

Water From a Rock

MEMORY VERSE: "He caused the water to flow out of the rock." Isaiah 48:21

SCRIPTURES: Exodus 17

AIM: To teach that God has proved His trustworthiness AGAIN

The Israelites were trudging across the hot, dusty desert toward Canaan, the land God had promised to give them. The land was brown and dry. In fact, they couldn't see any water anywhere. They carried water to drink, but their jugs were almost empty. What would happen when their water was finally gone? They began to worry and complain.

"I'm thirsty!" they all said in unison.

On and on the people walked following the white cloud in the sky. Their mouths were dry and their throats parched.

It's bad enough to be hungry when you are tramping through dry, parched country, but it's far worse to be thirsty. Everyone longed for a drink of cool water.

Finally they came to a place called Rephidim. There the cloud stopped. "Let us put up our tents to shelter us from the sun," said the people. "Then we will look for water."

They looked and looked everywhere, but they couldn't find water. This made the people very unhappy. And though they knew that God had provided for them in so many ways, and should have trusted that He would provide again, they chose to question whether or not God was with them!

"Let's find Moses," they said. "He is the one who took us away from our home in Egypt. Because of him we are in this hot place with no water."

The angry crowd found Moses. "Give us water!" they threatened. "Why did you bring us here to die of thirst?"

Moses turned to God. He found a place where he could be alone, then he prayed to God for help. "What shall I do with these unhappy people?" he asked.

God said to Moses, "Take the elders of Israel with you and lead the people out to Mt. Horeb. I will meet you there at the rock. Strike it with your rod; the same rod with which you struck the Nile. Water will come pouring out of the rock; water enough for everyone!"

When the large company reached the spot that God had indicated, Moses faced the angry crowd of thirsty men and women, whose little children were crying for water. He asked them to gather around. Then Moses did as he was told. He struck the rock as God had commanded, and suddenly there burst forth from the stone a stream of fresh water.

Water to drink! Water to clean their clothes! Water for the animals, too! Can you imagine how the boys and girls felt? They knelt down by the stream and drank as much as they could hold. They probably washed their dirty faces and hands, too. The water felt so good!

Now everyone was happy again. But would the Israelites remember this miracle the next time there was trouble? We will find out in other stories.

Do you think God was pleased with the people when they grumbled against Moses? No. God wanted them to trust Him. But over and over, the Israelites were overcome by the power of their sinful hearts, and chose to rebel against God rather than trust. It's not just the Israelites who have a problem of sinful hearts. The Bible tells us that *everyone* has the same sin problem, and only Jesus can take that sin problem away and allow us to trust God the way He deserves to be trusted!