

Glen Park Gospel Church  
**Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes**

Rev Chris Tringham

From Egypt to Canaan

No 6

## Water From the Rock

Bible Reading: Exodus 17:1-7

God was doing two things. He was getting the people out of Egypt and He was getting Egypt out of the people. The first was accomplished by the act of redemption, the offering of the blood of the Lamb in the place of the death of the first born. The second was by a series of crises through which they were cast upon the providential grace of God.

For we who are in Christ the process is the same. We are saved by our faith in His atoning sacrifice, but we are sanctified by our participation by faith in His resurrection life. The Christian then needs to learn as early as possible to approach every problem and possibility in a new way; with courage and dependence upon the One who was raised from the dead to be his life.

Paul put it like this:

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life Romans 5:10.

Today's study is another chapter about how God was doing this for the Hebrews.

**How Resentment Grows v1.** God led His Hebrew people through tough times. He did not spare them hardship and He will not spare it us. Their problem was that they did not under-stand, or want to understand, and thus did not benefit from it. Added to this, underneath all was an evil heart of unbelief Hebrews 3:7-12. They did get their water, and water in abundance. Getting material things from God is not that difficult for His children, but learning the lessons of living in the Spirit takes patience, diligence, insight and faith.

He led them by stages from Elim to Meribah. They are detailed in Numbers 33:9-14 and suggest protracted deterioration in circumstances and the people's responses. Our understanding of this comes from the name meanings of the stopping places as Moses lists them<sup>1</sup>. They are:

v9	Marah 4785	Bitterness
9	Elim 362	Tall trees
10	Red Sea	(A Re-start)
11	Sin 5512	Desert of clay
12	Dophkah 1850	Blow or a knock
13	Alush 445	Crowd of men
14	Rephidim 7508	Slacken, feeble. <sup>2</sup>

Rephidim has been located by many as the Wadi Feiran where reportedly there is usually good and abundant water, but it can sometimes be dry<sup>3</sup>. This was all that it needed.

'No water' Exodus 17:1 means precisely that. No water at all. The spring was dry.

We can easily draw up a picture: From the bitter water of Marah then Elim with plentiful water and tall shady trees, God led Moses back to the Red Sea, to start over. Then through a thirsty, barren, clay desert. At camp the people contended over available supplies. Further on this unrest turned to mob demonstration. Relentlessly the cloudy pillar led them on until at last people and animals began to collapse from thirst. But even at Rephidim, probably against what Moses' expected from his experience as a shepherd in these places, there was absolutely no water at all, and the mob turned on Moses, "Give us water to drink!"

Moses however cried 6817 out to the Lord, the kind of prayer He answers. See for example Judges 3:9.

Pilgrim, when you are in the deep, keep your eye on God, not on your circumstances. Concentrating on circumstances will lead you into depression or doubt. Concentrating on Jesus will enrich your relationship with

Him.

**The People Had Lost Faith in God and His Stated Purpose.** This is borne out in the words Moses used. They 'quarrelled' 7378 with Moses. It is a word which means to argue or conduct a legal case. Their case was to 'test' 5254 or prove God. That is they were finding the fault with God and His dealings. They had lost faith in God because of the hardness of the way, and were trying to prove it to Moses. "Is the LORD among us, or not v7?"

Their focus on water had turned to a lust for it. Notice that v3 does not say that the people thirsted because of a lack of water, but they thirsted for water<sup>4</sup>. Their experiences had so affected their reasoning that they lusted for water, more than the slacking of thirst. Can you hear them cry: What do we want? Water! When do we want it? Now!

**God Chose to Demonstrate His**

**Faithfulness and Powerfulness.** Notice the word 'take' v5. *Take* the elders and *take* the staff (See Study 1) which was God's symbol of His power through Moses. They were to witness the miracle. Moses was obedient in every particular, and God honoured His servant v6. God worked through Moses. He did not act without Him because of the nature of the complaint.

**I Will Stand On the Rock,** or above the rock<sup>5</sup> indicates the presence of the LORD as

the provider. How can the eternal invisible God stand upon a rock? It is a figure of speech called *anthropopatheia*, or condescension by which we 'ascribe to God what belongs to human or rational beings, irrational beings or inanimate things'<sup>6</sup>. It teaches us to look for the presence of Christ in all our problems. Paul tells us that the presence of God in that problem was Christ:

... all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:4.

All the appearances and visitations of God Himself to man in the Old Testament record, called a *theophany*, are by the person of Jesus whom the ancient Hebrews called YHWH, written as LORD in our Authorised Version and other later translations and versions. He is God as the God of covenant. It is He whom Moses contended and followed. It is He of whom John named the Word:

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14AV

According to Asaph, the Musical Director in David and Solomon's time who was a gatherer and writer of psalms, the water which flowed from the rock was a torrent, a stream in the desert which liberally watered Israel's thousands and all their livestock. He wrote:

He split the rocks in the wilderness  
And gave *them* abundant drink like the ocean depths.  
He brought forth streams also from the rock  
And caused waters to run down like rivers. Psalms 78:14&15

Footnotes: The number beside a word is from Strong's. 1. Moses named places they visited by some characteristic or event that occurred there. See for example Exodus 17:7. 2. Bible notes from miscellaneous sources. 3. Ellicott v1, p250. 4. The preposition used is the Lamed prefix, 'to' or 'for'. Weingreen p26. Matthew Henry notes this point. 5. 'On' is a word often indicating the loftiness of the LORD, but as here with a preposition 'above, over, upon or against' Vine. 6. Bullenger, Companion Bible, Appendix 6. Bible quotations in this study are from the NASB, unless otherwise acknowledged.

*Welcome* Glen Park Gospel Church  
Lower Road, Eltham North  
Sundays 10.30 am

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