

Water From The Rock

Exodus 17:1-6

MEMORY VERSE

PSALM 114:7-8a

Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, At the presence of the God of Jacob, Who turned the rock into a pool of water...

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A trick birthday candle (one that won't blow out) and matches.

Gray clay and blue yarn.

A small, baby food jar, water, baby oil, and blue food coloring.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Can't Blow It

You will need a trick birthday candle (the kind that won't blow out!) and matches. Please read the directions on the candle box. Be very careful with the matches and the lit fire with the children. Have it under your control at ALL times. Have the children try to think of things a person could do that would make God stop loving them. As they mention it let them try to blow out the candle. It will not go out, just as the love of God will not go away.

LESSON TIME!

The children of Israel had some incredible experiences as God took care of them in the wilderness. In Exodus chapter 14, they saw the Red Sea part and they walked through it on dry ground. They saw the Egyptian army covered by the Red Sea, the very sea that they had passed through. In chapter 15, they tasted the bitter waters that God made sweet for them. In chapter 16, they had the wondrous provision of the manna that would sustain them for the next 40 years. **God always provides for His children.**

Wouldn't you imagine that such great miracles would build your faith so much that you would never doubt God again? Yet, the Israelites struggled with unbelief on their journey. We can look at them and wonder why they didn't believe and trust God, yet how many times in our own lives after we experience miracles do we fall into doubt and unbelief about God's care for us? Once again, the Israelites would complain and murmur, and once again we will see the incredible grace and long-suffering of the Lord towards them, and towards us. We will also see another picture of our Lord Jesus in this passage.

EXODUS 17:1

Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink.

In this verse, we see the children of Israel journeying from the wilderness of Sin to Rephidim, "according to the commandment of the Lord" and there was no water for them to drink there. Did God make a mistake in His command? No, He did not.

This shows us that the path of faith is often a path of trial. When we are led by God, we must expect to encounter those things that are difficult.

Now, this was no difficulty to God, the one who had parted the Red Sea, buried the army in it, turned bitter water to sweet, and given manna from heaven. He would certainly provide water as readily as He provided their food, but how soon do we doubt God when we don't see His provision for us with our own eyes?

What we really need to understand is that God Himself is leading us and knows our needs. Sometimes He will bring us to "impossible"

places because there is something that He wants to teach us. **God always provides for His children.**

EXODUS 17:2-4

Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?"

And the people thirsted there for water, and the people murmured against Moses, and said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!"

Here we are told that the people “contended” with Moses. They challenged Moses to supply them water, almost as if it were a debt that he could not honor. Because they had been supplied with bread, they insisted upon having water too. Moses told them that in attacking him, they were attacking the Lord. They tried God's patience by speaking against His servant. They questioned both God’s goodness and faithfulness. Moses had been appointed their leader by God, and he was God's representative to the people. To murmur against Moses was to murmur against the Lord.

As their need grew stronger, and no evidence of water was to be seen, they grew angrier. They quarreled with Moses for bringing them out of Egypt, as though instead of delivering them, he planned to let them all die in the wilderness. How quickly they leaned on the circumstances and their own understanding than on the arm of their Almighty Deliverer.

What was the end result of their foolishness? They had come to the place where they were ready to stone Moses. How often does sin cause us to believe that the blame lies somewhere besides on us? In their "evil heart of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:12) they were driven to accuse the one who had laid down his life for them. When we are unthankful and complaining a door is opened wide for the enemy's lies. We begin to truly believe that our problems are someone else's fault. Then by blaming others and complaining we are really saying we don't trust God and we don't like how He is doing things. We think we are smarter.

What was Moses' response? He did not attack the people or rebuke them for their sin, but we see this man of God going to the very source of his strength, Almighty God. He cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do?" Moses cried, indicating the depth of his request and the earnestness of it. He did not know what to do, and he admitted it. How many times do we go on in our own strength, trying to fix the situation, usually creating more of a mess, rather than just coming to the Lord and admitting our utter weakness and inability to "fix" it? **God always provides for His children.**

EXODUS 17:5-6

And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go.

"Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Here we see that as this great leader came to the Lord for his need in dealing with the people, realizing his own lack of ability to deal with them, God graciously answered Moses. When we come to God

in prayer with our needs, we can be assured that He does answer us. **God always provides for His children.**

God told Moses to go before the people, even though they wanted to stone him, yet Moses knew God was with him and would protect him. He was to take the elders with him, and also his rod, the same rod used in God's judgment of Egypt. Yet, this time the rod was not going to be used to pass judgment on the children of Israel, though they deserved it, but it would be used to satisfy their need for water. What wonderful patience God has with His people.

The Rock

Make a "rock" out of gray clay with several strands of blue yarn "flowing" from it. If you want, have the children make rocks too, so they can take them home as a reminder of the power of God.

God then told Moses that He would "stand before you there upon the rock in Horeb." What a beautiful promise from God to Moses that He would stand before Him. Then Moses was told to "strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." What a beautiful type of Jesus Christ is this picture (see 1 Corinthians 10:1-4). We see the rock being hit, speaking of the death of the Lord Jesus. The rock was hit by the rod of Moses; the same rod which in the hand of Moses had been the symbol of judgment (Exodus 4:3; 7:17).

The elders of Israel witnessed the smiting of the rock, just as the Pharisees witnessed Jesus' death. Also, God Himself stood upon the rock while it was smitten (verse 6). One thing that is awesome to consider is the fact that it was the people's sins that led to the smiting of the rock, just as our sins led to the smiting of the Rock of our salvation, Jesus.

Just as the water flowed out of the rock to meet the need of the people, so grace flows from our Rock to meet each of our needs. In

John 7:37-38, Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The water flowing from the rock is a beautiful type of the Holy Spirit which fills us and refreshes us as God's children.

EXODUS 17:7

So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

Moses named the place Massah, meaning "temptation," because they tempted God; and Meribah, meaning "strife." There was a name given as a remembrance of their sin, both for the disgrace of the sinners and for a warning to their children not to commit the same sins as their parents. So, in this passage, we truly see God's love and forbearance for His people. **God always provides for His children.**

Though they murmured and complained, accused Moses and God, He graciously extended to them mercy and grace beyond comprehension. Truly, where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. We may see in this that God wants us to be dependent upon Him for everything. Even in our most difficult situations, God can open fountains for our supply, "waters in the wilderness" (Isaiah 43:20). Remember, God always provides for His children, just because He loves us.

What a Reminder

In a small baby food jar mix water with a little baby oil and blue food coloring. Glue the lid on. This can be passed around just to remind them of the water that came from the rock as you talk about it.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for God's faithful provision. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.