

# Israel in the Desert

Exodus 15:22 - 17:16



## The Story

God's people had left the land of Egypt. God led them safely through the Red Sea and saved them from the army of Pharaoh. Now God led them by a cloud through the wilderness.

The people traveled for three days in the hot dry desert. At last they came to Marah. There was water here, but it was too bitter to drink. The people did not trust in God to help them. They grumbled to Moses, "What shall we drink?"

God showed Moses a tree. Moses threw the tree into the water and the water tasted sweet!

The next stop on the journey had twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees. They rested for a month in this wonderful place.

When it was again time to travel on, God led the people into the Wilderness of Sin. The people again grumbled to Moses. They said they wished they had stayed in Egypt where there was plenty of food.

God supplied this need also. That evening God sent so many quails into the camp that it was easy to kill them to eat. In the morning a small round seed lay all around on the ground. They asked, "What is it?" (Manna) Moses said that this was the bread that God had sent. For five days they were to gather

just enough for each person. If anyone gathered extra it grew worms and smelled bad. On Friday they were to gather twice as much, because God would not send any on the day of rest. The extra that they gathered did not grow worms or smell bad on Saturday.

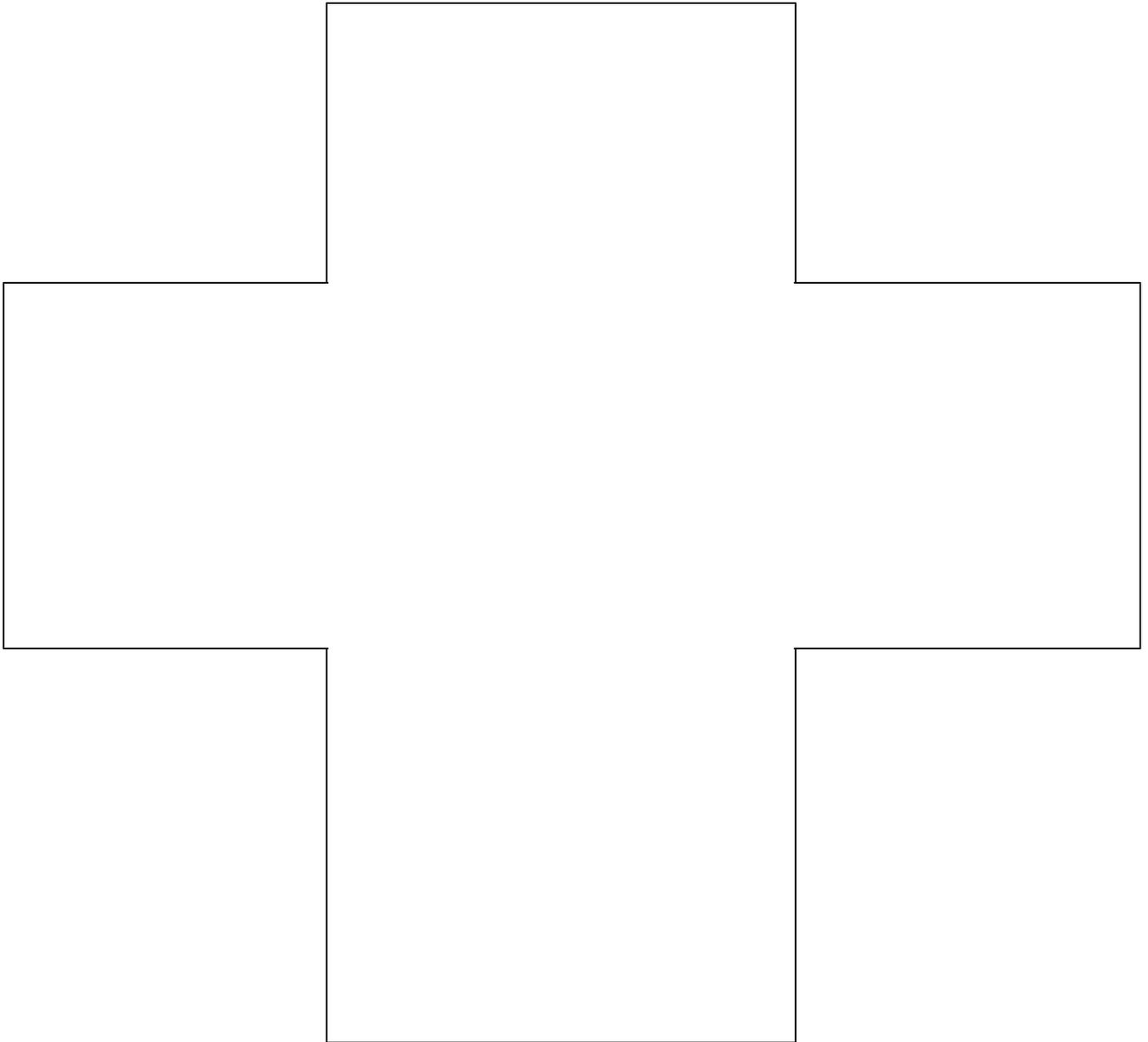
As they set out again through the wilderness, they came to Rephidim. There was again no water for them to drink. The people thought they would die of thirst. God commanded Moses to hit a certain rock with his staff and water poured out of it.

