spiritual immaturity. A.W. Pink puts it like this:

“The LORD does not suffer His “babes” to be tested as severely as those who are more mature; [consider] the various trials to which He subjected Abraham—the command for him to offer Isaac was not the first but the last great test which he received. It was so here with Israel. Later, there would be much fighting when Canaan was reached, but at the beginning He led them not the way of the land of the Philistines for that would have involved warfare. He had respect unto their weakness and timidity.”<sup>4</sup>

## Dogma

That brings us to our **second principle**: *The Christian's path is precious because God accommodates Himself to our spiritual immaturity.* Consider how many times Jesus constantly accommodated Himself to the spiritual immaturity of His disciples. When Jesus told Peter that the latter would deny Him, Jesus stooped down to help Him. Luke 22:32 *“I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.”* When His disciples were all hiding in fear after His death, His first words were not a deserved rebuke but rather *“Peace be with you”* (John 20:19). When Thomas refused to believe that Christ rose from the dead, Jesus didn't disown Him but lovingly lowered Himself to Thomas's level and said “Put your finger here, and

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<sup>4</sup> Source: <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/pink/Gleanings%20In%20Exodus%20-%20Arthur%20W.%20Pink.pdf> pg. 183, Accessed September 22, 2023. Additionally, Matthew Henry points out that “God is said to bring Israel out of Egypt as the eagle *brings up her young ones* (Deuteronomy 32:11), teaching them by degrees to fly.”

see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe” (John 20:27).

### **Experimental Use**

Here we see Israel leaving Egypt after 10 plagues, 10 miracles—a Biblical number of fullness—and yet our tender LORD accommodates them right here at the very point when their faith should have been as strong as steel. Dear congregation, how many times has Jesus done the same for you and me? I wonder if we could see into the secret counsel of God how many times He has chosen a longer journey for us instead of the shorter journey simply because He knew we were not ready for it.<sup>5</sup> Our path towards the Promised Land is indeed filled with such tender mercies of God. Lamentations 3:22-23 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; <sup>23</sup> they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

### **Informatory Use**

Certainly God is mercy. However He does want us to spiritually mature. He does want us to “stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong” (1 Corinthians 16:13). So how do we do that? How do we increase our faith? By *considering how God fulfilled His promises to those who have gone before us*. Look at v.19 “Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, “*God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones with you from here.*”<sup>6</sup> These bones were 200 years old. Israel was under oath for

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<sup>5</sup> “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now” (John 16:12).

<sup>6</sup> This detail of Joseph’s bones is not an unimportant footnote. It is mentioned no less than four times in Scripture: Genesis 50:25-26; right here; Joshua 24:32; and Hebrews 11:22 which says “By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.”

200 years to bring His bones out of Egypt. And now the day was here. Just as Joseph said God surely visited Israel. His bones were a witness that God always fulfills His promises. Dear church that is how you increase your faith: *meditate on Joseph's bones*. Mediate on how the saints of the past. Consider the outcome of their faith. Go read Hebrews 11, go read how their “faith conquered kingdoms... stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of the fire, escaped the edge of the sword...put foreign armies to flight” (Hebrews 11:33-34). Look at the end of the matter. Look at Joseph's bones. See how God has always vindicated the faith of His children. And you will grow up in Christ. But know in the meantime, that our Lord doesn't put the finish line at the beginning of the race. He continues accommodates us in our weaknesses as we grow up in Christ. That's our **second principle**: *The Christian's path is precious because God accommodates Himself to our spiritual immaturity.*

### III. A Painful Path

#### Exegetical

Please look at v.20 “And they moved on from Succoth and encamped at Etham, on the edge of *the wilderness*.” God took them into *the wilderness*. This wilderness was not like a camping trip up in Crouch, Idaho, where the nearest store is like 20 minutes away. This was a wasteland. The prophet Jeremiah reflected on this in his day and he said that this wilderness was “a land of deserts and pits...a land of drought and deep darkness...a land that none passes through, where no man dwells” (Jeremiah 2:6). This was not a vacation it was a trial. And Israel felt it. Why did they complain so many times? Why did they



murmur so many times? Because once they were in the wilderness, they felt trials, deep trials, dark trials that they didn't feel in Egypt. They were in the wilderness not just physically *but spiritually*. Please turn to Deuteronomy 8. Look at v.2 "And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years *in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.* <sup>3</sup> And *he humbled you* and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. <sup>4</sup> Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. <sup>5</sup> Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, *the LORD your God disciplines you.*" In summary, the journey to the Promised Land—the wilderness—was a time of humbling (v.2-3); a time of testing (v.2) and a time of discipline (v.5).

## Dogma

That brings us to our **third principle**: *The Christian's path is often painful as God leads us through the wilderness.* There's no lack of illustrations here. Abraham and Sarah suffered through the wilderness of being childless for a century (Genesis 17:17). Joseph suffered through the wilderness of slavery and prison (Genesis 37, 39). Paul's wilderness included his mysterious thorn that he pled with the Lord three times to remove (2 Corinthians 12:7). Truly Jesus said "In the world you will have tribulation" (John 16:33).

## Informatory Use

How do we move from spiritual immaturity (last point) to spiritual maturity? Through God humbling us, testing us, disciplining us. Children, boys

and girls, when I was in high school I was a good wrestler. I was a state champion in freestyle. In folk-style I took 3rd place as a sophomore and 2nd place my junior and senior year. I was pretty good for a hobbit. But when I got to college things changed. I was 18 years old and my 55 year old wrestling coach named Mike Young forced me to wrestle with him not on our feet but on the ground for the first several months at practice. He pummeled me again and again and again. It was so discouraging at times. But do you know what happened? I got better, so much so that he stopped wrestling me because I started pummeling him. He did his job. The pain of those months made me a far better wrestler. It is not good times that tend to grow our faith, it is hard times. Dark times, wilderness times. Peter says in 1 Peter 1:6-7 “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup>so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

### Consolatory Use

So for those of you who are in the wilderness right now, take heart, don't lose hope. Remember *Who* led you there. God *led* Israel into the wilderness, and so He *leads* us in the wilderness as well. It will do no good to say that Satan is behind our pain in the wilderness. That is what Open Theism says. If Satan is in control of your journey we have no hope. God predestined your path, even through the wilderness. Loved ones, you can trust the wisdom of the Pilot. He never steers the ship astray. You can trust Him. How do we know? That's what our final two points teach us. So this was our **third principle**: *The Christian's path is often painful as God leads us through the wilderness.*

## IV. A Persevering Path

### Exegetical

Please turn back to Exodus 13 if you are not already there. Look at v.21-22 “And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. <sup>22</sup>The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night *did not depart* from before the people.” The fire cloud *did not depart* from before the people. It raises the question. For long did the fire cloud lead them? We see it with them ch. 14, 16, 33, 40. It was still leading them in Numbers 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16. Moses spoke of it 40 years later in Deuteronomy 1:33, meaning just as Joshua was commissioned to lead Israel at Moses’ death, it was still leading them. Deuteronomy 31:14-15 “And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, the days approach when you must die. Call Joshua and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, that I may commission him.” And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tent of meeting. <sup>15</sup>And the LORD appeared in the tent in a *pillar of cloud*. And *the pillar of cloud* stood over the entrance of the tent.” We know from Numbers 33 the fire cloud led them all the way to the Jordan River. But when they entered the Promised Land (a type of Heaven) we see it no more. This fire cloud led them for 40 years. But what is more amazing than that is that the fire cloud stayed with them in spite of all of their sins.

- Immediately after the Red Sea, the Hebrews grumble and complain against the LORD (Exodus 15:22-24; 16:2-3).
- Aaron makes a golden calf and Israel gives it the glory for bringing them out of Egypt (Exodus 32:1-6).

- They complain about the manna that God miraculously provided for them (Numbers 11:1-10)
- All of Israel refuses to go into the Promised Land when the 10 spies bring back a bad report (Numbers 13-14).
- No less than five times did they openly express regret that God brought them out of Egypt (Exodus 14:11-12; 16:2-3; Numbers 11:4-6; 14:1-4; 20:4; 21:5).

Yet, in spite of all this the fire cloud did not depart. Nehemiah 9:19 “...you in your great mercies *did not forsake them in the wilderness*. The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should go.

