

How the lord (Jesus!) Leads His People

Main idea: God leads His people by order, human leadership, expertise, but most of all Himself!

Introduction: three days' worth of journeying (v33) will take shockingly long, but before the trouble that comes from the people, the Scripture focuses first on the help that comes from God.

1. Order
 - a. Camps. Single-column military formation for security. "Prep" via census and instruction.
 - b. Structure arriving first on wagons, then the holy things on poles
2. Leadership
 - a. The tribe that has the standard for each camp.
 - b. The chief/leader that is over each tribe.
3. Expertise
 - a. Hobab. Familiar with the wilderness and fiercely loyal.
 - b. Reminder that Moses himself was familiar with the wilderness.
4. The Lord Himself
 - a. Power. Of the millions who arise and who rest, One makes all the difference.
 - b. Presence. Gladness in God, and praise of Him, are the point of all their work and resting.

Conclusion: How much more we know and have His power and presence in the Lord Jesus.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Numbers chapter 10 verses 11 through 36.

These are God's words. Now, it came to pass on the 20th day of the month in the second year. That the cloud was taken up above the Tabernacle of the testimony. And the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai on their Journeys. Then the clouds settled down in the wilderness of Paran.

So, they started out for the first time according to the command of Yahweh. By the hand of Moses. The standard of the camp are the children of Judah set out first according to their armies, Over. Their army was an action son of a minute. Over the army of the tribe of the children of visakar was nothing else, son of zuar.

And over the army of the tribe of the children of zebulun was eliad. The son of Halon Then the Tabernacle was taken down and the sons of gershon and the sons of morari, set out carrying the Tabernacle. And the standard of the camp of Reuben set out according to their armies.

Over their army was elizor. Son of sharayor over the army of the tribe of the children of Simeon was shalumi. Oh, the son of zarishidai. Over the army of the tribe of the children of God was Eliasaf, the son of dewell And the coatites set out carrying the holy things, the Tabernacle would be prepared for their arrival.

On the standard of the camp are the children of Ephraim, set out, according to their armies. Over their army was Ali Shama the son of a hood. Over the army of the tribe of the children of Manasseh was Gamali all the son of parasur. The army of the tribe are the children of Benjamin was Avidan the son of giriani.

Then the standard of the camp are the children of Dan the rear guard of all the camps set out according to their armies. Over their army was ahiezar, the son of Amishadai. Over the army of the tribe of the children of Asher was paggio, the son of Akron. And over the army of the tribe of the children of naftali was a hero, the son of Anan.

Thus was the order of March of the children of Israel according to their armies, when they began their Journey. Now Moses said to how bad the son of rewell, the midianite, Moses father-in-law. We are setting out for the place of which Yahweh said. I will give it to you.

Come with us and we will treat you well for you always promised good things to Israel. And he said to him, I will not go, but I will depart to my own land and to my relatives So Moses said, please do not leave and as much as you know, how we are to camp in the wilderness and you can be our eyes.

And it shall be, if you go with us, indeed, it shall be That whatever good Yahweh will do to us the same. We will do to you. So they departed from the mountain of Yahweh on a journey of three days. The Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh went before them for the three days Journey.

Search out the resting place for them. And the cloud of Yahweh was above them by day when they went out from the camp. So it was whenever the arc set out, that Moses said rise up o Yahweh let your enemies be scattered. And let those who hate you, flee before you.

And when it rested, he said return o, Yahweh To the many thousands of Israel. Amen, that sends this reading of God's inspired and inerrant toward It's a precious portion of scripture for us at Hopewell ARP. Not yet to you. I hope all scripture is precious to you. But in God's dealing with us and particularly, with our fathers.

Uh, for for we are. Uh descended from covenanters, who often sang the opening, stanzas of Psalm 68 as they were about to go into battle. Praying that The Lord would take in battle those who were prepared to meet their creator and that those who are not spiritually prepared, might survive.

And they would often sing. Uh, let God arise, let his enemies be scattered. But those also who hate him, flee before him. The opening verse of Psalm 68 coming, as it does from the end of numbers, 10. Which is before us this afternoon. And then as Smoke has driven away, so drive them away as wax.

Melts before the fire. So let the wicked perish at the presence of God, but Let the righteous be glad that them Rejoice. Before God. Let them, yes, let them Rejoice exceedingly. And so also the second part there at the ending of Numbers chapter 10 Fraterno Yahweh to the many thousands.

Of Israel. Sing to God, sing praises to his name, extol him, who rides on the clouds by his name, yah? And rejoice before him. A father of the fatherless a defender of widows as God in his holy habitation. God sets, the solitary in families. He brings out those who are bound into Prosperity but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

And then the Uh, the opening stands of Psalm 68 ending this way. Oh God. When you went out before your people? When you marched through the Wilderness. Say law. And there is a crescendo, or a key change. Or maybe an acceleration, the word say law, not meaning, rest, as you may have heard, but from a root, that means to increase.