At Rephadim the Amalekites attacked the Israelites. Joshua led an army against the Amalekites while Moses watched from a nearby hill. As long as Moses held up his arms in prayer to God, the Israelites were winning the battle. After a while Moses' arms grew tired. When he let them drop to his sides, the Amalekites began to win. Moses then sat on a rock while Aaron, his brother, and Hur held up his hands until sunset. With the help of God Joshua and the Israelites won a great victory.

***God continues to provide for a complaining people.***

**Activity One** - Draw or cut and glue pictures out of a magazine to show blessings God has given us.

***JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS IS OUR GREATEST BLESSING***



***God continues to provide for us.***

**Activity Two** - Try any of these activities.

1. What does "bitter" taste like? Sample some bitter baking chocolate to see.
2. Role play Moses holding up his arms until they were too tired. Then show Aaron and Hur holding up Moses' arms until the battle was over. (rod optional)
3. Color this picture of the Israelites gathering manna from the ground.



## Passage

Psalms 103:2 - Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

**Hymn** - TLH #434 v. 1, 2

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.

## Prayer

Dear Jesus,

Thank You for all the food and drink You give me every day. Thank You also for coming to the world to save me. Keep me every day in Your care. Amen.

# Israel in the Desert

Exodus 15:22 - 17:16



## 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. They were sure 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 said. 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 12 wells of water and 70 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 Him. 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?!"

Moses explained, "This is the bread (Manna) which the Lord has given you to eat." Everyone was to gather one omer (two quarts) for each person each day. If anyone tried to save it overnight, it grew wormy and smelled bad. On the sixth day they were to gather twice as much, for none would appear on the seventh 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 40 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 Moses struck 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.

