

THE FOURTH CRISIS OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS — THIRST: GOD’S PROVISION OF WATER EXODUS 17:01–07

Introduction

The craving for water, the need to moisten parched lips, is one of the strongest drives that a man has. As long as a man’s thirst is quenched, he can go on about his normal life. However, if water is withheld for a long period of time, the body begins to dehydrate. If water is not provided soon after dehydration, the man will become sick and eventually die.

Now note: physical thirst is a picture of spiritual thirst. Men who sense spiritual thirst will do anything to satisfy their thirst. Spiritual thirst is a normal thing, but it becomes abnormal when man tries to satisfy his thirst with the things of the world...

- possessions
- worldly friends
- property
- pornography
- recognition
- overeating
- position

The thirst of the human heart can be met by God and by God alone. This is the much needed lesson of this passage: *The Fourth Crisis of Israel in the Wilderness — Thirst: God’s Provision of Water* Exodus 17:1-7.

- I. The crisis: thirst — the Israelites had no water to drink (v. 1).
- II. The terrible sin of Israel (vv. 2-3).
- III. The cry of God’s servant: he cried out to the LORD (v. 4).
- IV. The provision of God (vv. 5-6).
- V. The place memorialised (v. 7).

I. *Exodus 17:01 The First Crisis: No Water*

There was the crisis of thirst, of coming to a place and finding no water to drink. Israel had left the desert of Sin and marched to Rephidim where they were expecting to find water. But when they arrived, they discovered to their horror that the creeks were dry. There was no water.

The people had been wandering about in the desert for days, perhaps weeks; and remember, there were two to three million of them. They were tired, weary and thirsty — totally exhausted. Nerves were on edge. Water supplies had no doubt been running low for days, and each family had been rationing their water supply. When they reached Rephidim, they obviously had run completely out of water. Then they heard the most frightening words imaginable: “No water. The creeks are dry.”

A crisis existed, the most severe crisis that a people could face out in the dry, barren desert: no water. It was a matter of life and death, of survival. What were they to do? What could they do?

Now, note a significant fact: it was the LORD Himself who had led them to camp at Rephidim, who had led them by the pillar of cloud, by His very own presence. Why? Why would the LORD lead them to a place where there was *no water*?

The answer lies in the name of *the LORD*. The LORD (Jehovah, Yahweh) means the God of revelation and deliverance.

- => The LORD was obviously planning to reveal Himself at Rephidim, to reveal that He is the God of salvation and deliverance, the God who saves and delivers His people through all the trials of life.
- => The LORD was obviously planning to test His people at Rephidim, to test and strengthen their faith: to teach them to trust Him more and more, to trust Him to take care of them and their needs more and more.
- => The LORD was obviously planning to glorify Himself at Rephidim, to glorify Himself by proving that He is truly God, the God who saves and delivers His people through all the trials and problems of life.

Thought 1. What causes so many trials and problems in life? Often, we do. We are often the cause of problems and trials, of bringing affliction into our own lives. We act foolishly and abuse our bodies, break the law, mistreat others, act irresponsibly, misbehave, fail to take care of things, and on and on the list could go. We often cause many of the problems and trials that confront us.

But note: sometimes trials arise in our lives that are beyond our control, trials that we did absolutely nothing to cause. These are often caused by God. God sometimes puts us in situations that really try us, that cause serious problems for us. Why?

(1) God uses trials to test, prove and strengthen us. God uses trials to arouse us...

- to cry out to Him for help
- to trust Him more and more
- to become stronger and stronger in enduring and in standing up for Him
- to be a strong testimony and witness for Him that He does truly exist and can deliver and save those who trust Him
- to draw closer and closer to Him in prayer, trust, fellowship and communion

Deut 8:2 *Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.*

Job 23:10 *But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.*

Psa 66:10 *For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver.*

John 6:5 *When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"*

Rom 5:3-5 *Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

2 Cor 4:17 *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

James 1:2-4 *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

(2) God uses trials to glorify and praise Himself. When the LORD delivers and saves us through a trial, we glorify and praise God for delivering us.

Deut 8:10 *When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.*

Psa 107:22 *Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.*

Col 1:12 *Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.*

1 Pet 1:6-7 *In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

(3) God uses trials to reveal that He is the God of salvation and deliverance, the God who saves and delivers His people through all the trials of life. Thereby people know that God is the LORD...

