

Exodus Chapter 17 Commentary

Ex 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, 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?"

Rephidim means *to spread a bed, to refresh, comfort, spread*. Thus, we understand that God has brought Israel to a place of rest, for a season. However, there is no water to drink in this place. Therefore, instead of praying to God and asking him for water, Israel begins to blame Moses and complain to him, which is to blame God and complain against God.

Did you notice that they demand that Moses give them water to drink? You see, they are not focused upon God, because they are asking a man to provide. There is a lesson in this scene for us. How often do we ask men to provide for us, rather than asking God to provide? How often do we look to a man for the gospel, instead of praying that God will provide the gospel through the man? When we go to church assemblies, we should go praying that God will prepare us mind, body, and soul, for whatever he has in store for us. We need to go praying for God's ministers to be blessed of God, and for God to overshadow them and give them that which God has in store for us at that time.

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?"

As their thirst grows, Israel begins to realize that they are in dire straits, then Israel begins to really blast Moses. Notice they are leaving God out of the picture. They even accuse Moses of bringing them out of Egypt to kill them in this wilderness, having already forgotten the many miracles God performed to bring them out of captivity, and having forgotten God's promise of a land of promise.

Again, we see the principle of our fleshly nature brought forth. How often, do we castigate God's ministers of the gospel and our brothers and sisters in Christ, with ungrounded accusations? It is easy to forget we were once in Egypt, under great bondage, and we desired to be freed therefrom. It is easy to forget God, when trials and temptations are like a tempest in our lives. It is our fallen nature that leads us to accuse others, especially our leaders, when things do not go as we would wish them to be. It is easy to forget that we are wholly dependent upon God for everything we need in life, which includes both natural and spiritual blessings, especially, when our natural needs seem to be too little. This is exactly where Israel is in this scene before us.

I believe we can see: God is testing Israel's faith in him with this tribulation of thirst. A reminder to us that sometimes tribulations come in our lives, if for no other purpose, to strengthen our faith and trust in God.

4 "And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. 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. 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?"

Moses, just as any true minister of God would do in this situation, prays to God, acknowledging that the people are ready to stone him to death. I can partially witness with Moses in this situation. As a Minister of the Gospel, and a Pastor, I have experienced being stoned with words in an attempt to slay me. I can testify that God is faithful to provide deliverance.

God tells Moses: I will stand before you upon the rock Horeb. Horeb means *desolate*. Then take the rod of God and strike the rock in the sight of all Israel. Then I will cause water to run out of the rock to water the people, which Moses did, and God provided in accordance with his word.

Just as Israel is in this wilderness of sin, so we live in a wilderness of sin today, in this age of salvation by God's grace. Christ Jesus, the rock of our salvation and the sustenance of our Christian lives, has gone and stood

before us. Just as Moses smote the rock Horeb, a place of desolation, So Jesus, our rock, stood before us and was smitten by our sins, when he hung desolate upon the cross at Calvary, forsaken of his Father, seen in:

- **Mt 27:46 "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"**
- **Mr 15:34 "And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"**

Today, we drink from the fountain of living waters flowing out from the rock of our salvation, Jesus Christ.

I can testify to you as Moses could tell Israel, I do not supply you with water, but God has done this miracle. Before I began my public ministry I dreamed, or had a vision, that I was way above the earth and standing beside a great rock. I saw, and felt, the power of a great stream of water flowing from this rock. I looked down and saw this stream flowed down to earth far below. As the water went down it spread out and separated into smaller streams, and the streams into separate droplets of water, and as they fell upon a pool of water on earth, each droplet made its own ripple. I remember feeling the power of this water, and the force of it was so strong that it made my hair stand up on end. When I was brought out of this trance, I understood that I was called to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and this was to show me the source of the preaching, and what I was called to do was not of myself; it was of God. I have tried to serve faithfully in this position, and endeavor to always ascribe all glory and honor to God. The river of the water of life is not in me: I merely get to see where it comes from and where it goes.

