

## Exodus 17:1-7—Striking of the Christ

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You have already seen today how the Lord Jesus took full responsibility for your sins. He was charged, tried, convicted, tortured, and then killed. In this 2<sup>nd</sup> sermon you will see what the results are of him taking the full force of God's justice for you. You will see that his work was not a token act, but a vital act on your behalf.

Our headings are: The Problem: The People lacked faith and face death, and the Provision: the Water of Life from the struck rock.

Our goals are: That you will see, that God does not only provide food, clothing, and shelter, but that he provides a bigger and better thing: eternal life through the suffering and death of his Son on the tree.

### The Problem: The People Lacked Faith and Faced Death

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.

1. Jehovah told Israel he would provide everything they needed for their journey from Egypt and that he would give them Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey. One of the first stops on their journey was a place called Rephidim or "resting place."

2 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?" 3 And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained 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?"

2. Ironically, when they got to the "Resting Place" there was no water to drink to quench their parched throats. And it didn't take long in the desert to die from thirst with high temperatures of 40-50C during the day. Based on the context, the Israelites assumed there would be water in the wadi and did not pray to their covenant God for provisions... The covenant people discovered what many non-believers discover today: "Mother Nature" is impotent. So the Jews contended and complained to Moses for him to get water for them to drink. They did not pray to God. Moses was their leader, not their provider. Moses didn't have the means to satisfy them. He was simply leading them as God told him to do.

3. At this time they had a weak faith and were not looking to and trusting in Jehovah's promises. How can you see that they were not receiving and resting in Jehovah's promises?

a. The Covenant people of God forgot God had assured them that they would go to Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. God had promised this to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and more recently through Moses. You see: **No Word, no faith; know Word, know faith.**

b. The Covenant people of God forgot that God confirmed those promises with the sign of the Passover. God told them to celebrate the Passover throughout their generations. Telling them to do so meant that they were going to survive for many generations. And they saw how God destroyed all the firstborn of Egypt but saved their firstborns. **(Sacraments are a means of grace and do strengthen your faith.)**

c. The Covenant people of God forgot that God confirmed those promises by the amazing plagues he put on Egypt and yet protected them for those plagues while they lived in Egypt. God had just opened up the Red Sea, saved them, and destroyed Pharaoh and his army. God had just miraculously turned bitter water sweet so they could drink and live, along with their animals. **Signs confirm truth.**

The point was, the Jews had weak faith when their faith should have been strong. When adversity came they thought God was absent, neglected his promise, making him a liar. **Troubles should drive you to truth, not away from it.**

4. What happened when they lacked faith? They attacked Moses. They complained (**subtle opposition**) that Moses wanted to murder them, their children, and their animals, and they contended (**bold opposition**), meaning they were ready to fight. Not long after they wanted to kill him and return to Egypt. Christians became cannibals when they took their eyes off of the Lord and their faith became weak. The covenant people of God wanted to kill the leader and offer themselves to the pagan...just like the Jews' day wanted to do: Kill the king and give themselves over to the Romans. They were renouncing the covenant and acting like enemies of God.

## The Provision: The Water of Life from the Struck Rock

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

**1. Moses, the Great Intercessor, prayed for God to help the people.** Moses had faith in God and stood in the gap between God and his covenant people. It was good to have a God to go to in time of trouble, for his hand was not shortened that it could save, nor his ear heavy that he could not hear! In his prayer **Moses pointed out the seriousness of the situation and the weakness of Israel's faith...not because he cared for his own life, but because he wanted to emphasize the seriousness of the situation to God.** Similarly, Jesus is the Intercessor for his children by his death. God will listen to you because Jesus made peace with God for you and intercedes for you.

Hebrews 7:25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

It is interesting how the people had tried to kill Moses just as they tried to kill Jesus Christ.

John 10:31-32 - Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"

5 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.

