

WATER FROM A ROCK; A VICTORY OVER AMALEK

BIBLE TEXT : Exodus 17:1-16

LESSON 59 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (I Corinthians 10:4).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Exodus 17:1-16

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?

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.

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

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Chiding of the Israelites

- 1 The next step of the Israelites' journey brings them to Rephidim, near Mt. Sinai, Exodus 17:1
- 2 The absence of water causes them to murmur against Moses, Exodus 17:1-3; **Exodus 15:24** ²⁴ And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?
- 3 Since God had promised to bless Israel, Moses reminds them that their complaint is against God, Exodus 17:2;

Exodus 16:8 ⁸ And Moses said, *This shall be*, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what *are* we? your murmurings *are* not against us, but against the LORD.

1 Corinthians 10:13 ¹³ There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

1 Kings 8:56 ⁵⁶ Blessed *be* the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.

- 4 Moses prays for help and advice, Exodus 17:4;

Exodus 15:25 ²⁵ And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, *which* when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

- 5 God commands Moses to strike the rock in the presence of the elders of Israel, Exodus 17:5. 6;

Exodus 15:25 ²⁵ And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, *which* when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

Psalms 62:1-8 ¹ Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.

² He only *is* my rock and my salvation; *he is* my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

³ How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall *shall ye be*, and as a tottering fence.

⁴ They only consult to cast *him* down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.

⁵ My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation *is* from him.

⁶ He only *is* my rock and my salvation: *he is* my defence; I shall not be moved.

⁷ In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God.

⁸ Trust in him at all times; *ye* people, pour out your heart before him: God *is* a refuge for us. Selah.

Psalms 78:15-20 ¹⁵ He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave *them* drink as *out of* the great depths.

¹⁶ He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.

¹⁷ And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness.

¹⁸ And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.

¹⁹ Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

²⁰ Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?

Psalms 105:41 ⁴¹ He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places *like* a river.

Deuteronomy 32:3-4 ³ Because I will publish the name of the

they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

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: to morrow 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.

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.

LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

⁴ *He* is the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he.

Deuteronomy 32:18 ¹⁸ Of the Rock *that* begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.

Deuteronomy 32:30-31 ³⁰ How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?

³¹ For their rock *is* not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves *being* judges.

1 Samuel 2:2 ² *There* is none holy as the LORD: for *there* is none beside thee: neither *is there* any rock like our God.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 ¹ Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

² And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

³ And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

⁴ And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

John 7:37 ³⁷ In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

6 Moses names the locality Massah, and Meribah (Temptation and Strife), to remind the Israelites of their failure, Exodus 17:7

II The Battle with the Amalekites

1 The Amalekites make a treacherous attack on the rear ranks of the Israelites' marching column, Exodus 17:8;

Deuteronomy 25:17-18 ¹⁷ Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt;

¹⁸ How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, *even* all *that were* feeble behind thee, when thou *wast* faint and weary; and he feared not God.

Numbers 24:20 ²⁰ And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek *was* the first of the nations; but his latter end *shall be* that he perish for ever.

2 Joshua, the soldier of the Lord and minister of Moses, leads an army to battle, Exodus 17:9, 10;

Exodus 24:13 ¹³ And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God.

3 Moses, with Aaron and Hur, two trusted assistants, intercedes in prayer for Israel's armies, Exodus 17:9, 10;

Exodus 24:14 ¹⁴ And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur *are* with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them.

4 Moses' intercession, and Aaron and Hur's support, give us a valuable lesson in prayer, Exodus 17:9-12

5 The victory is won over Amalek because of the faithfulness of God's leaders, Exodus 17:12, 13

6 Moses is commanded to record the treachery of the Amalekites, Exodus 17:14;

Deuteronomy 25:19 ¹⁹ Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance to possess it, *that* thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget *it*.

1 Samuel 15:2-3 ² Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

³ Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

2 Samuel 1:1 ¹ Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag;

1 Chronicles 4:42-43 ⁴² And *some* of them, *even* of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to mount Seir, having for their captains Pelatiah, and Neariah, and Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi.

