

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 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.

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.