

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

9-9-20

Exodus 17

The People Grumble For Water - Verses 1-3

¹The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?" ³ But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

17:2 Again the people complained about their problem instead of praying. Some problems can be solved by careful thought or by rearranging our priorities. Some can be solved by discussion and good counsel. But some problems can be solved only by prayer. We should make a determined effort to pray when we feel like complaining, because complaining only raises our level of stress. Prayer quiets our thoughts and emotions and prepares us to listen.

17:2 Again the people complained about their problem instead of praying. Some problems can be solved by careful thought or by rearranging our priorities. Some can be solved by discussion and good counsel. But some problems can be solved only by prayer. We should make a determined effort to pray when we feel like complaining, because complaining only raises our level of stress. Prayer quiets our thoughts and emotions and prepares us to listen.

17:3 God is sovereign over circumstances and will use them to direct our paths, but don't try to force God to do something to prove Himself to you. He doesn't have to prove Himself to us.

Moses Struck The Rock And Water Came Out - Verses 4-7

⁴ Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." ⁵ The LORD answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

17:4 From Moses we learn that God is the one we should turn to, not anybody around us. We learn that God is the one that can help us. We learn that many times reasoning with people or trying to convince them might be pointless. Pray to God for help. We also learn that being a leader or teaching people might not always be easy. Fair or not, all problems will come back to you. This should remind us that if we ever lead we need to be extra dependent on God. We can learn to expect occasional complaints and grumbling, but should remember to deal with it gracefully. We

can also remember to treat our leaders graciously and not give them cause for grief. See Hebrews 13:17.

17:5-7 The staff was like the visible symbol of God's power. It reminded them of God authority and His miracles. It wasn't a magic wand. God told Moses to strike the rock in front of everyone. Why? This could be yet one more sign of God's power. Seeing is believing. If they didn't see it they would have even more excuses and denials. Seeing it should have convinced them once again that God was real, that He was with them, and that He would continue to take care of them.

Moses holds his arms up and the sons of Israel have victory over Amalek - Verses 8-13

⁸ The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. ⁹ Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands." ¹⁰ So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. ¹¹ As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. ¹² When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. ¹³ So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

17:8 The Amalekites were descendants of Amalek, a grandson of Esau. They were a fierce nomadic tribe that lived in the desert region of the Dead Sea. They made part of their livelihood by conducting frequent raids on other settlements and carrying off plundered goods. They killed for pleasure. One of the greatest insults in Israelite culture was to call someone "a friend of Amalek." When the Israelites entered the region, the Amalekites saw this as a perfect opportunity for both pleasure and profit. But this hostile tribe was moving in on the wrong group—a people led by God. For the Israelite slaves to defeat such a warlike nation was more than enough proof that God was with them as he had promised to be.

17:9 Here we meet Joshua for the first time. Later he would become the great leader who would bring God's people into the Promised Land. Joshua was Moses' right hand man and leader in training. Just as God had prepared Moses for leading the people way ahead of time, God was now preparing Joshua to take over this position when Moses died. Joshua seems to be more of a warrior leader while Moses is more of a administrative and spiritual leader.

17:10-13 Aaron and Hur stood by Moses' side and held up his arms to ensure victory against Amalek. We need to "lift up the hands" of our spiritual leaders as well. Shouldering some responsibility, lending a word of encouragement, or offering a prayer are ways of refreshing spiritual leaders in their work.

The Book of Records and God's Declaration Against Amalek - Verses 14-16

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven." ¹⁵ Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner. ¹⁶ He said,

"Because hands were lifted up against the throne of the LORD, the LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."

17:14 There are several reasons given in the Bible why God told Israel to utterly destroy the Amalekites. Firstly, they were evil. Their practices were abominable to God. We know both from the Bible and from other historic documents that the Canaanite civilization was perhaps the most wicked and vile ever known in the world. They were descended from Esau and also were exposed to the Israelites and the true teaching from God. Yet they rejected it in favor of a vile, sensuous, and brutal religion. God's just character requires Him to punish evildoers. Generally He is patient (and He did wait hundreds of years to use Israel to wipe out the Canaanites), but His patience doesn't last forever and He decided to judge the Amalekites sooner rather than later. Secondly, according to Deuteronomy 7 and other Scriptures, if any portion of these wicked nations were allowed to remain they would ensnare Israel and lead them away from the true God to worship their false gods and also practice abominations. Israel did not completely wipe out those nations and what God prophesied did happen, not only once but numerous times (1 Kings 14:22-24, Jeremiah 32:35).

17:15 God is just and judges sinners. We need to be extremely careful not to be influenced by culture or unbelievers around us, and also not to leave any sin or foothold for Satan (Ephesians 4:27) in our lives. If we give a foothold to Satan he will use it and influence our lives negative, trying to turn us from God.