

GOD PROVIDES WATER

Old Testament Lesson #186

The people of Israel were traveling by foot through some rough and difficult land. They had left the land of Egypt nearly two months earlier. Things had not been easy for them, but each difficulty they encountered, God always took care of them. God loved the people of Israel. Not many weeks earlier, God had provided them meat to eat by providing quails. God also started providing the manna (bread) each morning, so that the people would always have food to eat (Exodus 16:13-21).

In Exodus 17, the people of Israel are making their way from the Desert of Sin towards Mt. Sinai. They were moving from place to place as directed by God. They eventually come to a place called Rephidim, and they set up camp here (v. 1).

However, they quickly realize that now there was no water for them to drink. This caused the people to get upset with Moses. Despite all that God had done for the people up until now, they still got very concerned and afraid when they had no water. We know how important water is in order to survive, and because they had none, they complained to Moses. Grumbling to him, they said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst" (v. 3)?

This bothered Moses. He knew that God would take care of them, yet the people started complaining again as soon as they encountered another challenging obstacle on their journey. Moses turns to God. He cries out to Him, saying, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me" (v. 4).

It is at this point that we see another example of God's great love for His chosen people, Israel. Despite the complaining of the people, God was very patient with them. He had some great plans for the people, and He was going to continue to patiently care for them. God instructs Moses to strike a rock at Horeb, and Moses does this in sight of the elders of Israel. And, water flowed freely from the rock. Because of God's love, the people had all the water they needed!

Let us remember, that no matter how difficult our lives may seem on any given day, God is always there to patiently and lovingly care for us in all our needs. Even if we find ourselves complaining, God is willing to help us if we turn to Him. What a great and loving God He is!

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- This location was named "Massah and Meribah---" (v.7). These words mean "temptation" and "contention" respectively. The place was called this because "the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not'" (v. 7)?
- Compare this event to one that occurs at the end of the 40 years in the wilderness in Numbers 20:1-13. Again there is no water for the people to drink, and they again complain. Once again, God provides water out of a rock for the people. However, this time God instructed Moses to speak that water would come out of the rock, but Moses strikes the rock twice. This causes God to be angry with Moses.
- Deuteronomy 8:1-4 speaks of why God tested Israel in bringing them through the wilderness for 40 years. He was testing and preparing them. All the time though He loved them and cared for them, so much so, that their "clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years" (Deuteronomy 8:4). See also Deuteronomy 29:5 and Nehemiah 9:21.

ANSWER KEY:

WATER

quest, bled, drum, lady, store, tender, eager

quarreled, grumbled, ready, stone, tested

Take the staff in your hand. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.

Moses struck the rock as God commanded.
God provides water for the thirsty people.

Circle the 7 differences in the 2nd picture.



Name _____