## Dogma

Here's our **fourth principle**: *The Christian will persevere on the path because it depends not on himself but on the LORD*. Oh dear saint, this is the great doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. WCF 17.1 says “They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; *but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.*” The Church will infallibly, irresistibly, invincibly make it to Heaven, because the Lord Himself will not depart from us.

## Elenctic Use

Now if you know the whole story, you may object. You may say “Wait a minute, that whole generation of Israelites, except Caleb and Joshua and those under 20 years of age all died in the wilderness because of their sin. They didn't persevere. They didn't make it to the Promised Land. Certainly this means that some Christians won't make it to Heaven because of their sin.” How

do we answer that? It is true that generation perished. But it wasn't because of their general sins, it was because of a very particular sin. Jude 1:5 "Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, *afterward destroyed those who did not believe.*" Why were they destroyed? *Because they didn't actually believe.* They were not true Israel, they were not the true Church. It wasn't their sins *per se* that held them back, it was their unbelief.

### **Consolatory Use**

Loved ones, there is no use in denying this truth. You and I are great sinners. Israel in one sense is a mirror. In her we see all our deformities, all our iniquities, all our hell deserving sins. All men in this respect are equal. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The true Christian will make it to the promised land not because we haven't sinned gravely, but because the Lord—the fire cloud—will not depart from us. Yes those who are false brethren will not make it. The Judases will perish. But the Lord will never forsake the Peters and the Marthas—those who have truly received Christ as their Savior—regardless of their manifold sins.

John 6:39 "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day."

John 10:27-28 "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."

John 17:12 Jesus said “I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost.”

So realize this Loved Ones, you will not make it to the Promised Land because of something in you. You will make it because the fire cloud of the LORD will never depart from you. Our perseverance Westminster says “depends not upon [our] own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within [us], and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which arises also the certainty and infallibility thereof.” That’s our **fourth principle**: *The Christian will persevere on the path because it depends not on himself but on the LORD.*

## V. A Path of Perfect Presence

### Exegetical

The last question is *what* was this pillar of cloud/pillar of fire that led them, that would not depart from them? *What* is the wrong question. *Who* was this? Look at v.21 “*And the LORD went before them* by day in a pillar of cloud...” Yahweh led them.<sup>7</sup> The pillar of cloud and fire was a Theophany--a Divine appearance. Which Divine Person do you suppose this was? It was the same Divine Person who appeared in the Burning Bush. It was the Lord Jesus Christ—

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<sup>7</sup> cf. Exodus 14:19, 24; Numbers 14:14; Psalm 99:7.

pre-incarnate.<sup>8</sup> This is the witness of the NT. It was Jesus who delivered Israel out of Egypt (Jude 1:5); it was Jesus who led Israel by the pillar<sup>9</sup> of cloud and fire in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:9); it was Jesus who would not depart from them but was with them wherever they went, all the way to the Promised Land.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Christ the mediator of the Covenant, the One who would walk through blood appeared as smoke and fire in Genesis 15:17. Christ appeared in the fire at the burning bush Exodus 3:1-6; and then again at Sinai in a cloud and the fire that consumed the top of the mountain Exodus 19:9-16; 24:6-16; Deuteronomy 5:23; 9:15; Acts 7:37-39. This same Christ in the smoke and the fire rested over the tabernacle Exodus 40:38. This same Christ appearing in the cloud over the mercy seat in the holy of holies Leviticus 16:2. This same Christ appears in the clouds from the wilderness as the Heavenly Groom of His Bride (Song of Solomon 3:6).