⁴³ And they smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped, and dwelt there unto this day.

7 Another revelation of God is given through the introduction of the sacred name, Jehovah-nissi, Exodus 17:15, 16;

Exodus 6:3 ³ And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name* of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

Exodus 15:26 ²⁶ And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I *am* the LORD that healeth thee.

NOTES:

Complaint Instead of Trust

Every morning the Children of Israel left their tents before the sun arose to its height, and gathered a supply of heavenly bread sent by God for their physical nourishment. So recent also was the miraculous provision of quails for meat that they could not possibly have forgotten how God had provided for their needs. In complaining against Moses when they had no water to drink, they were unreasonable, ungrateful, and unbelieving.

They were unreasonable, for Moses was only God's lieutenant and was likewise a sharer of their afflictions. They were ungrateful, since Moses had, from the very first, done everything in his power for them — not for any personal gain or glory but only for their good. They were unbelieving, because they could easily have reasoned that Moses again would be able to intercede for their needs.

Did God or Moses Deliver Israel?

But their complaint was, in reality, not against Moses. It was against God, their Deliverer from Egypt and their Guide, Protector, and Provider heretofore. The Israelites had been told by Moses that their complaints were against God, no matter against whom else they were directed. There was contained in these murmurings an element of unbelief, its entry into their hearts being so subtle that they probably were not aware of its presence. "Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt?" as spoken to Moses, would indicate that they did not believe God had delivered them but that it was entirely by the plan and ingenuity of their humble leader. Simple logic would have told them that their deliverance was a supernatural one, entirely by the hand of God. Had it been a scheme invented by the head of their nation, some provision would have been made for such emergencies as these.

"By faith he forsook Egypt"

Moses had lived in the wilderness for 40 years and he certainly knew what was before them. He knew that without a miracle it would be impossible to feed such a multitude in the desert. But he was willing to go forward at the command of God in spite of the difficulties he knew were ahead, which is a demonstration of the greatness of his faith. Abraham left his native land and went out not knowing whither he went, but Moses left knowing what was ahead and what would be necessary for the people whom he led. And these necessities were not in evidence. Such faith should have inspired the Israelites to trust in the God Who had never failed them.

We have seen before, and we shall see many times in our future study, the source of Moses' faith, strength, and courage: whenever he faced an emergency he "cried unto the LORD." And we shall see that God never failed him; for as often as Moses interceded for the Israelites, God delivered them! This time was no exception. God gave Moses a command and Moses obeyed. With the elders of Israel he went to a certain rock and smote it with his rod. Immediately water came out of the rock.

Christ Our Rock

This rock is a remarkable type of our Lord and Savior. Jesus came to deliver us from certain death, but it was necessary that He first be smitten before eternal life could be given to us. Water is emblematic of the spiritual nourishment and soul-satisfying blessings of the Gospel. In several passages it is especially typical of the blessings of salvation (Isaiah 55:1 - **Isaiah 55:1** ¹ Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. **John 4:14** 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. **1 Corinthians 10:4** ⁴ And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ), the Apostle tells us that the Israelites of the Old Testament were given the same salvation which we obtain, for "that Rock was Christ."

History tells us of providential deliverances by God of people who called on Him in trouble. In the Civil War when a large number of Union soldiers were confined in a military stockade at Andersonville, Georgia, God performed a miracle that saved the lives of thousands of those suffering men. These prisoners of war were without water to drink and were rapidly dying from the effects of thirst, hunger, disease, and exposure. In that condition many of them prayed for help, and God sent a severe storm that started a spring of water flowing which exists to this day, and is called Providence Spring.