Uh, in the middle of a sentence. And yet highlighting what we have here that the Lord who went out before his people, the Lord before whom When the ark set out, Moses would say rise up. Oh, Yahweh, let your enemies be scattered and let those who hate you flee before you And the Lord before whom, then when the The ark was resting, which would would Moses would cry out return?

Oh, Yahweh to the many thousands of Israel. He is to his people throughout all the ages. The same as he was then. And he has caused to be written in his songbook and in his prayer book. A song, a prayer for us to sing and for us to pray, To no, not merely that.

That we may somehow haltingly by faith believe that God who once gloriously manifested himself in a cloud and appearance of Fire by night and by use of furniture A box with a lid and cherubim and poles. That somehow we having less than they did, would believe that he is with us, but we don't have less We have more.

God himself has tabernacled Among Us. The one to whom we are united as a bride to her husband sits upon the throne of glory. He has not only Arisen, he has ascended and he has taken a seat, and all of his enemies are being made a footstool for his feet.

Psalms 110. And the many New Testament passages that make use of Psalm 110 declare Jesus to be Yahweh of numbers 10 verses 11 through 36. And so praise God, if you are like I was Three and a half decades or so uh late Elementary School and into Junior High and high school, youth group and Desiring to be led by Christ belonging to him by faith but not knowing what that is like.

Here, we have a passage. On how God leads his people, how the Lord Jesus. Leads his people and praise God, he focuses on himself first in this three days journey, because this three days journey is not going to take them 3 days. It describes in verses 11 and 12.

And Or really 11 through 13. And then verse 33, you would think that the The cloud lifted up and the ark went out and they traveled for 3 days to Perron and the cloud descended and they set up the Tabernacle and that's how it was. They came to pass in the 20th day of the second month.

So we're 19 days now, after the censuses began. Uh, in the second year that the cloud was taken up from above the Tabernacle, the testimony, the children of Israel set out from the will, from the Wilderness of Sinai on their Journeys. Then the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran.

Well, we don't actually get to the Wilderness of Quran until chapter 12 and verse 16. And verse 33 describes it saying so they departed from the mountain of Yahweh on a journey of three days. And the Arc of the Covenant of y'all, we went before them for the three days journey to search out a resting place for them.

But it's like saying well how far is Uh, the Nashville Zoo from your home. Well, it's 50 minutes. Uh, but it depends on when you leave and what is happening, it might be an hour and a half. Well these, this three days journey is going to take them at least a month at stop.

Number one. While they eat Quail of judgment, which Lord willing will get to next. Next Lord's Day Afternoon. And then if the Lord spares us, another Lord's day, we'll find out that they had to spend at least a week for Miriam to recover from the leprosy with which God plagued her for rising up and Rebellion against Moses.

And so you may feel in your life that the great story of your life, is the story of your sluggishness before, God, your resistance to his, will your sin and the time that it takes to recover. Um, As the Lord in his merciful dealings with you chastens, you or restores you or, or get, uh, permits you to finally complete what was three days worth of?

Of living or accomplishment and took you a month and a half or more, or But that's not the great story of your life and that was not the great story of Israel's life. The great story of Israel's life was Israel's God, And so, there is a real sense in which It's a three days.

And God is leading them. The cloud arises, the ark goes out and eventually the ark comes to rest and the cloud. The cloud comes to rest and the The Arc stops, and they set up. And there they are three days away from, from the Wilderness of Sinai, where they began in the wilderness of Quran.

If you didn't go into chapter 11 at all, All you would see is the faithfulness of God. The reliability and power of God and how he led his people. And so the Lord draws our attention in this portion of his word to how he leads his people. And we see him Uh, giving his people order.

And some of this, Uh, just describe in summary fashion. Because we've been through chapter two, In which the order was prescribed. And now, the order that was prescribed is followed and we've been through chapter four, In which the order for the gersonites and the meraitis and then the coatites the gershonites and the meraitis with their wagons because they're carrying the structure in the marorites or sorry.

The covetites no wagons because they have to carry the holy things on pulse and so far so forth. So there's the order. Has provided leadership. God has provided expertise. But overall these things and in all these things, By in using all these things, the Lord has especially provided Himself.

And so we do have the order. You notice, there are the four camps And, And the four camps go in single column military formation. Uh, God has A security precaution. He even describes them, according to hosts, which is the word for armies, and praise God. New King James here is, is using the word armies, which is exactly what you would hear.

