



“Open Church – Open Bible”

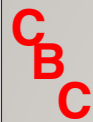
Min. Marossa Davis



Sunday Church School

September 13, 2020

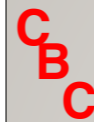
“God Provides Water from a Rock”
Exodus 17:1-7



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“God Provides Water from a Rock”
Exodus 17:1-7

- v. 1 “And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink.
- v. 2 Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?
- v. 3 **And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?”**
- v. 4 Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.”



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Exodus 17:1-7

- v. 5 “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.
- v. 6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.
- v. 7 **And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?”**

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Although Moses is the primary human character in this biblical account, the real story is the **redemptive** work of Yahweh delivering Israel from slavery and establishing an unique covenant relationship with the nation.

Life is filled with tests: drivers tests, test and quizzes in school (in person or remotely), college entrance tests, employment tests, medical tests etc. The same is true of **spiritual tests**. They often accompany physical tests **challenging us to trust the Lord** through pain, suffering, loss and hardship. Even when we don't see a benefit, such tests are beneficial in the long run. They teach us about God, ourselves, and about life in this world cursed by sin. We can forfeit the benefits of the tests God brings into our lives. However, when we fail to learn from them, we do not progress spiritually.

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Last week we learned how God provided meat and bread for the children of Israel and of **Jesus's declaration** that He is the bread of life. **John 6:35**. Remembering everyday what Jesus has already done for us should help us avoid receiving God's gifts in an ungrateful way and reap the consequences of a bad attitude. Let's strive to cherish the blessings of today and trust that the Lord will provide for tomorrow. Today, we will study **God's miraculous provision of water** and discuss how He is still able to provide for our needs today.

Today's Aim:

1. **Facts:** to see the facts of God's miracle of Rephidim
2. **Principle:** to understand that God is powerful and has the ability to solve all our problems.
3. **Application:** to look for the hand of God in all our situations

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Exodus 17:1 says that in Rephidim there was **no water** for the people to drink. The large nation of Israel had journey through the wilderness of **Sin** to **Rephidim** where they encamped. This would be their last stop before reaching nearby Mt Sinai and they reached Mount Sinai exactly 3 months after they departed Egypt. Ex. 19:1 They had already had a similar experience with having **no drinking water** in Marah when God gave them fresh water to drink. Ex.15.23-26. They were accustomed to living in Egypt where the Nile was a constant source of water. The wilderness in which they were traveling to the **Land of Promise** was not all desert but there were few natural sources of water or food.

Our text makes it clear that it was the Lord Himself that led the people to this place. His means of leading them was the pillar of cloud by day, which was also a

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a pillar of fire by night. **The Lord's Presence** in the cloud provided divine guidance for them throughout their wilderness travels. Ex.13:21-22, 40:34-38. The Lord's clear guidance in leading the people to **Rephidim** is equated with His **commandment** or **instruction**. It was not the people's choice nor Moses' to camp there. God had specifically directed them to this place where there was **no water**.

Why would He do this? To test His people. Would they trust the Lord to provide for them as He had before? Or would they once again grumble and complain? Had they learned their lesson, or would they continue their already established pattern? This was a **very real test** of their faith.

Verse 2 tells us that the people began to 'chide' with Moses. To chide means to **strive** or **contend** with, to find fault with, scold or rebuke. It is used for verbal combat and sometimes used for legal disputes.

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It could have meant that the people were not just complaining against Moses but arguing that they did not deserve what they were suffering. It is interesting that the people demanded their drinking water **from Moses**. They could not seem to **look beyond their leader** to the God who had made him their leader. They should have humbly asked Moses to pray and ask God for water since God was the One providing for them all along the way.

Moses’ response was to ask the people why they were contending with **him** and **tempting** the Lord. Any complaints against Moses were actually against the Lord because He was the One who had brought them there. To **tempt** means to **test** or **prove**. While it is appropriate for God to test people, it is entirely inappropriate for people to test God in a spirit of unbelief, as if He won’t really follow through. Deut. 14: 6:16. They were testing His patience with their ingratitude and demands. They did not appreciate what God had done and was

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doing for them. They considered their circumstances unfair and demanded immediate relief.

In v. 3, in spite of their leader’s words, the people continued to grumble and direct their complaints against Moses. As they have done before (Ex. 16:3), they accused Moses of bringing them out of Egypt to kill them and their families, and their livestock in the wilderness. The first words out of their mouths was **WHY?** We often blame our leaders or others or even God when things go wrong. They were focused on their uncomfortable circumstances and this focus warped their thinking beyond all reason. They could see no potential value in their suffering because they would not look beyond their thirst to the God who had led them to this place. Perhaps they needed to learn greater dependence on the Lord on their way to the Promised Land. This was a test of Israel’s trust, something they would need for their survival that was

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even more essential than food and water.