<sup>9</sup> Why in the shape of a pillar? Why not some other shape? What do pillars do? Physical pillars support the weight of a building. Samson brought the building down on the Philistines by pushing down the pillars Judges 16:28-30. Thus analogically the earth (the greatest building) rests on pillars 1 Samuel 2:8; Job 9:6; Psalms 75:3. Thus metaphorically wisdom is said to rest on seven pillars Proverbs 9:1. Thus Christologically, the Lord is said to have pillars of marble as legs (Song of Solomon 5:15) to support Him. Thus ecclesiologically, James and Peter and John were called pillars of the church seeming to indicate that they supported the weight of the church in Jerusalem Galatians 2:9 (The church is called the pillar of truth (1 Timothy 3:15); Jeremiah was called a pillar (Jeremiah 1:18); The leaders of other institutions are called pillars Isaiah 19:10; Ezekiel 26:11). Thus covenantally, pillars were used as symbols of covenant that was made between God and man, the pillar as a symbol that the weight of the covenant will be held up Genesis 28:18-22. Thus doxologically, pillars were symbols of worship Genesis 35:14 (Moses built an altar with 12 pillars Exodus 24:4; The tabernacle and the temple were filled with pillars that God prescribed). Thus idolologically the pillars of other gods were to be despised and broken down Exodus 23:24; Leviticus 26:1; Deuteronomy 7:5, 16:22; 2 Kings 10:26; 2 Chronicles 14:3, 31:1. From this we can conclude that 1) Jesus Christ is the Pillar of Heaven and Earth. The weight of the Heavens is on His shoulders. He is the Pillar that prevents Heaven from falling down upon us. or 2) that Jesus is the only go-between, the only Mediator between God and man.

<sup>10</sup> "This pillar of cloud and fire, and also the cloud of glory on mount Sinai, and in the tabernacle and temple, was a type of Christ in the human nature. The cloud was a fit representation of the human nature, being in itself a dark body, a vapour, a weak light thing, easily driven hither and thither by every wind, or the least breath of air; while it continues, is a most mutable thing, sometimes bigger, and sometimes less, constantly changing its form, puts on a thousand shapes, and it quickly vanishes away, is easily dispersed and brought to nought; a little change in the air destroys it, a little cold condenses it, and causes it to fall and sink into the earth. See [2 Sam. xiv. 14](#). A little increase of heat rarifies and causes it wholly to disappear. A cloud is a most fit representation of the human nature of Christ, because it is derived from the earth, but yet is a heavenly thing. The bright, glorious, and inimitable fire or light that was in the midst of the cloud, represented the divine nature united to the human. The cloud was as it were a veil to this fire, as Christ's flesh was a vest to the glory of the divinity. When Christ took the human nature upon him he veiled his glory, the bright and strong light of the glory within, which otherwise would have been too strong for the feeble sight and frail eyes of men, was moderated, and as it were allayed and softened, to make it tolerable for mortals to behold. Thus the glory of God is exhibited in such a manner in our incarnate Saviour, so as it were to moderate, soften, and sweeten the rays of divine glory, to give us a greater advantage for free access to God, and the full enjoyment of him." Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 2*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), pg. 720

## Dogma

That brings us to our **final principle**: *The Christian is not alone on his path but Jesus Christ is with him unto the end of the age.* This pillar of cloud and fire was a type of how Jesus is with us even now in this age. The last thing He told His disciples after the Great Commission was “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

## Consolatory Use

Dear child of God, this is how make it. Jesus is with us. This is how we endure. Jesus is with us. This is how we never give up. Because Jesus is with us. The presence of Jesus Christ with His people is the deepest, strongest, most sure consolation of the soul.

Psalm 23:4 “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, *for you are with me.*”

Psalm 46:2 “...We will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea.” Why? Because v.5 “*God is in the midst of her.*” v.7 “*The LORD of hosts is with us.*”

Why did Caleb and Joshua believe that the giants in the Promised Land would be easy to overcome? Numbers 14:9 “...do not fear the people of the land, *for...the LORD is with us.*”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> cf. Deuteronomy 7:21



How could Paul have courage before his execution when all his friends deserted him? Because he said “*the Lord stood by me and strengthened me*” (2 Timothy 4:17).

Why can we look at the howling wilderness and not be afraid? Because “...he has said, “*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*”<sup>6</sup> So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?” (Hebrews 13:5-6).

### Hortatory Use

So here's your **charge** dear congregation.

- **First** *have confidence* that your path to the Promised Land has been predestined by God. Your journey through this life is not by chance, but you are in the Sovereign hands of the Redeemer.
- **Second** *be content* that your path to the Promised Land is most precious because the Lord accommodates Himself to your weakness of faith.
- **Third** *consider* that this painful path to the Promised Land is to test your faith so that on that Day you will praise, honor and glory in God.
- **Fourth** *be cheerful* on this path because you will invincibly persevere because the Lord will never depart from you.
- **Fifth** *take comfort* on this path because it is the Lord Jesus Himself who is with you always even unto the end of the age.