If you were, if you were a Hebrew, you know, we we hear the Lord of hosts and I don't know what you think, whether you think a great multitude of people As a great host, which maybe, or maybe even you think of like, Uh the the Lord who is really good at putting on dinner parties.

Uh, but it's an army word. And they're in a they're in a military formation. God God calls them to move in the order that is appropriate to what he's doing, among them. And so when the Lord organizes his church, And we know that the way that he grows us, the means by which he grows us are in the means of Grace.

And in, in those, uh, those spiritual things, word, Sacrament, and prayer. And he organizes a church with Elders. And not a hierarchy of Elders. Lest we exalt or trust in the men, whom he uses to Shepherd Us in spiritual things, But one plurality of Elders, so that even in Acts 15, even in First Peter 5, the apostles considered the Elders of the same Authority in the church courts as they had.

Even though the office of Elder was not the same as the office of Apostle. And so, there is an order that God has given us. Prioritizing. The means of Grace, prioritizing his worship prioritizing, those things by, which he works out in us, the union, with Christ that he has given us.

But also, Giving us deacons. Because we are to serve one another and not merely in spiritual things. For we are still Body and Soul human beings. And in this world, we do have property and possessions, and they are no Christs property and possessions for we are Christ's property and possession.

And so he even by the order that he has given us, Thank God, he hasn't called us to March as an army. And that does indicate to us. What the nature of the church is like, And he gives not just the camps, but He gives an order that will be conducive to keeping his commands for worship.

It's very important that the Tabernacle be set up first that That the coatites be able to arrive and the gershonite, and marrowite wagons would be unloaded and everything would be. In exactly the right place so that they could carry in and their poll is still covered. The holy things.

And put them, put them where they go. Praise God. He knows where he is taking us and he has given us our orders and we don't have to know necessarily where we are going. One of the great things that, That he has done for his people here, as he is set up, even the the way, by which they move.

So that they are learning what he's going to come and tell them later towards the end of Moses's final sermon. The secret things belong to our God. Where he's going to take us, what he's going to do. A great number of the details between now and future events. Some of which he has told us.

Almost all of which he hasn't. Between now and then. But he is the one who is leading us. And he's given us revealed things too, hasn't he? Those are the ones that are for us and for our children that we may keep all his word Because he is leading us and Um, he gives us orders that our Commandments This is all being done, isn't it?

According to the command of Yahweh. By the hand of Moses as verse 13 says, which brings us to the second thing, not just order, not just the general structure but particular leaders. Even among the four camps, he has assigned particular tribes. That will carry the standard. That that Camp of their of three tribes rallies around, whether it's the standard of Judah or the standard of Reuben or the standard.

Sorry. Ephraim, I was going to say Manassas. The other brother, the standard of Ephraim, this or the standard of Dan But then, even among each of the 12 tribes, they each have a leader. And even the the Priestly tribes. Or each or the levitical tribes. Are each assigned, one from the house of Aaron who are Over them.

Although the the members of the House of Aaron, Uh, leas are in ethamar, are not. Are not particularly mentioned here. But the 12 leaders of the 12 tribes are And so you remember that the Lord had picked those men by name himself. He had chosen them. And so, the leadership that God has given us.

As the leadership that God has given us. None of those men were picked because they were sinless as we were going to Even the 70 elders that we'll hear about. Next. Lord's Day. Lord willing. Or not picked because they're sinless and the spirit coming upon them doesn't make them sinless.

As we're going to see. Hopefully does not shock. Uh, you children but your parents aren't sinless. But as I sometimes, tell my children. Sometimes daddy is wrong. But God has never once been wrong to have. Made me your daddy. And so, you have to honor and obey me. Because God made me your leader in the home.

When we do the same with our leaders, in the church, the elders that God has given us. The deacons that God has or is giving us And so God leads his people by establishing an order for them that is his commandment that is appropriate to what he is going to take them through.

What he's going to do for them God, it gives them particular leaders. God also uses expertise. It is not. A spiritual or praiseworthy thing. To refuse to study the Bible. Whether you're going to be, Teaching it to your children or whether you're going to be praying from it, even in your private, uh, Private worship or leading your family in it or leading.

The congregation he uses expertise. He has created us with a capacity for wisdom. That's part of being made in His Image. And here he provides Hobab. The son of Raywell. The fact that he Uh the he is Moses's brother-in-law that real well, the midianite is Moses's. Father-in-law reminds you.

That hobab isn't actually perfectly necessary here. Is he Moses spent 40 years as a Shepherd in this Wilderness. But here you can see that moza Moses. Recognizes the Providence of habab as a gift from God. And he doesn't say. Well, we have the arc and we have the cloud rising up and and going out and and setting down.