- that *He does exist*
- that *He is the only living and true God*

Exo 7:17 *This is what the LORD says: By this you will know that I am the LORD: With the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water of the Nile, and it will be changed into blood.*

Exo 8:9-10 *Moses said to Pharaoh, "I leave to you the honour of setting the time for me to pray for you and your officials and your people that you and your houses may be rid of the frogs, except for those that remain in the Nile." "Tomorrow," Pharaoh said. Moses replied, "It will be as you say, so that you may know there is no one like the LORD our God."*

Exo 8:22-23 *"But on that day I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live; no swarms of flies will be there, so that you will know that I, the LORD, am in this land. I will make a distinction between my people and your people. This sign will occur tomorrow."*

Exo 9:29 *Moses replied, "When I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands in prayer to the LORD. The thunder will stop and there will be no more hail, so you may know that the earth is the LORD's."*

Isa 43:1-13 *"You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me." "I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no saviour. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed — I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "that I am God." Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?"*

Acts 26:15-18 *"Then I [Paul] asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'*

EXODUS 17: 01 REPHIDIM

The meaning of the word *Rephidim* is *refreshments*.

Scripture states that it was hardly a refreshment for the people of God. For them Rephidim became...

=> a place of unbelief (Exo 17:1-3)

Exo 17:1-3 *The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarrelled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?" But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"*

=> a place of unfaithfulness to God (Exo 17:7).

Exo 17:7 *And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarrelled and because they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"*

=> a place of battle with Amalek (Exo 17:8-16).

Exo 17:8 *The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.*

=> a place where Moses struck the rock to secure water (Exo 17:1-7; 19:2).

Exo 17:6 "I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.

=> a place where God delivered His people (Psa 81:7).

Psa 81:7 In your distress you called and I rescued you, I answered you out of a thundercloud; I tested you at the waters of Meribah. □

II. *Exodus 17:02–03 The Terrible Sin of Israel: Grumbling, Complaining*

There was the terrible sin of Israel. What did Israel do? Did they pass the test of God? Did they trust God, trust His goodness: believe that He loved them and cared for them? Note what they did.

1. The Israelites looked to a man not to God; they had their eyes and hopes placed upon an earthly leader not upon the LORD. Note what happened: they argued and grumbled against their earthly leader, Moses (v. 2). They demanded of Moses, "Give us water." They treated him as though he were a magician, as though he could work miracles and meet their needs.

The point is this: the people's eyes were on Moses and not on God. They focused upon Moses as a wonder worker, as a worker of miracles. A man was the object of their attention and loyalty not God.

Thought 1. Our trust must always be in God not in man. In the terrifying and difficult trials of life, man can be of little help. Man can help us very little if at all when facing...

- terminal illness
- very old age
- a terrible accident
- the death of a loved one
- an awful tragedy
- bankruptcy
- natural disasters
- life-threatening situations
- a supervisor's hatred or anger

Our hope is in God not in earthly leaders. Therefore, we must learn to look to God not to men for help.

Psa 31:19 How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you.

Psa 34:22 The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.

Psa 37:3 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

Psa 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.

Psa 118:8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.

Psa 118:9 *It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.*

Prov 3:5 *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.*

Isa 2:22 *Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?*

Isa 26:4 *Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.*

Isa 30:1-2 *“Woe to the obstinate children,” declares the LORD, “to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin; who go down to Egypt without consulting me; who look for help to Pharaoh’s protection, to Egypt’s shade for refuge.”*

Isa 31:1 *Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD.*

Isa 31:3 *But the Egyptians are mere mortals and not God; their horses are flesh and not spirit. When the LORD stretches out his hand, those who help will stumble, those who are helped will fall; all will perish together.*

Isa 50:10 *Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.*

Jer 17:5 *This is what the LORD says: “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD.”*

Hos 5:13 *“When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his sores, then Ephraim turned to Assyria, and sent to the great king for help. But he is not able to cure you, not able to cure your sores.”*

Luke 12:19-20 *“And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you.’ Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?”*

2. The Israelites tested God: they were questioning God's goodness and demanding that He prove Himself, demanding that He take care of them right then and there (v. 2).

How could the people question God's goodness when He had done so much for them? How could they doubt His existence and His care? Why were they complaining and grumbling and arguing with God's servant? The answer is obvious:

- ⇒ Because they were not a people of prayer. Instead of complaining and grumbling against God and Moses, they should have gone to Moses and suggested that they all seek God in prayer, seek Him to meet their need. Just imagine what a great sight that would have been: two to three million people on their knees together — out in the

middle of the desert — crying out to God to provide water for them. What a different picture we would have in the Scripture of Israel if they had only done what they should have: joined Moses in prayer, seeking God to meet their need. But this was not to be.

3. The Israelites accused Moses of being an impostor: of misleading them and leading them to their death (v. 3). Note how serious the situation became: the people were ready to stone Moses (see v. 4). They became violent, filled with uncontrolled anger, malice and rage.

=> They forgot all about God's wonderful provisions in the past: how God had already provided water for them.

