

half will come. That's what we're told elsewhere, as the order is described. And here it says it went before them and so they get all excited about whether the ark was at the head of the group going before them or whether it was in the middle. And they rightly point out that that doesn't need to be a problem because after all this was a normal order of march given, but there is no reason they should not have departed during this particular 3-day journey if -- at the Lord's command and have the ark go at the head. We know it went across the Jordan ahead of them when they went into the Promised Land. We know there were some occasions when it went ahead. ~~We/know~~ Though that was the normal order they might have followed a different order here. And one or two commentaries even say, Well it went before them, that word liphnehem can just mean that it was in command over them, it was in leadership and the leader doesn't have to go at the head, he can be anywhere in the group and he's still before them. He's in ~~the~~ their leadership. So maybe it just means ^{that} the ark represented God's presence as their leader even though the ark was in the middle. I think that's a little extreme. I think it's more likely to think that they did carry the ark ahead of them during the three days. But that doesn't explain how the ark searched out a resting-place, for them. It doesn't explain it. We don't know. I think probably there's a very simple explanation if we knew it but there are probably some data we just don't have. The Lord hasn't given us. Maybe we'll discover them some day. Maybe we'll find just exactly what the answer is. Maybe we'll wait until we are with the Lord and He will tell us ~~that~~ that. I believe there's doubtless some very simple explanation as there are too many things we can't explain. But I don't think we should try to just brush aside the problem. If it wasn't for those words "to search out a resting place," for them there would be no problem. But it's the other part of the problem that the conservative scholars write so much about, and deal with which I don't think is any very serious problem but this is a ~~problem~~ problem to which I don't know the answer but that doesn't mean there isn't an answer which we may find some day. At any rate the Lord's presence was there. The Lord was guiding them and leading them. His presence was shown. His ~~presence~~ presence was in a very particular way in the ark. One Christian scholar who has given thought to the real problem has worked out a very ingenious answer. Maybe it's correct, but I'm skeptical of it. His answer is this: that the men who were around the ark in the middle of the camp were men specially designated of