**2. So God ordered Moses to go with elders in front of all the people to witness his provision for his covenant people's needs. This had to be a public event...as the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was.**

6 "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.**

**3. God ordered Moses, the leader of his people, to have a rod in his hand...the rod with which he opened the Red Sea – a sea most appropriately named, and strike the rock in Horeb.** The Red Sea (picturing blood) after it was struck, opened up and saved the lives of the Jews. Now Moses had to strike Horeb, which means "dried up." After Moses struck the rock, water came for Israel and saved the lives of the Jews. According to a Dr. Pocock who traveled in this area, at the foot of Mt Seriah, there is a red granite stone, fifteen feet long, ten wide, and about twelve high that the Muslims call the "Stone of Moses." It was described as having 12 spouts, picturing the 12 tribes fighting against God. This provision was most precious.

Deuteronomy 32:13 "He made him ride in the heights of the earth, That he might eat the produce of the fields; He made him draw honey from the rock, And oil from the flinty rock;

**4. Why was Moses required to use a rod for the Red Sea and now the Rock in Horeb?** The Rod was an offensive weapon that was used as a javelin to kill wild animal that would attack the sheep. God wanted his sheep to be safe. And why was he had to stand on the rock? The rock was amethyst or granite rock. By standing on the rock he had more power to strike at the rock. And he did. Moses should have struck the people – the rebels who wanted to kill him and attack God, but God provided a substitute.

**5. Moses there represented the law and wicked Israel.** Earlier, God provided a piece of wood that made the water potable. That wood, for example pictured the cross. Even before that, in the shape of a "T" the children of Israel had to put blood on their door posts and lintel, which was another symbol of the cross. Now in this passage we read of another wood – rod – that would be the source of "pain" for the rock...so lives would be saved. No, God did not require a stream of blood from the offenders' side, but provided living water from the Rock to quench their thirst so they could live. What beautiful pictures God used to teach of the cross!

**6. Now, fifteen hundred years later, the Rock, Jesus, had to be struck – smitten- by the stipulations of the law and by the wicked people...tortured and killed so that you would receive the blood that flowed from his body to quench your spiritual thirst and live.**

Matthew 26:66-67 - "What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death." Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, Isaiah 53:4-5 - Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

As good as Moses and the other prophets were, they were not fit to die for you. You needed the Lord. What sweet waters of grace flowed from the cross! It is curious that when Jesus died it was noted that water flowed from his side. And isn't this what Jesus promised to the woman at the well? He promised a living water that would never make one thirsty again. But he had to be struck first.

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

#### **7. No wonder Jesus is called the Rock of Ages. The Bible confirmed that Jesus was the Rock in Exodus.**

1 Corinthians 10:2-4 - all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

Furthermore, the fact that the "Rock followed them" showed that he continuously supplied their needs. No wonder Israel sang about water from the Rock.

Psalms 78:16 He also brought streams out of the rock, And caused waters to run down like rivers.

Psalm 114:8 Who turned the rock into a pool of water, The flint into a fountain of waters.]

Psalm 105:41 He opened the rock, and water gushed out; It ran in the dry places like a river.

Christ may have looked unpromising at birth... but he produced nourishment for the whole world.

Isaiah 55:1 "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.

#### **8. God did not provide water for his covenant people because they were good; he provided water for them because he was good.**

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?"

#### **9. Moses renamed the place, no doubt at the direction of God, as a memorial to Israel's sin and a warning to God's seed: Massah – temptation. Meribah – contention. Here, the people had become practical atheists...doubting the existence of God. They wanted to kill Moses, reject God's covenant, and return to Egypt.**

### **Conclusion:**

God did not treat Israel as his sins deserved, but showed grace, giving him what he did not earn. God provided intercessors among his people for his people. They should not have been distrusted God. God had kept them in worse trials. But they did forget his promises and distrusted him. Yet, out of grace, God provided a crystal creek for them to drink and be satisfied to the full.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The rock of the desert was a picture of Christ, and just as the rock had to be struck, so Jesus had to be declared guilty, struck, and killed to give his life-giving blood for you. As the water quenched the thirst of the Israelites, so Jesus' blood had to be shed so that your soul could be satisfied. For without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins. This must make it easy for you to bow the knee in worship and service to him.

Finally, if you have not drunk of the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus Christ, I urge you to drink spiritually of him! As your Rock, he provides for your everlasting satisfaction. He says: I can give you water that will never make you thirsty again. This means he will remove your sins and accept you into his kingdom. So do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness...(Heb. 3:8)