*God continues to provide for a complaining people.*

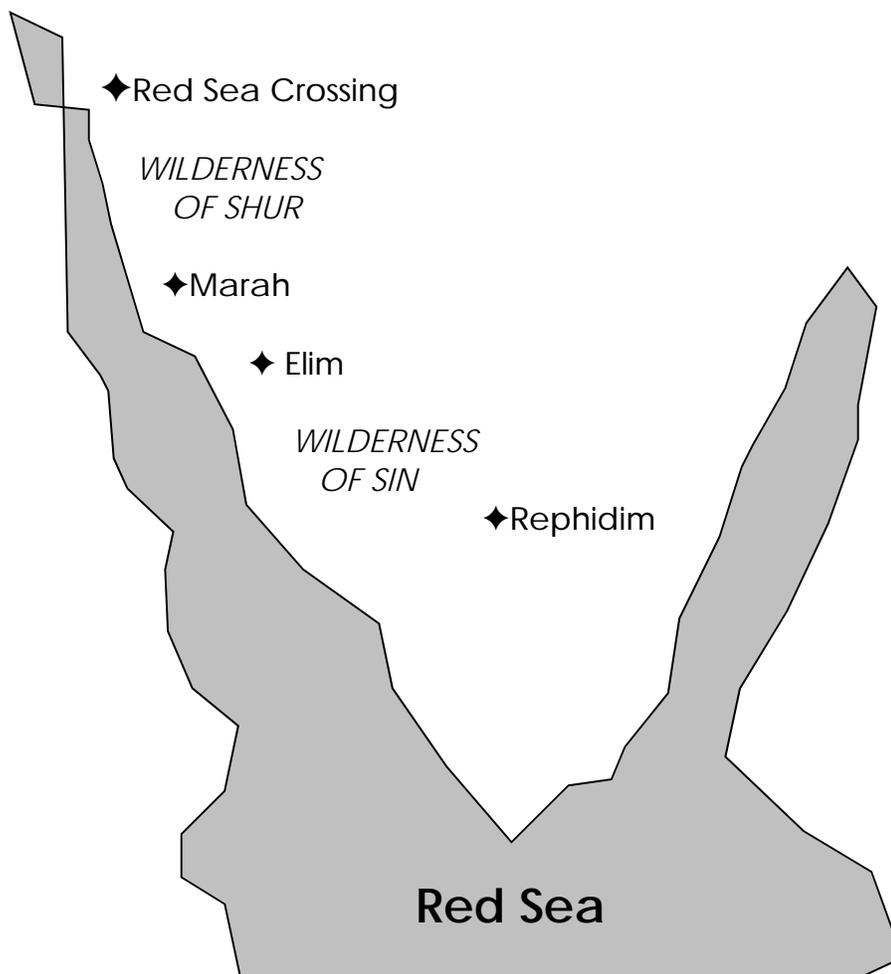
### Activity One - Fill in the blanks with words from the WORD BOX.

hands	bitter	tree	bread	Joshua
	water	quail	Moses	

1. The waters of Meribah
2. The Lord made the waters sweet when Moses threw in a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The food that God supplied for the people was \_\_\_\_\_ in the morning, and \_\_\_\_\_ in the evening.
4. At Rephadim, the Lord made \_\_\_\_\_ come from a rock.
5. The Israelites were winning the battle with the Amalekites when Moses held up his \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The leader of the Israelite army was \_\_\_\_\_.

## Activity Two - 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



*God continues to provide for us.*

## Activity Three - Answer the following.

How does God supply our daily needs of food, clothing and shelter?

Make a list of the blessings God has given you.

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## Passages

Psalms 103:2 - Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

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

## Hymn - TLH #434 v. 1, 2

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.

## Prayer

Dear Jesus,

Thank You for supplying all our needs each day. Please help me to be thankful and to always trust in You. Amen.

