

**"Water from the Rock"**

**Exodus 17:1-7**

**Introduction:** Let us begin today by reading the text before us.

**Notice Exodus 17:1-7**

It is the question at the end of verse 7 that we need to focus upon as we start into these verses. Israel asks, "Is God among us, or not?"

This very same question is often asked today but it is phrased just a little different, but it has the very same meaning. The question today is, "**Where is God?**"

I have heard this question asked many times. Let me give you some examples:

- Someone goes to the doctor for a simple check up and they are delivered devastating news concerning their health and they come to you and they say, "Hey Christian. I have received news that I am going to die. Where is GOD amid all of this?"
- A family is going through life and unexpectedly one of the children dies and you visit the family and they look at you and they ask the questions, "You claim to be a follower of God, can you tell me where is your God NOW? Why has my son or daughter died?"
- It may be with someone who has just lost the best job they ever had in their life and they come to you and they ask, "Hey Mr. Christian. Where is your God NOW?"
- I can sense that it has been asked many times in the past couple of days with the election, "Where is God in the midst of this?" President Trump stood for Israel, he stood for the unborn, he stood against globalism. So, where was God?

We as believers often offer one of four answers:

1. There is an attempt to defend God (like He needs us to defend Him) by saying that God has two wills. One is sovereign and the other is permissive. What you are experiencing is the permissive will of God that takes into account the free will of man.
2. Sometimes we try to push the blame to Satan. He is God's enemy and when good things happen it is from God but when bad things happen it is from Satan. God permits Satan to do certain things and you have felt the evil arm of Satan.
3. The third response is one that I have heard many times. You have come to this place in your life because of a lack of faith or because you were afraid. I listened to sermon one day and it was on the suffering of Job. I could not believe the reason which the pastor had given for Job's suffering. He quoted the very words of Job.

**Job 3:25-26**

<sup>25</sup> *For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.*

<sup>26</sup> *I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.*

The pastor explained that because Job "feared" this opened the door for all of this to come upon him. He should have had faith and not fear.

4. The fourth explanation that is offered is, what has happened is God's discipline on sin in a person's life. I have heard people claim that others who were facing difficult times were doing so because of sin in their lives.

The problem with these explanations is that the first three have no Biblical support and the fourth explanation fails because we do not know what God is doing in another person's life. It could be discipline but we cannot be absolutely sure.

None of these answers satisfy anyone who is walking through a deep dark valley, not the unbeliever or the believer.

The truth of the matter is that we all question God when we go through these valleys. Everyone of us can relate to what Israel is facing here in Exodus 17:1-7. There is a warning connected with this found in Psalm 95.

**Psalm 95:7-11**

<sup>7</sup> *For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,*

<sup>8</sup> *Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*

<sup>9</sup> *When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.*

<sup>10</sup> *Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:*

<sup>11</sup> *Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.*

I show you this to help us to understand that the Psalmist is speaking about the very event we are looking at and the warning is concerning God's rest. It can only be entered and enjoyed by faith.

I. Israel's Sin

1. Israel's lack of humility.

Notice Exodus 17:1

It is important for us to notice that Israel was walking in the will of the Lord when they ran out of water. I point this out as a reminder to all of us that even in the will of God we face trials and tests. There is no promise of an easy life as we follow the Lord.

James 1:2-4

<sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

<sup>3</sup> Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

<sup>4</sup> But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Notice Exodus 17:2

Here we see the arrogance of Israel. They do not ask for water, they do not call a prayer meeting to pray for water, neither did they beg for water, but they DEMAND Moses give them water.

This is a major lack of humility. They demanded water like they deserved the water. They were treating God as though He owed them something other than judgment. Judgment was what they deserved. They have not been traveling very long and they have done nothing but murmur and complain about each test and trial. They had witnessed the mighty power of God over and over. Yet they refused to walk by faith. They did not deserve water, but they deserved judgment.

Application:

Demanding anything from God or from His servant is nothing but arrogance and a lack of humility.

When we find ourselves in a situation in which we believe we deserve better we are no different. This is nothing but arrogance.

When we find ourselves in a situation where our faith is being tested and we begin to grumble and complain we are doing the same thing. We are not directly stating it but through the complaining we are making a statement that God has not given to us what we believe we deserve.