The tests we face in life not only teach us lessons; they also reveal our **character**. Their problem was not only a lack of water but a lack of faith in God to meet their needs. Do we learn from the tests we face or do we continue to focus on the problem rather than the One who can solve our problem? Do we ‘walk by faith in the Lord’ or do we never look beyond what we see with our eyes?

In verse 4, Moses properly responded by appealing to the Lord. He exhibited the faith the Israelites lacked. He asked what should he do? He was **utterly frustrated** with the people. He was a patient man, but he did not have the patience the Lord possessed. **He did not know what to do** and it appeared the people might **stone** him.

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As Christians, we acknowledge the power of prayer, but too often as a last resort rather than a continual practice. For some reason we think we can provide for our own needs and for those that depend on us. We must never lose sight of the simple truth that **we are dependent on the Lord** for our daily bread Matt 6:11 It is to Him we should turn for strength, help and the wisdom we need **to meet every challenge we face** in life. Moses realized that **something had to be done soon** and only the Lord could do it!

In vss. 5-6 we see the response of the Lord. As always, the Lord was waiting with a solution to the problem. He instructed Moses to go out in front of the people, taking with him ‘ the elders of Israel’ and the rod, which the Nile River had been struck with (7:17-21). At a certain rock, the Lord would be standing in front of Moses on it. Moses was to **strike the rock** with his staff

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and water would gush forth from it in such abundance that **all** the people could drink.

Once again Moses would be the instrument God would use to provide for the people. Moses was the one the people had attacked and this miracle would again **vindicate his leadership**. The elders would serve as witnesses to this event, passing on to all the Israelites what had happened since three million people could not personally see what Moses was doing.

Moses’ staff is also referred to as the ‘rod of God’ Ex. 4.20, 17.9 The rod symbolized the power, authority and presence of the Lord, and it was clearly connected with Moses as well, indicating he was **God’s appointed leader**. The Lord’s promise to stand before Moses on the rock probably means the pillar of cloud would move to the place, pointing out the specific rock, but also encouraging Moses as the Lord stood with him **while the elders looked on**.

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The rock is called **Horeb** as they were near Mt Sinai at this point. Moses did as the Lord instructed, and water came forth out of the rock in great abundance. In fact, Psalms 105:41 says it became a river. In I Corinthians 10:4, Paul indicates the **rock that was struck represented Christ**. He too was struck, and He provides the water of life to all who believe in Him.

In verse 7 the Lord graciously and miraculously provided the water His people needed. At the same time, Moses gave them a lasting reminder of the sinful attitude they exhibited on this occasion. He gave to that place the name **Massah** and **Meribah**. In Hebrew, *Massah* means **tempting** or **testing**; *Meribah* means **strife** or **contention**. These names would **forever recall** that the people had tested the Lord there and contended with His servant Moses.

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Moses added that the people had tested the Lord by saying, “Is the Lord among us, or not?” This added to their guilt, **to question His presence**. His presence among them was obvious. He led them with the pillar of cloud each morning, each morning manna arrived from His hand. Their denial of the obvious was a challenge to God and an insult. **Do we ever question the Lord’s presence with us** because times are difficult and God has not given us relief? Troubles should drive us to trust the One who has been so faithful to us through the years and praise Him that He is **sovereign** and **in control of all our circumstances**, good and bad.

We can complain about life or choose to live in the joy of God’s promises. We have proof of His promises, **the empty tomb**, a **Risen Savior** and the presence and the power of the **Holy Spirit** within us! God kept His Promise.

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God met Moses at the rock. Moses did not have to face his trouble alone. Moses obediently struck the rock and the water flowed. Although humans need physical water to survive, we need living water even more, which is Jesus. **Jesus is the Rock** who gives us **living water** so that we never have to thirst again. John 4:10,14

Rocks, out of which the water came were **symbols of God’s presence** and power. It also was one of Moses favorite designations for the Lord. It was the **Rock that brought salvation** to Israel Deut. 32:15. David used the term ‘rock’ for the Lord throughout the Psalms. Ps. 94:22, “...the **Rock** of my refuge”; Psalms 95:1 “...the **Rock of our salvation**.” Paul spoke of the Israelites when he said “And did drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual **Rock** that followed them and that **Rock was Christ**. I Cor.10:4

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Practical Points

1. It is possible to be in a difficult situation and still be in the will of God. Exodus 17:1
2. Prayer should be a believer’s first resort in adversity. v. 2
3. Obey God and trust Him with your questions and fears. v. 3
4. Prayer is critical to anyone who leads God’s people. v.4
5. Believers succeed by yielding all their resources and abilities to God. v.5
6. Faith in God means we trust Him even when His plan does not make sense to us. v.6
7. Believers should express faith in prayer, not doubt in complaints to others. v.7

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For Further Reflection

1. Why does God sometimes allow His people to go through difficult times?
2. In what ways do Christians sometimes respond to adversity like unbelievers?
3. What responsibility does God place on Moses during this miracle? What does this teach us about God’s provision today ?
4. What similarities and differences are there between the water that Israel received and the water that God has provided us through His Son (cf. John 4:10-14) ?

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