# 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.

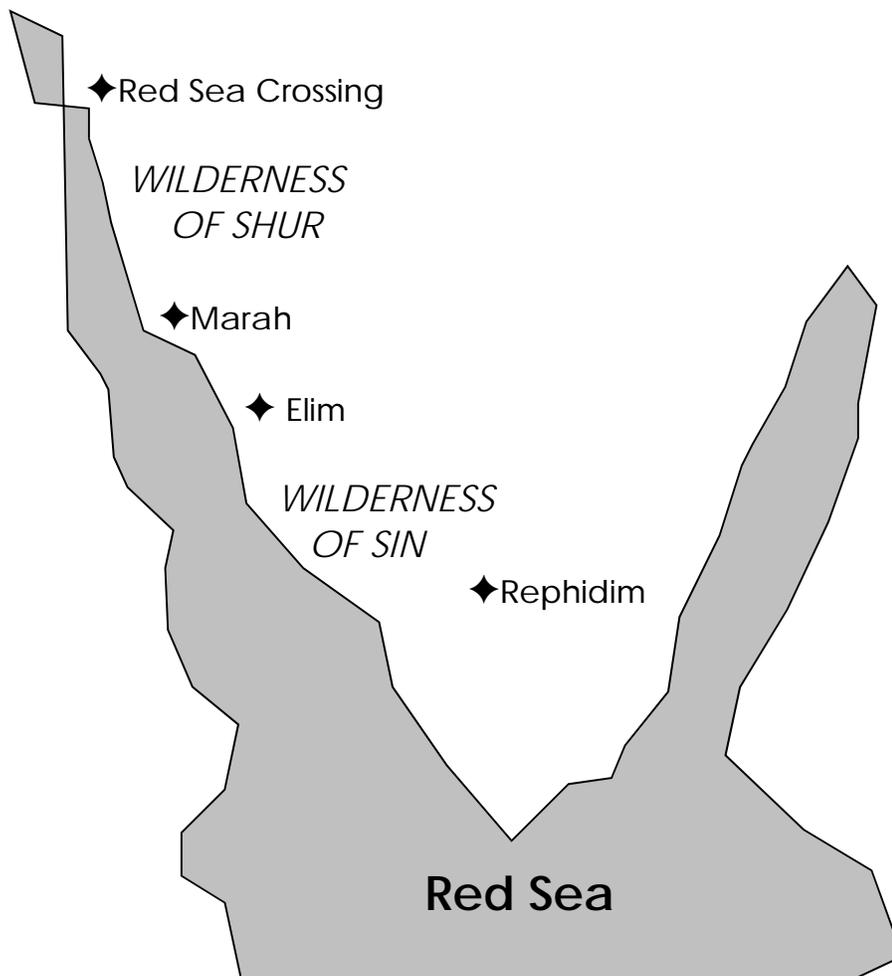
Earthly Blessings

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.
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  - ▶ a rock with water pouring out of it at Rephadim
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**Inner Aim - God continues to provide for us.**

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## Passages

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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,

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

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

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.

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Standing high on Zion's wall,  
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You can be like faithful Aaron, holding up the prophet's hands.

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

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**What the Story Tells Us** - Look at the COMPLAINT/PROBLEM of Israelites. Find the SOLUTION given by God through Moses from the story and write it.

Israel's COMPLAINT/PROBLEM

SOLUTION from God

1. The water at Marah was bitter . . . . .
2. The oasis at Elim . . . . .
3. No food at the Wilderness of Sin . . . . .
4. Rephadim had no water . . . . .
5. The battle against the Amalekite enemies . . . . .

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

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## Passages

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1 Corinthians 10:12 - Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.  
*What does this passage mean for us?*

## 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.

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

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

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.

**STORY**

Israel in the Desert - Exodus 15:22-17:16

**TEACHER PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, sometimes the things of this world seem to occupy my attention to the exclusion of You. I also tend to complain and gripe when I don't get what I want. Create in me a quiet sense of contentment. Feed me with the Bread of Life and the Water of Life that I may share this spiritual food with the children entrusted to me. Thank You for everything You have provided for me and enable me to receive these gifts with thanksgiving that drives out complaining and discontent. Amen.

**VOCABULARY**

*complain* - to let someone know that you are not happy with what you have

*murmur* - the sound of complaining; for example, when someone mutters under his breath

*content* - to be satisfied with what you have

*test* - to try a person's faith so that faith may grow and become stronger

*manna* - bread that God provided for His people (Hebrew word meaning "What is it?")

**OUTER AIM**

God continues to provide for a complaining people

**INNER AIM**

God must get tired of our complaints or does He?

**BACKGROUND**

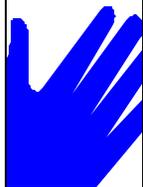
Moses' song of thanksgiving after the deliverance at the Red Sea (Exodus 15:2-18) can be divided into three parts (Ex. 15: 2-5, 6-10, 11-18) showing the power of Jehovah, the destruction of His enemies, and the calling of Israel to be the people of God.

The results of God's deliverance were short-lived with the children of Israel. They came to the wilderness, and after three days under the hot desert sun and the pebbly ground, they had not found water. When they finally came to a pool, it was too bitter for use. They named this place Marah, meaning bitterness. Their outlook seemed hopeless, and they were only three days on the road. Luther remarked that when our provision ceases, our faith is liable to come to an end.

Again God intervened on behalf of His people. He had Moses throw a tree into the water, and it became drinkable. Thus He made for them a statute and an ordinance (principle that the Lord would provide on their journey), and there Jehovah proved the Children of Israel by testing them (Exodus 15:25). God also "proves" us by constantly exercising our faith with challenges that it may grow. Our enjoyment of the blessings of God is made dependant upon a constant exercise of our faith.