Proverbs 28:25a

**25 He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife:**

When the proud have a need they are going to voice their complaint because they do not believe they should suffer. They will eventually blame someone just as Israel blamed Moses. It is pride within the heart that convinces us that we should not suffer but that we are above that and that we deserve better.

We must be sure to guard against pride creeping into our hearts. Our sin nature is prideful, and our sin natures hates humility.

**Jeremiah 17:9**

*9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

Before we leave this point it must be pointed out that Israel never prayed in this situation.

**2. Israel's accusation against God.**

**Notice Exodus 17:3**

Israel accused God of bringing them to the wilderness to kill them by letting them run out of water so they would die of thirst. Israel had a bad habit of falsely accusing God.

**Exodus 14:10-12**

*10 And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.*

*11 And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?*

*12 Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.*

**Exodus 16:2-3**

*2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:*

*3 And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the*

*full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.*

All the accusations of Israel are a way of Israel accusing God of sin and unrighteousness. They were blaming Him for not taking better care of His people. But I do not want to be too hard on Israel because we do the very same thing.

When we complain about what is happening we are also blaming God for not taking better care of us and making life easier.

Everything we have has come from God. He has provided faithfully, and He has never failed us.

### **1 Corinthians 4:7**

*<sup>7</sup> For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*

God is so faithful to us. He gives us strength to rise, strength to work, strength to go to the store to spend the money He has provided. But sometimes it takes a reminder for us to acknowledge this. You see we think that we can handle the small things and let God handle the big things, but the truth of the matter is everything we face is out of our control. But we do not realize until we become too weak to go and do what we normally do. Then we often sound like Israel. We complain about the situation. We say, "Lord, why is this happening NOW?" "We have followed you to this point and NOW this happens."

Now let us understand the underlying problem with Israel and with us. There are two points here:

- a. The accusation ignores God's provisions up to this point.
- b. The accusation assumes that God makes every move with my comfort in mind.

Both are wrong! **If I understand that I exist to bring glory to God then I will say to God, "Do whatever you desire with my life. I am here for your glory, Lord."**

### **Isaiah 43:7**

*<sup>7</sup> Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*

We are to view every situation that we face in life with this Truth in mind. We are to believe that whatever we are facing, God has allowed it because in this situation I will bring glory to my Creator. Let us pray for grace to bring God the glory no matter what we

face. Let us also understand that God has a plan and many times we cannot understand His ways.

**Isaiah 55:7-9**

*<sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

*<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*

*<sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

**II. God's Response**

**Notice Exodus 17:4-6**

The picture here is absolutely beautiful. Moses was to take elders with him. The reason was because this event needed to be recorded and remembered. He was to take the rod that was used to strike the Nile River and turn it to blood. This is by the way the same rod that was used to part the Red Sea. But here it is referred to as the rod that was used to strike the river. (This is significant). God then told Moses that He would stand upon the Rock and Moses was to strike the Rock and water would flow out. Now let me show you something especially important.

**1 Corinthians 10:1-4**

*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;*

*<sup>2</sup> And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;*

*<sup>3</sup> And did all eat the same spiritual meat;*

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

When God told Moses, He would stand upon the Rock, He was stating that He would be the Rock.

**Psalms 61:1-2**

*Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.*

<sup>2</sup> *From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

Now let me get you to the rod. It was described as the rod that was used to strike the river. It was a rod of judgment. When Moses struck God, He was taking the judgment that should have fallen upon Israel. This is a picture of what happened upon the cross. God the Son took our judgment upon the cross. We, like Israel, had sinned against God and instead of sending judgment upon us He took our judgment.

**Conclusion:**

Now this living water is offered to all who will come to Him.

**John 4:10, 14**

<sup>10</sup> *Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

<sup>14</sup> *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.*

**Revelation 21:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> *And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.*

<sup>7</sup> *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

Have you drunk from the Rock? You may come here and listen week after week and the water flows over you. But it does you know good unless the water flows in you. You must repent and accept Jesus Christ as your Savior.

The question today is, "Where is God?" I cannot tell you what He is doing today but I can be sure that 2000 years He was sacrificing His own Son for our sins.

**Romans 8:31**

<sup>31</sup> *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

<sup>32</sup> *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*