

# Israel in the Desert

Exodus 15:22 - 17:16

Look at the picture. These men are defeating the enemy at war. How could that happen? Do they have special powers? Let's read today's lesson and find the answers.

## Prayer TLH 496 v. 3

If you cannot be a watchman,  
Standing high on Zion's wall,  
Pointing out the path to heaven,  
Off'ring life and peace to all,  
With your prayers and with your bounties  
You can do what God demands;  
You can be like faithful Aaron, holding up the prophet's hands.



## The Story

God's people, the Israelites, were on their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. God had delivered them from Pharaoh and his army by parting the Red Sea and leading them through it. Surely God was with them! However, it did not take long for them to doubt God's goodness and to forget to trust in Him.

Following the pillar of cloud, which showed that God was with them, Moses led the people to the Wilderness of Shur. They traveled through the barren desert for three days without finding any water. At last they came to the waters at Marah. To their great disappointment the water was so bitter that they could not drink it. After only three days the people were forgetting to trust in God. They began to murmur

against Moses. "What shall we drink?" they asked. Moses turned to the Lord who was ready to help. God showed Moses a tree. When Moses cast this tree into the waters, they became sweet. The need of the people was well supplied.

When the people continued their journey, they came to a wonderful oasis called Elim where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees. God gave them this pleasant place to rest for a month.

After this time of rest, the journey went on through the Wilderness of Sin. Instead of trusting in God, the complaints began again. "Oh that we had died in Egypt where we sat by the pots of meat and ate bread until we were full. Did you bring us out to this



wilderness to die of hunger?" they groaned.

God again patiently supplied this need. He told Moses, "I will rain bread from heaven."

Moses and Aaron told the people, "At evening you will know that the Lord has brought you out of Egypt and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, for He hears your murmurings against the Lord. God will send meat to eat in the evenings and bread in the morning, and you shall know that the Lord is God."

That evening so many quails came up and covered the camp that the people could easily kill them for meat. The next morning dew lay about the camp. When the dew dried, there remained a small round substance as fine as frost. It was like white coriander seed and tasted like wafers with honey. All the people asked, "What is it?!" (Manna)

Moses explained, "This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat." Everyone was to gather one omer (two quarts) for each person in their household each day. If anyone tried to save it overnight, it grew worms and smelled bad. On the sixth day they were to gather twice as much, for none would appear on the Sabbath day, the day of rest. On the seventh day the extra bread did not have worms or smell bad.

The Israelites were commanded to save an omer of manna in a pot as a remembrance of God's goodness to them.

The Lord supplied this manna for forty years until they entered the Promised Land.

After setting out on their journey once more through the Wilderness of Sin, the people arrived at Rephadim, only to find that there was no water. Instead of remembering how God had taken care of their needs before, they demanded of Moses, "Give us water to drink. Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?"

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

God told Moses to lead the people to a rock at Horeb. When he would strike the rock with his staff, water would come from it. Moses obeyed the Lord and the people had water. He called the place Massah (temptation), and Meribah (quarrel).

While the Israelites were camped at Rephadim, the Amalekites attacked them. Moses told Joshua to pick some men and lead them out to fight the Amalekites the next day.

During the battle, Moses stood at the top of a hill overlooking the battlefield with his staff in his hand. As long as Moses held up his hands in prayer, the Israelites were winning the battle. However, when his hands grew tired and sank down, the Amalekites began to be stronger. Aaron and Hur found a rock for Moses to sit upon, and they each propped up one of his arms until sunset. By that time, with God's help, Joshua and the Israelites had won a great victory.

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## Outer Aim - God continues to provide for a complaining people.

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**What the Story Tells Us** - Even though God constantly took care of the Israelites while they wandered in the desert, as when He brought them to the oasis at Elim, they often complained. Match up the COMPLAINT/PROBLEM of Israelites listed below with the SOLUTION given by God through Moses.

Israel's COMPLAINT/PROBLEM

SOLUTION from God

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. ____ The water at Marah was bitter            | A. God gave victory in battle through Moses' raised arms in prayer and Joshua's leading the Israelite army. |
| 2. ____ No food at the Wilderness of Sin         | B. God told Moses to cast a tree into the water.  |
| 3. ____ Rephadim had no water                    | C. God gave water from a rock at Horeb.   |
| 4. ____ The battle against the Amalekite enemies | D. God gave manna and quail.  |

**What God's Word Tells Us** - Read the Bible passage below. Then list the blessings God has given you for your life on earth and for your life to come in heaven.

Psalm 103:1-3 - Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases.

Earthly Blessings

Spiritual Blessings

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

## Map Work - Use the map to do the following activities.

1. Trace the route which the Israelites traveled.
2. Draw...
  - ▶ a tree in the water at Marah
  - ▶ palm trees at Elim
  - ▶ manna and quail in Wilderness of Sin
  - ▶ a rock with water pouring out of it at Rephadim
  - ▶ Moses with his hands held out at Rephadim



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**Inner Aim - God continues to provide for us.**

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## Passages

Psalm 103:1-3 - Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases.

1 Corinthians 10:12 - Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

## Hymn - TLH #434

O God of Jacob, by whose hand  
Thy people still are fed;  
Who thro' this weary pilgrimage  
Hast all our fathers led,

Our vows, our prayers, we now present  
Before Thy throne of grace;  
God of our fathers, be the God  
Of their succeeding race.

Thro' each perplexing path of life  
Our wand'ring footsteps guide;  
Give us each day our daily bread  
And raiment fit provide.

Oh, spread Thy covering wings around  
Till all our wanderings cease  
And at our Father's loved abode  
Our souls arrive in peace.

Now with the humble voice of prayer  
Thy mercy we implore;  
Then with a grateful voice of praise  
Thy goodness we'll adore.

## Prayer

Dear Jesus,

All too often it is true that the more You give us, the less satisfied we are. May our faith not depend on how much we have but on You alone. When we need something, instead of complaining, help us to ask You for what we need with thanksgiving. Keep us from complaining and whining. Feed us today on Jesus, Who is the "Bread of Life" and the "Water of Life." Amen.