The Treachery of the Amalekites

The first people the Israelites met were the Amalekites (Numbers 24:20 - **Numbers 24:20** ²⁰ And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek *was* the first of the nations; but his latter end *shall be* that he perish for ever). These people were the posterity of Amalek,

one of the dukes of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, Jacob's brother, and in that way they were related to the Israelites (Genesis 36:15, 16 - **Genesis 36:15-16** ¹⁵ These *were* dukes of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the firstborn son of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz, ¹⁶ Duke Korah, duke Gatam, and duke Amalek: these *are* the dukes that came of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these *were* the sons of Adah), One would think they would have helped the Israelites instead of opposing them in the mean and cowardly way which they did. They were probably moved by suspicion and jealousy, together with a natural fear of such a great multitude of people in the wilderness, and were determined to prevent their passage through it. They first carried out a campaign of harassment, but finally came out in a pitched battle with the newly appointed armies of Israel. But Amalek did not yet realize the source of Israel's strength nor did they yet realize the fact that opposition to God's chosen people would mean certain defeat.

Joshua, the Minister of Moses

Here, at a time of crisis, a new person is introduced. Joshua, beyond all doubt, was not new to the Israelites; for he is spoken of as occupying a very important place in relation to their leader, Moses. And from the language of our lesson we see that God had already marked him as the successor to Moses. He was now instructed to select an army and engage the Amalekites in combat. We know from the history of the years in the wilderness that he was a man of faith. He must also have been capable of inspiring courage and faithfulness in others.

Joshua is pointed to, by some, as being a very expressive type of Jesus, since Joshua fought against and conquered the enemies of the people whom he brought into the Promised Land. His name literally means a savior, and is translated in the New Testament "Jesus" (Acts 7:45 - **Acts 7:45** ⁴⁵ Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David).

Victory came to Israel because of the courage of Joshua, backed up by the intercessory prayer of Moses. Moses went to the top of the hill with two of his faithful men, Aaron and Hur, and there he lifted up the rod of God toward Heaven, in prayer. As long as he continued in prayer the Israelites prevailed, but when his hands grew heavy and fell down from physical fatigue the Amalekites prevailed. Courage in the face of trouble and trial is commendable, but courage is not enough. In those times we must enlist the help of a Power greater than ourselves, and that is done through prayer.

A Greater Revelation of God

The "rod of God" (Exodus 17:9) was the physical instrument used to give help and courage to Israel at this time. The Hebrew name which is translated God here is the name that denotes God's creative power, might, and sovereignty — the general name of God. It is used especially in His relationship to the nations as distinguished from Jehovah (LORD), which is used in His relationship to Israel. We have already seen that there is great significance in the Holy Spirit's selection of the divine names and that they often have a deep spiritual application.

At the burning bush God made Himself known to Moses as Jehovah; at the Red Sea as Jehovah, my strength; and at Marah, Jehovah heals. Now, at Rephidim, God reveals another aspect of His character and greatness. When the victory was won Moses erected an altar and there God was revealed as Jehovah-nissi, which is translated The LORD my banner. He is the Captain Whom we follow and the Leader of the army in which we have enlisted!

We come out of every trial and difficulty with some new and deeper conception of what God is to us, and what He can do for us. Each difficulty brings us nearer to God, if we turn to God in the right way during that time of crisis. Every time we receive a deeper revelation of the God we love we are obligated all the more to yield Him willing obedience. And every act of obedience brings its added reward in eternity. So we see that they know God best who have been most frequently delivered by Him in time of trial; and because they do know Him best they are required to serve Him best.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What was the name of the locality where the Israelites camped at this time?
- 2 What physical need did they experience here?
- 3 What attitude did they take in regard to that need?
- 4 What lesson can we learn, in regard to our ministers and leaders, from the conduct of Israel here?
- 5 What did Moses do that is so commendable?
- 6 Why did Moses name their encampment Massah, and Meribah?
- 7 How were the Amalekites and Israelites related?
- 8 Are we always to expect wholehearted co-operation in the things of God from our relatives?
- 9 What part did Aaron and Hur play in the battle against the Amalekites?
- 10 What greater revelation of Himself did God give at this time?