

Water From The Rock

Exodus 17:1-6

MEMORY VERSE

PSALM 114:7-8a

“Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, At the presence of the God of Jacob, Who turned the rock into a pool of water...”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A trick birthday candle (one that won't blow out) and matches.

Gray clay and blue yarn.

A small, baby food jar, water, baby oil, and blue food coloring.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Can't Blow It

You will need a trick birthday candle (the kind that will not blow out!) and matches. Please read the directions on the candle box. Please supervise the use of the lit fire and matches carefully. Have the children try to think of things a person could do that would make God stop loving them. As they share their ideas, let them try to blow out the candle. It will not go out, just as the love of God will not go “out.”

LESSON TIME!

The children of Israel had some incredible experiences as God took care of them in the wilderness. They saw the Red Sea part and they walked through it on dry ground. They saw the Egyptian army covered by the Red Sea, the very sea that they had passed through. They tasted bitter waters that God made sweet for them, and they saw miraculous provision of the manna, the food that would sustain them for the next 40 years.

One would think that such great miracles would build their faith so much that they would never doubt God again. Yet, the Israelites struggled with unbelief time and time again. We will see, once again, faced with a *seeming* impossibility, they begin to murmur and complain. And we will see, once again, the wondrous grace and long suffering of God toward them. **God takes cares of His children.**

EXODUS 17:1

Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink.

In this verse, we see the children of Israel journeying from the wilderness of Sin to Rephidim, "according to the commandment of the Lord," and there was no water for them to drink there. Did God make a mistake?

It was God who led them into an "impossible" situation. Surely, their Great Shepherd who led them knew what trials would befall them. Surely, He is prepared to work on their behalf. God will sometimes lead us into "impossible" situations in order to accomplish His divine purposes. We, too, can trust that He knows the trials and obstacles we are facing and will face; and He is prepared to work on our behalf. **God takes cares of His children.**

EXODUS 17:2-4

Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?"

And the people thirsted there for water, and the people murmured against Moses, and said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!"

Here we are told that the people “contended” with Moses. They challenged Moses to supply them with water, almost as if it were a debt that he could not honor. Moses responded that they were, in reality, contending with the Lord. Moses was God’s appointed leader and His representative to the people. To murmur against Moses was to murmur against the Lord.

As their need grew stronger, and no evidence of water was to be seen, the children of Israel grew angrier. They accused Moses of bringing them out of Egypt to let them die of thirst in the wilderness. They were questioning God’s goodness and faithfulness.

Now, it was no difficulty for God to provide water—He who had parted the Red Sea, buried the army in it, turned bitter water to sweet, and given manna from heaven. How quickly they forgot all the miracles God had done and became, again, overwhelmed with the circumstances.

Their unbelief had blinded their eyes and, foolishly, they were even ready to stone Moses—the one who had laid down his life for them. May we be cautious that we do not fall prey to an "evil heart of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:12) as did the children of Israel.

How did Moses respond? Rather than become angry and attempt to defend himself, Moses brought the problem to the Almighty God—the source of His strength. He cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do?" He, wisely, sought counsel from the Lord.

We, too, should learn to seek God's counsel and wisdom when faced with every decision and problem. With our own solutions and "fix it" attempts, we can make a greater mess than we started with. It is always wise to seek the counsel of the Lord. Proverbs 3:5,6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." **God takes cares of His children.**

EXODUS

17:5-6

And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go.

"Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

God graciously answered Moses cry. (When we come to God in prayer with our needs, we can be assured that He answers us.) God told Moses to go before the people, even though they wanted to stone him. Moses knew God was with him and would protect him.

The Rock

Make a "rock" out of gray clay with several strands of blue yarn "flowing" from it. If you want, have the children make rocks too, so they can take them home as a reminder of the power of God.

God then told Moses that He would "stand before you there upon the rock in Horeb." What a beautiful promise: God would stand before Moses. Moses was to "strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink."

We see a beautiful type of Jesus Christ in this picture (see 1 Corinthians 10:1-4). We see the rock being struck, speaking of the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross. Moses used his rod to strike the rock—the same rod that had been the symbol of judgment (Exodus 4:3; 7:17) in the hand of Moses. Jesus took the judgment for our sins that we deserved. It is awesome to consider is the fact that it was the people's sins that led to the smiting of the rock, just as our sins led to the smiting of the Rock of our salvation, Jesus. Note, God, Himself, stood upon the rock while it was smitten (verse 6). The Bible says, "...God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them...."

Just as the water flowed out of the rock to meet the need of the people, so grace flows from our Rock to meet each of our needs. In John 7:37-38, Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The water flowing from the rock is a beautiful type of the Holy Spirit, who fills us and refreshes us as God's children.

EXODUS 17:7

So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

Moses named the place Massah, meaning "temptation," because the people tempted God; and Meribah, meaning "strife." A name was given as a remembrance of their sin; it would serve as a warning to their children not to commit the same sins as their parents.

We truly see God's love and forbearance for His people; although, they had murmured and complained, accused Moses and God. The Bible says where sin abounds, grace much more abounds.

May we not be guilty, as the children of Israel were, of “an evil heart of disbelief” and find ourselves complaining when faced with “impossible” circumstances. Our faithful and all-powerful God can, if necessary, provide "waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink..." (Isaiah 43:20). Remember, **God takes cares of His children.**

What a Reminder

In a small baby food jar, mix water with a little baby oil and blue food coloring. Glue the lid on. This can be passed around just to remind them of the water that came from the rock as you talk about it.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for God's faithful provision. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.