We have no need of expertise. No wisdom is from God. Expertise is from God. Men should study men, should prepare men should be skilled. Paul did not tell Timothy. Don't you dare prepare your sermons or your prayers? Make sure you always preach and pray off the cuff so that you could be extra spiritual.

No, he said study to show yourself a Workman, who will be unashamed. God uses. Expertise. Praise God. Hobab. Just the sort of fiercely loyal, man that you would want to have expertise. When Moses invites him on account of what he might get with Israel. He says, no. I'll go to my own land and my relatives.

It's like barzulai the gileadite who served David, even when Absalom turned against him. And he's 80 years old and David tries to coax him to come and stay in the palace with him when he's restored. And he said You know what? Maybe take my boys but my place is at home.

I can't enjoy all that. Royal stuff anyway, my taste buds and Ears. And And eyes don't function like they used to. Well, how bad is first offered? These good things that Yahweh has promised to Israel. In verse 29, he says, no, I'll go to my own land and to my relatives Notice what moves him?

It's not the offer of the good things. He's offered them again and with more covenantal language in verse 32, but what moves him is that God's people need Moses said, please do not leave in as much as you know, how we are to camp in the wilderness and you can be our eyes.

You hear what Moses is saying here? It's very humble, isn't it? After 40 years of being married, to hobab's sister, And doing the same job as hobab. He might have said, you know what, no worries. How bad I've got plenty of experience. We're good. But the humility of Moses and the kindness of Hobab.

Are joined together in God's Providence. To provide his people with expertise. So the Lord provides order and he provides leadership and he provides expertise and he uses all these things but really it's the Lord It's the Lord. Who is his own greatest provision? He gives us a privilege of participation, he gives us a privilege of obedience.

That we may discover his faithfulness not just that his commands are good but his grace even sustains Us in keeping them and then he makes that to be effective. He blesses it, but it's he who does it. And so, in this, Uh, in these 36 26 verses or so.

He is preparing us for the three days Journey that wasn't three days journey. The climax, the conclusion is so it was whenever the ark set out that Moses said rise up o Yahweh and let your enemies be scattered. And let those who hate you, flee before you. Is this not what you do.

Day by day in your morning times. As you're going out. And you have, You have the enemy within. You know, the world and the devil. Are not nearly so intimidating to the believer as the flesh. Uh, but you do have all of that to do. And yet the Lord Jesus who sits enthroned on high and who has joined you to himself, And who gives you not even to eat or drink except that you do it in his name?

It's a really good. Really good principle for. Figuring out what you can do in just War. You could do just as much as you can do. Sincerely zealously, in Jesus's name. But it's not the just not only the just Warrior. It's the child. Is waiting to eat and drink, until mommy says he can start.

And until daddy has prayed why? Well, both because Jesus told him to honor his mommy and daddy. And because they're training him to eat only in his name. And so, we eat in a way that receives it from the Lord. And we, we eat in a way that is considered of others.

Whom the Lord has also given us. And all of those things, there's a whole life eating, and drinking and everything you do to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is one of the reasons why he gave us the Psalms. You remember that in Colossians 3?

We let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. Admonishing one, another, with Psalms hymns and spiritual songs. And he highlights three different types of Psalms by the three different types of Greek words in their superscripts and in the Greek copy of of the psalter that the New Testament Church would have had And then he says, Doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

That's why we have a songbook that covers every sort of circumstance, every sort of emotion. That we encounter in the Christian Life. So that we learn how to do all in the name of Jesus, so that the beginning of our day, Is a crying out to God to rise up.

Yeah, we're gonna go do things that are according to wisdom and and we're going to be under Authority or in Authority, and we're going to be doing it orderly. But it is the Lord. The Lord who arises and goes before us. And then when the work is done and we can return to worship again.

Is a return O Lord to the thousands of Israel. Receive the praise and Thanksgiving. For all that you did for us and helped us do since last, we were gathered to receive our pleas for forgiveness and are crying out and confessing of sin for all that we have done since the last time we were gathered to you.

And so praise God for this precious passage in which we see how the Lord leads his people. And we know that the Lord is Jesus. And he still leads us this way. Amen, let's pray. How we thank you, Lord. For being the same yesterday and today and forever. And that you Lord, Jesus very specifically are the same yesterday and today and forever that you are with us.

Always even to the very end of the age that our keeping all that you have commanded is by your grace. And so give us to have a view of our life that is like this. Do we pray? Keep us from sinning against you. We complicate and corrupt so much but we thank you.

That ultimately, when the story is written. It is of how you were faithful. And you let And you accomplished. So be glorified in our lives. We pray and help us by your spirit. For whose ministry, we ask in writing the truths of this portion of your word on our heart.

Which we ask in your own name. Lord, Jesus. Amen.