

“THE PLACE IS HERE AND THE TIME IS NOW”

Exodus 17:1-7

“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.” (Exodus 17:6)

Introduction

(Exodus 17 has a remarkable backdrop)

1. In Chapter 14, Israel has just come through the Red Sea.
2. In Chapter 15, Israel travels three days in the wilderness with no water (v. 22).
3. Finally, locating water in Marah, Israel discovers it is bitter (15:23).
4. God instructs Moses to throw a tree into the water so that the waters will become sweet (15:25)

“The tree at Marah points to the cross, the place where mature people crucify their murmurs, grumbles and complaints.”

5. After testing, comes blessing, and Israel goes to Elim and finds 12 wells of water and a place of shelter (15:27).
6. In Chapter 16, 3 million people murmur again for want of food (16:2).
7. Moses then says, *“In the morning you will see the glory of the Lord.”* (16:7) and Israel is fed manna from heaven for 40 years on the way to the Promise Land (16:35)

NOW TO CHAPTER 17 AND OUR TEXT

- ◆ Here Israel will be tested in Rephidim!
- ◆ Here Israel will reveal their character!
- ◆ Here Israel will teach us something about ourselves!
 - Something we need to know in pursuit of revival.
 - Something we need to know as we progress in our journey.

Question: What does God reveal to our hearts in Exodus 17?

Three Discoveries Revealed in Exodus 17

I. The Providence” of God in Your Life (v. 1-3)

Fact: Under God’s direction, Moses leads the Israelites into the wilderness. (v.1)

Fact: Under God’s direction, Israel is faced with no food and no water. (v. 1)

Fact: Israel’s dilemma was not an accident, but a fulfillment of the will of God.

“The Children of Israel journeyed according to the commandment of the Lord.” (v. 1)

- ◆ Moses follows the leading of the Lord.
- ◆ Moses leads the people to Rephidim.
- ◆ Moses believes that God will provide.
- ◆ Moses experiences the wrath of criticism.

“Wherefore the people did chide with Moses.” (v. 2)

“Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?” (v. 2)

Fact: The people blame, rebuke, reprove and condemn their leader.

“According to the commandment of the Lord.” (v. 1) means:

It was God's idea to go to Rephidim!
It was God's plan for Israel to be where they are!
It was God's arrangement Israel was quarreling with:

And I discover something here:

That when we murmur and complain about the path God leads us in...we reveal a lack of faith in the providence of God for the way He leads us. (Repeat)

"Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?" (v. 2) Means:

1. The people were not trusting the Lord.
2. They asked Moses for water and knew he didn't have any.
3. They asked a very striking question.

"Is the Lord among us or not?" (v. 7)

Ever ask that when in between a rock and a hard place?
Ever ask that when God's ways are not your ways?
Ever ask that when God's will is painful to you?
Ever ask that when you wonder "why did this happen to me"?
Ever ask God "why?" in the midst of a trial, tragedy or testing?

For a temporary moment...

Israel has forgotten their deliverance from Egypt.
Israel has forgotten their Red Sea divided.
Israel has forgotten their enemy's power broken.
Israel has forgotten the cloud, the fire, the fresh manna and 12 wells provided at Elim.

Fact: When we forget all that God has done for us in our past, we will forget what God will do in our present. (Repeat)

"Wherefore do you tempt the Lord?"

The word "tempt" means to try or test.
Israel was trying God's patience by questioning His goodness to them!
Israel was "tempting" God" by not trusting in His plan for them.

And the fact is:

You can get rid of the grumbles and all bitterness by:

1. Trusting in the way of the Lord!
2. Believing in the goodness of God!
3. Relying upon the Lord in your Rephidims.

The question is not:

- ◆ How can God remove my Rephidims?
- ◆ But, how do I respond in the midst of my Rephidims?

Question: How do you go from panic to peace with God?

Question: How do you go from anxiety to assurance?

Question: How do I respond when in between a rock and a hard place?

We do what Moses did:

II. The "Pleading" With God in Your Life (v. 4, 5)

Question: What did Moses do in Rephidim?

Answer: (v. 4) “And Moses cried unto the Lord.”

Question: Why did Moses plead with God in prayer?

Answer: Because God knew where Moses was!
Because God knew what Moses needed!
Because God wasn’t surprised by Moses surprise!
Because God has the answer that Moses needs!

Question: What do we do when we come to a Rephidim in life and the well becomes dry?

We do what Moses did!

1. We turn directly to the Lord!
2. We know that God has the solution!
3. We learn to prevail with God in prayer!
4. We believe God answers when we spread our case before Him.