A short march brought them to Elim where they found 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees. Here they stayed for a month before venturing into the Desert of Sin (Exodus 16: 1). The Wilderness of Sin was a sandy plain which ran along the shore of the Red Sea to the southern end of the Sinai Peninsula. It was a dreary trek with chalk hills and mountains in the distance.

Once more the Israelites' unbelief surfaced out of concern for their physical needs. They complained about



Moses and Jehovah. The people's displeasure with Moses was really a dissatisfaction with God and His ways. This was a part of God's "proving" or testing His people to see whether they would walk in His ways. In response, God showed them His glory and then met their needs. The food was called Manna (Hebrew for "What is it?"). In this way, God taught them to pray for their daily bread. Jehovah provided enough for each day. Those who tried to store it up found that it decayed. This is a lesson in our attitude toward the things of this world. He also provided quail for the entire camp.

Must the Lord continue to prove Himself? At Rephidim, again there was no water. Had Israel learned to trust the Lord? The answer is a resounding, "No!" The grumbling prompted Moses to go to the Lord. Again God provided water from a rock which was struck with Moses' rod. These places were called Massah (testing) and Meribah (quarreling).

The Lord demonstrated His total protection package by defeating the Amalekites. It was the Lord's battle as evidenced by Moses' hands. As long as Moses' hands were in the air, Israel triumphed over the Amalekites. Israel and Joshua had to learn that Jehovah would deliver them from the hands of their enemies. Israel must fight, but its success would be granted only as long as their fight was carried on under the banner of Jehovah. This is seen from the name given to this place of victory; namely, "The-Lord-Is-My Banner." The banner or ensign was the identifying mark of the regiment.

### **STUDENT 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.

### **PRESENTATION**

Again, review everything God had done for the nation of Israel as He led them out of Egypt to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The deliverance and mercy of God stands out in sharp contrast to the whining and unbelief of the people of Israel. Have a map handy so that you can trace the journey of the people of God toward Mt. Sinai and then north to the Promised Land.

Tell each of the stories illustrating how, in spite of everything God did for them, the Children of Israel had a very short memory. They continually put God to the test by complaining and revealing their lack of trust in Him.

1. Show how at Marah (Exodus 15:22-27), they complained about the lack of water and how God met their need.
2. Show how in the Wilderness of Sin (Exodus 16:1-36), they complained about the lack of food, and how God miraculously satisfied their needs.
3. Show how at Masseh and Meribah (Exodus 17:1-7), Israel again complained because of the lack of water and God met their great needs.
4. Show how God defeated the Amalakites (Exodus 17:8-16) on behalf of His chosen people.

Review these events in your own words.

## APPLICATIONS

- The joy of God's immediate deliverance is all too quickly forgotten. People tend to quickly forget the good things God has done for them. Have the children list the good things God has done them from their own experiences.
- When things are going well, we are vulnerable to temptation from the devil. Prosperity, instead of promoting faith, often leads people to forget about God and His care. How is this true in our country today and in the lives of these children?
- I Corinthians 10 reminds us that all these events were examples for us so that we do not fall into the trap that consumed the nation of Israel. It is a warning that anyone who thinks he stands on his own two feet, he must be careful that he does not fall on his face.
- This is a good opportunity to discuss with the children the danger of complaining against parents, circumstances, teachers, other children, and especially the danger of complaining against God.
- Finally, do not forget the spiritual blessings that God has given us. List these with your children's help.
- Remember that Jesus is called the "Bread" from heaven and the "Water" of life. In a spiritual sense, God meets our deepest spiritual hunger and thirst by sending Jesus to die for our sins and give us everlasting life. Consider the meaning Christians apply to the terms "Bread of Life" and "Water of Life" with the background of these accounts from the Exodus.

## PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

### Lower

Psalms 103:2 - *Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:*

### Middle any of the above and...

Psalms 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.*

### Upper any of the above and...

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

## HYMN CHOICES

"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" (TLH # 54)

"O God of Jacob, by Whose Hand" (TLH # 434)

"The Lord my Shepherd Is" (TLH # 426)