=> They forgot all about how gloriously God had used His servant in the past: how Moses had freed them from Egyptian slavery and led them through the Red Sea.

Death — death from thirst and dehydration — was staring them in the face, and they were terrified. They had grown so little in God and knew so little about God that they immediately turned against God's servant Moses.

Thought 1. Again, why? How could the Israelites so quickly forget God's blessings? So quickly forget how God had magnificently delivered His people?

(1) Because of their hearts and minds. Their hearts and minds were...

- carnal
- fleshly
- self-centred

Rom 8:7 *The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*

Eph 4:17 *So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.*

Titus 1:15 *To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.*

(2) Because of unbelief and distrust. They had not grown in prayer nor in trust of the LORD. Day by day out in the wilderness wanderings they had kept their minds upon carnal things, the things of this earth instead of upon God. They had obviously thought little about God, little about His glorious person and power, little about His wonderful salvation and deliverance.

Thus, they had learned little about God...

- little about trusting and believing Him
- little about worshipping and honouring Him
- little about witnessing and bearing testimony for Him

John 8:24 *"I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."*

Heb 3:8-12 *Do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty*

years they saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

Heb 4:11 *Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.*

Jude 1:5 *Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.*

III. Exodus 17:04 Moses Intercedes for the People

The servant of God cried out to God for help. The people were upset and impatient with Moses, to the point of violence: they were ready to stone Moses. He was experiencing what Paul was later to experience: “the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved” (2 Cor 12:15). Moses did the only thing he could: he got alone with God and cried out to God for help. Note that Moses was very upset with the Israelites: he called them “this people” instead of “my people.” The sin and personal attacks of the people against Moses had put a great distance, an alienation, between them. The prophets of God often felt this distance and alienation when the people rebelled against God and attacked them (Isa 6:9; Hag 1:2).

Thought 1. Our only hope in desperate situations is to cry out in prayer to God. When nothing else can help, prayer can. God hears and answers prayer.

Mat 7:7 *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”*

Deut 4:29 *But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all our heart and with all our soul.*

Psa 34:6 *This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.*

Psa 61:2 *From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

Psa 105:4 *Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.*

Jer 29:13 *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

IV. Exodus 17:05–06 The Provision of God

There was the provision of God. God heard the cry of His dear servant, heard his desperate plea for help.

1. God told His servant to walk ahead of the people: to take with him some of the elders of Israel and his rod or staff (v. 5). Why take the elders with him? To be eye-witnesses of the miracle. Why take the rod? Not to strike some plague or chastisement upon

them but to call forth the power of God. God wanted to meet the need of the unbelieving and distrusting backsliders. Note the patience, forbearance and long-suffering of God. Note His willingness to work a long time with us, longing for us to repent and trust Him — just as we should always do.

Isa 48:9 For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to destroy you completely.

Lam 3:22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

Joel 2:13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

Rom 2:4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

Rom 10:21 But concerning Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."

2 Pet 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

2. Now note what God promised to do for His backslidden people: He promised to stand before His servant by the *rock in Horeb* (v. 6).
3. God instructed His dear servant to strike the rock, and He promised that water would flow out of it (v. 6). (See *The Rock of Horeb*, Exo 17:6.)
4. God's servant obeyed (v. 6). Moses took his staff and struck the rock in sight of all the elders standing there. The result: water flowed out of the rock, flowed like rivers that branched out into streams.

Note another fact as well: the LORD Himself is said to have been standing there causing water to gush forth out of the rock. How was this possible? By God, by His omnipotent power. The LORD was standing there by the rock and when Moses struck it, the LORD caused a river and springs of water to flow out of the rock or out of the ground from under the rock. This is exactly what is declared in other Scriptures.

1 Cor 10:1-5 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

Psa 78:15-16 He split the rocks in the wilderness and gave them water as abundant as the seas; he brought streams out of a rocky crag and made water flow down like rivers.

Psa 114:8 *Who turned the rock into a pool, the hard rock into springs of water.*

Thought 1. The wilderness will leave a person dry, parched and empty of any moisture. This is a picture of man being spiritually dry, parched and empty. Spiritually...

- man has a dry spirit; God seems far, far away.
- man has a dry heart; tenderness dried up long ago.
- man has a dry soul; a personal relationship with Christ and personal devotions are lacking.
- man has a dry love life; self-centredness quenches any chance of sharing together sacrificially.
- man has dry friendships; surface relationships are the norm.
- man has a dry mind; worldly distractions rule every thought.
- man has dry hearing; the words of God are only faintly heard.
- man has a dry career; work has become a loathsome chore.
- man has a dry family life; little communication and little fulfilment and love.
- man has a dry vision for the future; little hope exists for a full and satisfied life.

