

WATER FROM A ROCK; A VICTORY OVER AMALEK

BIBLE TEXT : Exodus 17:1-16

LESSON 59 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "They that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing" (Psalm 34:10).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Exodus 17:1-16

¹ And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and *there was* no water for the people to drink.

² Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?

³ And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore *is* this *that* thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

⁴ And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.

⁵ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go.

⁶ 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. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

⁷ And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is

NOTES:

No Water

As soon as the Children of Israel started to travel again they ran into a new discouragement — there was no water to drink. They were Journeying at the command of God, which meant that the pillar of cloud had risen from its place and moved forward. Thus God guided the Israelites through all their wanderings: "In the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents"; but when it moved, they followed it (**Numbers 9:17** ¹⁷ And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents.). We know they were in the will of God to journey, but the enemy was there to discourage.

A Christian will find, as he consecrates his life to God for greater service, for a closer walk with Christ, that Satan will throw many obstacles in his way, and will whisper doubts into his ear. He does not want to see the Christian go forward, and will try to do all he can to hinder the aggressive follower of the Lord.

Moses had, through the power of God, freed a slave people from bondage, for which they should have been grateful. Instead, as soon as discouragements came they wanted to destroy him. They said he had brought them into the wilderness to die.

Water from the Rock

Moses knew what to do when in trouble; he called upon God. The Lord was right there to answer. He told Moses to take his rod, which he had used to perform the miracles in Egypt, and go smite the rock that He would show him, and water would come out of it. Moses might have said that that was impossible -- he would have if he had been like the rest of the people -- but he believed God, and did as he was told. God said He would stand before him upon the rock, probably in the pillar of cloud as He had at other times; and the elders who would accompany Moses would be witnesses of God's miracle in bringing forth water out of a dry rock. The miracle happened just as God said it would, and the people drank of the stream and were satisfied.

Christ our Rock

Paul uses this incident to tell us a great spiritual truth, in I Corinthians 10:4, "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." Out of that rock came natural life, because if they could not have found water they would all have perished. So in Christ we have life eternal so long as we drink at the wells of salvation. Jesus told the woman at the well that the water He would give her should cause her never to thirst again, and would be "a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). He was speaking of His salvation, His Spirit that would abide in her when she was converted. Some of the Children of Israel recognised the spiritual significance of the water from the rock, for the Psalmist said: "They remembered that God was their rock" (Psalm 78:35). (See also **Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 18, 31** ⁴ *He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.* ¹⁵ But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered *with fatness*;

the LORD among us, or not?

⁸ Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

⁹ And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.

¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

¹¹ And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

¹² But Moses' hands *were* heavy; and they took a stone, and put *it* under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

¹³ And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

¹⁴ And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this *for* a memorial in a book, and rehearse *it* in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

¹⁵ And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi:

¹⁶ For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn *that* the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation.

then he forsook God *which* made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. ¹⁸ Of the Rock *that* begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. ³¹ For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves *being* judges.)

War

A new difficulty now confronted the Children of Israel. There were enemies in the land who came out to fight with them. The principal tribe in the wilderness was called the Amalekites. They had some claims in Canaan, and may have thought their possessions were in danger because the Hebrews were moving in that direction. Or they may have known that the Israelites had carried away the treasures of Egypt, and they wished to steal from them. Whatever the reason, they came up behind the camp of Israel and made war with the stragglers.

We now have a new character introduced, about whom we shall hear much in the history of the Israelites. Moses chose Joshua to become commander-in-chief of their army. We remember that the Children of Israel had been slaves and had never had an army; but Moses commands Joshua to pick out the men he wants and go out and fight the Amalekites.

Joshua was to become a great military leader. After the death of Moses he led the Israelites across Jordan into the land of Canaan where they had to take the land by conquest. He subdued six nations and thirty-one kings during a war of six years. He then divided the Promised Land among the various tribes. The reason for Joshua's great success was that he followed the Lord closely, and made the well-known statement, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). His faith and trust in God in all things gave him the victory. He suffered only one defeat, the battle of Ai, which taught him how important it is to obey God in everything.

Victory through Prayer

Joshua led his men to battle; but while they were out there fighting, something more important was taking place on the hill above them. Moses had gone up to watch the battle; and as long as he held up the rod of God, their army was victorious; but when his arms grew tired and he let them down, the Amalekites would win. Moses' holding his rod toward Heaven was a type of prayer. Without prayer the army could accomplish nothing. We may hold religious services; we may talk about Christ and His kingdom; but if our actions are not backed up with much prayer, there will be no results for God. Prayer is the driving force of all we do for the Lord.

But Moses grew tired. Prayer makes the body tired; but if we do not pray sin will prevail. Here we see how important it is for all of us to support our leaders. Aaron and Hur had gone up the mountain with Moses, and they now fixed him a place to sit down, and one of them stood on either side of him and held up his hands an day long. Thus they helped Moses pray down the victory for their army, and the Amalekites were defeated.

Curse upon the Amalekites

The Children of Israel were to remember this victory; and in order that the record might be preserved for posterity, they were to write it in a book. God pronounced a curse on the Amalekites for their attack upon His people, and wanted Joshua to remember that they would some day be annihilated for their offence. Let us remember the Amalekites, and notice future battles with this nation, and their extermination.

Moses built an altar to worship God, and named it Jehovah-nissi -- Jehovah my banner. We remember that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had built altars unto God; but during

the time the Children of Israel were in Egypt, we hear nothing of any altars. This begins a new epoch in which the Hebrews have a place of worship.

QUESTIONS

1. How were the Children of Israel to get water?
2. Who was the rock?
3. Where do we get the living water?
4. Who attacks the Israelites? Do they win?
5. Who is the commander-in-chief of the new army?
6. How did he win the battle?
7. What was to be the future fate of the Amalekites?