Notice the secret:

In v. 4; “And Moses cried unto the Lord.”

In v. 5; “And the Lord said unto Moses.”

Fact: God was waiting to hear from Moses!

Fact: And God is waiting to hear from you and me!

Fact: It’s the Biblical reaction to our Rephidims in life (Phil 4:6, 7; Psalm 55:22, Psalm 27:5)

What happens when Moses gets alone with God?

1. (v.5) God tells Moses what to do:
“Go on before the people.”
2. (v. 6) God tells Moses what God will do:
“Behold, I will stand before thee thereupon the rock in Horeb and bring water out from the rock.”

Notice: “Go to the rock in Horeb” (v. 6)

- ◆ “The last place to find water is in a rock.
- ◆ But God said, “I’ll bring water from the rock.”

What does the rock mean to us?

(I Cor. 10:1-4)

(v. 1) “Don’t be ignorant how our fathers under the cloud passed through the sea.”

(v. 2) “And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and the sea.”

(v. 3) “And did all eat the same spiritual meat.”

(v. 4) “And did all drink the same spiritual drink’; for they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ.”

Fact: Their rock is our rock – Christ Jesus!

Fact: It is Christ who was smitten for our sins.

Fact: The Spirit flowed out from Jesus after He was crucified, buried, resurrected and glorified!

Question: Are you in between a rock and a hard place?

Question: Have you found yourself in a tough place?

If so, remember Deuteronomy 32:13

“God made Moses to suck honey out of the rock.”

1. A rock is the hardest thing in nature.
2. Honey is the sweetest thing in nature

And I discover...

That God will give you your sweetest lessons and greatest refreshing in your toughest seasons of life. (Repeat)

Illustration: When Joseph Scriven’s bride to be drowned the day before his planned wedding day, we wrote these words:

“O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry, everything to God in prayer.”

Illustration: ♦ In 1904/1905 God invaded Wales by the Spirit of God.
♦ God used the Evan Roberts family as the instrument of ministry in revival.
♦ For 13 years Evan Roberts never missed a prayer meeting.
♦ And when God walked through Wales, He tripped over Evan Roberts!

Question: What happened when Moses pleaded with God?

Question: What happens when we plead with God?

Question: What should we expect through the avenue of prayer?

III. The “Provision” From God in Your Life” (v. 6, 7)

1. In God’s providence and wisdom He has brought you to where you are.
2. In God’s plan, He is trusting that you will learn to plead and pray (instead of murmur and complain).
3. In God’s provision, He provides in miraculous ways:

All read Psalm 78:20

“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?”

- ♦ A picture of Jesus smitten!
- ♦ A picture of the Holy Spirit poured out!
- ♦ A picture of God providing all we need!

The question is:

- ♦ How does the Lord provide in our Rephidims?
- ♦ What can we expect in the hard places of life?
- ♦ What are the characteristics of God’s provision?
- ♦ How does God provide in the midst of our journey?
- ♦ What should I expect in this place, here and now?

The Characteristics of God’s Provision

#1. God Provides “Knowingly” (I Cor. 10:4)

“They all drank of that spiritual rock that followed them and that rock was Christ.”

Notice: “The rock followed them.”

- ◆ Israel was anxious and nervous!
- ◆ But Jesus knew where they were all the time!

Question: Are you passing through Rephidim?

Question: Have you questioned, “Does God know where I am?”

#2. God Provides “Abundantly” (Psalm 105:41)

“He opened the rock and the water gushed out, they ran in the dry places like a river.”

- ◆ The rock is a picture of Jesus coming.
- ◆ Israel was in a dry wilderness but water flowed.
- ◆ We have the same promise today (even in your Rephidims – water will be poured upon you).

#3. God Provides “Locally” (Exodus 17:6)

“The rock in Horeb”

- ◆ God’s supply was local!
- ◆ The Israelites didn’t have to travel long distance!
- ◆ God lead them to the source where they lived!
- ◆ God’s provision was near, close and within reach!
- ◆ God providing in Horeb was telling us:

That the place is here and the time is now!

- ◆ The provision was accessible, reachable and touchable in Horeb.
- ◆ No running to this place or this person.
- ◆ No false doctrine, that God is over there but not over here!

What is God saying here in Exodus?

1. I know where you are at; I followed you.
2. I know exactly what you need, and am not surprised.
3. I am where you are; in this location.
4. I will work where I find you; right here, right now.

Believe God now:

He provides springs in the valley!
He provides streams in the desert!
He provides rivers in dry places!
He provides a song in the night seasons!

Amen!
Bill Kirk