

Title: Water for the Thirsty  
Text: Exodus 17: 1-7  
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In the past few Psalms reference has been made to God giving Israel water out of the Rock. Let's go back and see that one more time.

**Exodus 17: 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...**

The children of Israel went where the LORD led them when the Lord led them.

Numbers 33: 8: And they departed from before Pihahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah. 9: And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they pitched there. 10: And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea. 11: And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. 12: And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah. 13: And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush. 14: And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink.

Numbers 9: 18: At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents....22: Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. 23: At the commandment of the LORD they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed:...

The Lord Jesus is our Shepherd. It is comfort to know we are his flock—the sheep of his pasture. By his sovereign hand he rules all things leading us where and when he will

Isaiah 40: 11: He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

When the Lord moves, we walk in his path; when he waits, we wait on the Lord. Each place had one thing in common. They each presented a trial in which the people had no ability to provide. Only the Lord could provide.

So the Lord led the children of Israel to another such place: Rephidim. It means resting place. Christ is our Rest. That is always where God is leading his people. It is always what he is making us know more clearly. Christ is our Rest. But we saw he called this place Meribah which means chiding.

**Exodus 17: 1:...and pitched in Rephidim: and *there was* no water for the people to drink. 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? 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? 4: And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.**

This is the rebellious people—the unregenerate—who turned back in every trial. But how we see ourselves. How quick we are to murmur when trouble comes. It can be something as simple as the weather or from the least trial and especially in bigger trials. But in everything God does in our life God is teaching us that Christ alone is our Rest. He is the Rock from whom the water of Life flows unto us. God is continually reminding us there is no water of life anywhere but Christ!

Notice, their murmuring was not against man or second causes, it was tempting the LORD.

**Exodus 17: 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?**

Murmuring, complaining, is questioning the LORD. It is questioning the Lord's presence, providence, promise and power. They doubted and questioned the Lord, whether he could give them water in a dry and desert land.

God only has to send a little trouble, a believer is reminded we still have a sin-nature. We have to be saved from our sins continually. It is pure grace for God to spare us when we murmur as they did. But God is bigger than our need! Yet, we have to first see our inability and sinfulness and need of forgiveness.

Every child who God calls is dead in sins by nature. We cannot and will not receive his word but by his Spirit. But the same is true after conversion. Before and after conversion we need God to save us every hour.

Are you thirsty? The water of life is found nowhere but Christ. Human will is dry; we must be made willing by the power of Christ. Human merit is dry; we must be made to rest in Christ's merits. God uses the trial to continually remind his child that only God is able to deliver. Only Christ is our Life.

**Exodus 17: 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. 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.**

**Proposition:** The Holy Spirit used the apostle Paul to tell us that Rock was Christ. (1 Cor 10: 4) Christ is the smitten Rock from whom comes the Holy Spirit which gives life--he continues to be that Rock giving the Water of Life in this life and the life to come

## **LED OF GOD**

**Exodus 17: 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.**

*The LORD said unto Moses.* God has to speak to us and lead us to Christ in the first hour and the rest of our days. God brought Moses to see his inability. The people were ready to stone him. We are talking about millions of people. Moses did not know what to do. Nor did Moses have ability to produce water or subdue these people.

*Then Moses cried to the LORD.* That is what God will bring his child to do by bringing us to the end of self, the end of all ability. Then we cry unto the LORD. It was then that God led Moses to the Rock.

## **CHOSEN OF GOD**

**Exodus 17: 5: And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel;**

God chooses who he will save. It is God's sovereign grace to choose who he will reveal Christ unto. Just as God chose Moses and the elders, God chose who he saves and leads to Christ the Rock.

And these elders were taken for witnesses to the people. God never leaves himself without a witness. God provides faithful witnesses to preach Christ is the Righteousness of God alone. The law and the prophets bear witness that the Righteousness of God is by the faith of Christ.

Romans 3: 21: But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22: Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ...

## **LOVED OF GOD**

**Exodus 17: 6: Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb**

God's grace and love is in Christ the Rock alone. As the Lord declared he would stand on the Rock so God the Father stood the glory of his name and the salvation of his people on Christ before the foundation of the world. The Father stood the whole purpose of salvation on Christ. He is the Rock, the Foundation Stone.

Isaiah 28:16: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

God the Father chose to glorify his name in his Son by resting all upon Christ's shoulder.

Isaiah 9:6:...the government shall be upon his shoulder:

Isaiah 22:22: the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

It is in Christ that God stands. He will bring his people to stand on Christ. The love and grace of God is found in Christ alone.

## **REVEALED OF GOD**

### **Exodus 17: 6:...and thou shalt smite the rock,...**

It is in Christ that God reveals his righteousness to his people. Moses smiting the Rock with the rod of God typifies God smiting our Substitute to uphold his righteousness when the sins of God's people were laid on him.

God's righteousness must be upheld. Each sinner God saves must die in righteousness due to our sins. So God provided his Son to take our place to fulfill all righteousness for us.

Romans 8: 3: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

About 40 years later, the children of Israel murmured against Moses again. Moses took glory that did not belong to him. He said, "*must we fetch water out of this rock for you?*" But Moses did not fetch it the first time. In great error, Moses smote the rock a second time. God saved Moses eternally but God took Moses' life because Christ cannot be smitten twice. Neither can any elect for whom Christ died be smitten twice. Justice is satisfied by the one offering of Christ for every sinner for whom he died. Christ is the Righteousness of God revealed of God in the hearts of his people through God-given faith.

## **GIVEN OF GOD**

### **Exodus 17: 6:...and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.**

Christ being smitten justified his people from our sins. Therefore the Holy Spirit, the Water of Life, is given of God freely when the Spirit regenerates the dead sinner.

The Rock was smitten—"that water might come out of it"—and in that we see that Christ receives all the glory. They would have no doubt that the water came only from that smitten Rock. We have no doubt that Christ gets all the glory for being our Life. God gives us Life freely through Christ's shed blood. He that glories let him glory in the Lord!

Also, it was God purpose in smiting the Rock "*that the people may drink.*" Christ knew who he was smitten for. The Rock was smitten for Israel. Christ was smitten for God's elect Israel. God smote Christ that he might be just to give his elect eternal life in righteousness. So by Christ justifying his people, the Spirit of Life is given to his people.

Titus 3: 5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6: Which he shed on us

abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7: That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

This is what Christ cried at the feast when he said is any man thirsty then let him come unto me and drink. Come to him believing on him. Christ said, *“He that believes on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”*

John 4:10: Jesus answered [the woman at the well], If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. 11: The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?...13: Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

## **THE LESSON**

Think about the lesson here. The murmuring of the rebellious was unbelief. In that state they were dying of thirst. In the first trial, when God first converts us, God makes us thirsty beholding our sins. Then God leads us to Christ, giving us life and faith to believe on Christ. As we drink, believing on Christ, our thirst is quenched. We have peace with God. The triune God in Christ gets all the glory. Every trial thereafter is a conversion all over again. Let us not murmur or sin, God is faithful to lead us to Christ and continue to give us Life and strength in and by Christ.

Psalm 105: 41: He opened the Rock, and the waters gushed out: they ran in the dry places like a river. 42: For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.

That Rock followed them everywhere they went. Christ is with his people always. He keeps reviving us by his Spirit. We drink by faith and the water of life continually flows. He will not let us die of thirst. Christ is our ever-present Rock from whom flows the water of Life

**Amen!**