Empty people have a desperate need to quench their thirst. But note, there is glorious news: there is water to quench man's dry, parched thirst. There is a living water, a water that gives life to man. That water is Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus Christ is the water of life. He can quench the dry, parched thirst of man. This is the strong declaration of Scripture.

John 4:10-11, 13-14 *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?".... Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

John 7:37-38 *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."*

Mat 5:6 *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."*

Psa 36:8 *They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights.*

Isa 12:3 *With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*

Isa 44:3 *For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.*

Isa 55:1 *Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.*

Rev 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

Thought 2. Jesus Christ declared that He is the water of life, the water that saves and gives life to man. Jesus Christ is the only water that can meet the thirst of man's soul, that can satisfy man.

John 4:10 *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

John 4:13-14 *Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

John 7:37 *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink."*

John 7:38-39 *"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

Rev 7:17 *For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*

Rev 21:6 *He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life."*

Rev 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

Isa 55:1-2 *Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.*

Thought 3. There is a great lesson here: we must learn to trust God, believe Him, depend upon Him to take care of our needs. God will meet our needs, even the most severe and difficult needs. God will do whatever is necessary to meet our needs: He

will even give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert to take care of us (Isa 43:20). Our task is to trust God, to depend upon Him.

Mat 6:33 *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

John 3:36 *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.”*

John 15:5 *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”*

2 Cor 3:5 *Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.*

Exo 23:25 *Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you..*

Psa 31:19 *How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you.*

Psa 32:10 *Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.*

Psa 34:22 *The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.*

Psa 37:3 *Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.*

Psa 37:5 *Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.*

Prov 29:25 *Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.*

Isa 26:3-4 *You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.*

Mal 3:10 *“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”*

V. Exodus 17:07 Rephidim was Memorialised

The place of Rephidim was memorialised. Moses wanted succeeding generations to always remember what had happened at Rephidim; therefore, he gave two names to the place.

=> Massah, which means test, testing. This, of course, referred to the people's testing — doubting and questioning — of God.

=> Meribah, which means argument, contention and strife. This referred to the people's complaining and grumbling spirit against God and His servant Moses.

Thought 1. Two important lessons must be learned from this point. We all (every believer) leave a legacy upon earth. We absolutely must not leave the legacy that the Israelites left.

(1) The legacy of testing God: of unbelief and distrust, of doubting and questioning God, questioning His existence and His goodness.

Rom 11:20-21 *Granted. But they [Israel] were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.*

Mat 11:3 *To ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"*

Mat 13:58 *And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.*

Mat 17:19-20 *Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."*

Mark 4:40 *He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"*

Mark 16:14 *Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.*

Luke 24:11 *But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.*

Luke 24:25 *He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"*

John 12:37 *Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him.*

John 20:25 *So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."*

Heb 3:12 *See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.*

Heb 4:11 *Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.*

Jud 6:17 *Gideon replied, "If now I have found favour in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me."*

Isa 53:1 *Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*

(2) The legacy of complaining, grumbling and murmuring.

Prov 19:3 *A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the LORD.*

John 6:43 *"Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered.*

1 Cor 10:10 *And do not grumble, as some of them did — and were killed by the destroying angel.*

Phil 2:14 *Do everything without complaining or arguing. ■*

EXODUS 17: 06 THE ROCK OF HOREB

Scripture teaches that the rock is a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the title of the song says, Jesus Christ is the "Rock of Ages." Time and again throughout Scripture, the rock pictures the LORD. (See notes, 1 Pet 2:4-8 for an in-depth study of "Christ, the Living Rock.")

1. The Israelites are said to have drunk of the spiritual rock, the Rock of Christ.

1 Cor 10:4 *And drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.*

What does it mean to say that Christ was the spiritual Rock that followed the Israelites? It means that He was the foundation, the support, the security, the solid footing of their lives. He was there to support them, to make them safe and secure and to provide for them, to provide whatever they needed.

2. Moses *struck the rock* and water flowed out of the rock, water that saved and brought life to the Israelites. Jesus Christ was "smitten, stricken and afflicted" and became the fountain of living water for us all.

Isa 53:4-5 *Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

John 4:13-14 *Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

John 7:37-38 *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."*

3. The Psalmist cried out for the Rock to help him in his distress.

Psa 61:2 *From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

4. Israel remembered that God was their rock.

***Psa 78:35** They remembered that God was their Rock, that God Most High was their Redeemer.*

5. Jesus Christ is the rock, the chief cornerstone, that determines the fate of all people.

***1 Pet 2:6-8** For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone" and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message — which is also what they were destined for.*

6. Jesus Christ is the only foundation upon which people can build and base their lives.

***1 Cor 3:11** For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. □*