Remember, Israel is at Rephidim, **a place of rest**, and now they have a river of water from God to drink. Here is the prophetic picture of the church, of salvation by the grace of God, being furnished as a place of rest for God's people on their pilgrimage on this earth. God has supplied the fountain of living water, the gospel of Jesus Christ, through Jesus Christ the rock of our salvation. God has provided Israel the water of sustenance to drink, and refresh them, while they wait for God to move them to the land of promise. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

This is a scene we do not need to forget, and there is a warning for both God's people and God's ministers. Both should always remember where the water of life comes from. People are prone, by their very flesh nature, to worship the minister and forget that the blessing is really from God. Ministers, by their very flesh nature, are prone to forget that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is from God and not from themselves. Help us all, dear God, to be faithful to you and our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ.

8 ¶ "Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. 10 So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword."

Amalek comes out to fight against Israel. Probably, in hopes of getting the wealth that Israel brought forth from Egypt. Moses tells Joshua to gather the fighting men and prepare for battle on the next day. Moses, Aaron, and Hur, go up to the top of the hill, overlooking the battlefield, and while Moses holds up the rod of God, Israel prevails in the battle. Moses's hands become heavy, and he cannot hold them up by himself. When he lets his hands down the Amalekites begin to prevail. (As a test, try holding your hands up over your head, and see how long you can hold them up.) Aaron and Hur, understanding the need, bring a stone upon which Moses can sit. One gets on each side of Moses, and they help him to hold up his hands, holding the rod of God, until the sun goes down and Amalek is smitten.

Moses, who is a type of Jesus Christ in time, was sustained by God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit, though all the trials he faced, until it was time for him to die upon the cross. Even though he died a mortal death and was buried, his hands hung down, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit sustained him. How do we know this? What did Jesus say as he was dying? **Lu 23:46 "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."** Secondly, Jesus told us he had power to lay down his life and take it up again in: **Joh 10:17 "Therefore doth my Father love me,**

because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." Wherefore, we see God the Father sustaining one hand of Jesus in giving him power over mortal death. We see the Holy Spirit returning to the resurrected body of Jesus, which is upholding the other hand. Thus, we see the triumphant trinity of the God head bodily in Jesus Christ, who has indeed triumphed over the enemies of God, the Amalekites, and has given victory to God's people.

This victory, for Israel, came to pass at the going down of the sun. This gives us the picture of the age of the sacrificial and ceremonial law service coming to an end. The victory is evidenced in the rising of Son in the new age of time, which is the age of Salvation by the Grace of God.

14 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. 15 And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi: 16 For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

God tells Moses to write it in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, because God intends to wipe out Amalek in the future. We are currently studying in I Samuel chapter 15 where the Amalekites are wiped out for this sin of coming out against Israel. It has been a long time coming to fruition, which is a reminder to us: when it seems that God is doing nothing, we can rest assured he has not forgotten any ill that has been committed against any one of his people. God's time of vengeance will come, and he will repay.

Prophetically, we see that with the first coming of Jesus Christ that the Old Testament scriptures were written, just as God had commanded Moses and the other writers. With the ascension of Jesus back to his eternal abode in heaven on the throne of God, there has been the recording of the New Testament scriptures. Thus, we have the whole testimony of the King James bible, which records the prophesy of the first and second coming of Jesus, and the fulfillment of his finished work, which provides us with the knowledge of what a great and glorious God we serve.

Moses builds an altar to the Lord and names it Jehovahnissi. Jehovahnissi means ***my banner***. This gives us the picture of the banner for the New Testament church, Jesus our Saviour, and Lord, who has provided us the fountain of the living waters flowing from the rock of salvation.

"Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." We also know that though Amalek may have been wiped out, there is the prophetic image of Amalek, as a type of sin and Satan, who is continually at war with God and God's people. This warfare, the great struggle between the 'flesh nature' of each person and the 'Christ in you' nature of the new creature in God's people, which is ongoing and will continue until the return of Christ at the end of time.

Praise and glory to God; we know that Christ will be the ultimate victor and all of God's people will be freed from the struggle with the Amalekites forever. In the eternal resurrection of the dead in Christ, and the change of those who are alive and remain at his return, God ***"will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."*** Hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord!