

# Water Will Come Out of the Rock

Exodus 17:1-7, "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. Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So 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 complained 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!" 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. 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?""

Our good gracious heavenly Father, we thank You that we can gather on this morning to study Your word, study Your ways. Lord, we know this text at Noel read is meant to admonish us. Lord, we pray that You would open our minds, open our hearts to hear Your word, to understand who You are. Lord, help us to see our sin. It's so easy to look at the Israelites and point out their sin, help us to see this as a reflection of ourselves so often. Lord we pray that You would be with Dan this morning as He preaches Your word. Use it to draw us closer to You. Lord, we ask this in Your Son's name, amen.

As we come to chapter 17, chapter 17 has two stories in it that I frequently use as examples when I preach; not so much here, but when I'm in other places. Especially this week's passage and the reason I use this passage so frequently is because when people hear it explained, their response is typically the same as my response fifteen years ago, which was essentially how I could not understand that, it's so obvious. Why didn't I see it before? I use it as an example and the reason I frequently use it is because it's a great example to show why God takes pictures so seriously, or how seriously God takes pictures. As we consider this passage you have to understand this in the context also of what happens thirty-eight years later. First in this passage, this passage is the picture of the gospel. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10 that this is clear that this is the spiritual rock, this is about salvation, this is about Christ being struck, Christ was the rock. We're going to go phrase by phrase through it to discuss it in more detail, but I kind of want to give the overview now. Remember, Moses is a picture of the law. As Paul tells in 2 Corinthians 3, when you see Moses you should be thinking about the law because that's what he's the picture of. We see this picture in chapter 17, it's important for us to interpret it according to what we've been revealed. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10 that he didn't want them to be ignorant of this, we're supposed to be understanding what's going on right here. We're not like the Israelites

who see this manna and ask what it is and what it means. They see all the manna from heaven and we're supposed to say this is the Bread of Heaven that is Christ. We're supposed to say the water that comes from the rock is the Holy Spirit. That's what it says in John 7 so we should just believe it, that's what the spiritual water is. It's important for us to understand that Moses is the law, the Rock is Christ and it says that in 1 Corinthians 10:4, so it's obvious this is a picture of the gospel. The law struck Christ and the Holy Spirit can't proceed from Christ until what? He is struck and He ascends to His Father is what Jesus Christ said. This is the picture, He has to be struck by the law in order for us to receive His Spirit. So the water coming from the rock, that's the picture of the gospel. So the reason I use this passage a lot though is to make the point that God takes pictures really seriously and to understand that we need to understand Numbers 20. Numbers 20 starts with the death of Miriam, probably the year before they enter the Promised Land. We know that Aaron is about to die, it's about forty years later and it's the first day of the first month so we even know the timeframe. When Aaron and Moses, they're both about to die, and the same thing happens. Israel does the same thing to Moses as they did in this passage, in Exodus 17. Numbers 20:2-4, "Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! Why have you brought up the assembly of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here?" I mean, they're almost quoting what their fathers said thirty-eight years before, but God doesn't say the same thing. God's commandment to Moses is very different in Numbers 20:8, "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." In Exodus He says to bring the elders, here He says to gather the congregations. In Exodus He says to strike the rock and here He says to just speak to the rock. So Moses didn't obey, Number 20:10-11, "And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank." Here they're asking Moses to bring water and he's saying he can bring water. He's in rebellion to God. So the first time he's commanded to strike the rock because the law struck Christ, but what does it say in Hebrews 6? It's blasphemy if you say Christ has to be crucified again. So when Moses strikes the rock the second time he's completely twisting the picture of the gospel. The gospel is Christ was struck once, He was crucified once and Moses indicates He will be crucified again. Because of that God says that he will not enter the Promised Land. God gave him the picture that he was supposed to give to the Israelites so that they would understand the gospel and he blew the picture so he would not go into the Promised Land. God's really serious about pictures. He's really serious about His pictures. The children of the first generation, they were fed the water because they were around when the rock was struck. The next generation isn't around when the rock gets struck. The Roman Catholics think you're supposed to crucify Christ every Sunday, that's what they think the Lord's Supper is. That's why they say, 'This is my body, this is my blood' and they think they are practicing cannibalism because they say Jesus Christ has been crucified over and over and over again. That's not true, the rock was struck and now you just speak to the rock and that's how the water flows, that's the gospel of Jesus Christ. The living water comes by hearing, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the

word of God so God told Moses to fulfill this picture and Moses refused so God judged Moses. Numbers 20:12, "Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." Because you did not hallow Me, because you didn't make the picture that I had given you to make, therefore you won't go into the Promised Land. God's really serious about the pictures that He gives. Why does that matter? Well, is your marriage about you and your wife and your pleasure and your children and the things that you want to do? Is it about your kingdom or is it about being a picture of Christ and the church? When you raise your children, is it the picture of the gospel, the Father and the Son or is it a picture of you having a child so you can be proud of yourself? God cares about His pictures and He has put pictures throughout the world that we're supposed to care about because God cares about them. He cares about them so much that when Moses perverts the picture, He says that he will not go into the Promised Land. Of course, that fulfills another picture because Moses is the law. What's not in the Promised Land? The law was added because of transgressions. In the Promised Land corruption puts on incorruption, is there transgression? No, Moses doesn't go into the Promised Land because of the picture of the gospel. In glorification there's no reason for the law, we will do what God wants us to do because we will want to do it. You don't need that law to say not to do something, we will know in full not to do something because it's not good for us. Even as Moses blew the picture, God used Moses not doing what he was commanded to do, to create the picture of the gospel because God won't be stopped, but Moses did receive the judgement because of that. Moses failed to show the holiness of God, He failed to show the righteousness of God to the congregation by acting as if the rock had to be struck again. God did not command that the law should strike Christ twice. God was angry with Moses not because Moses committed murder, think about this, you can see them saying that Moses wouldn't go into the Promised Land because he murdered the Egyptian eighty years before. God says that he struck the rock when I told him to speak. God is more serious about His pictures of the gospel even moreso than murder. Make sure we remember that when we think about the various ways we are to be sharing the gospel with people around us. The picture of father and son, master and slave, husband and wife, that's why the language is so strong in Titus 2 because compare that language to what God says about Moses not hallowing His name because he didn't keep the picture he was supposed to keep. Titus 2:3-5, "The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed." If the woman who is the picture of the church starts to obey other gods and isn't submissive to her own husband and is instead submissive to other men, what is she doing? She is blowing the picture and so God says she is blaspheming My name. God is serious about these pictures.

Verses 1-4, "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. Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So 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 complained 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 these people? They are almost ready to stone me!" "Then all the congregation of the children of Israel", after they crossed the Red Sea and went to Mara and complained about not having water and that the water would kill them, and Moses throws in the branch and it becomes sweet water and they have as much as they need. After they complain how they have no meat and food and then the quail come from heaven and the manna starts appearing every day that God sent to test them. After they failed the test, but they still go and collect manna, they still go and eat, after they've seen it over and over again they "set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin." They continue their journey, which again the Wilderness of Sin was about a third of the way from the Red Sea to what is thought to be Mount Sinai. So they continued to head to Sinai "according to the commandment of the Lord." We know they didn't go directly to Rephidim from Numbers 33:12-14, "They journeyed from the Wilderness of Sin and camped at Dophkah. They departed from Dophkah and camped at Alush. They moved from Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink." So they were following the commandments of God, not because of faith, but they saw where the pillar went, they saw where the manna went. They went not because of faith, but they did obey the commandments of God. "And camped in Rephidim". Rephidim means like a flat place that's probably between mountains. "But there was no water for the people to drink." We don't know how long it is, we don't have any time markers. We know that it was thirty days or a month from when they left Egypt to when they came to the Wilderness of Sin, but we don't know how long it was before they get to Rephidim. We know that the journey where they think Dophkah and Alush were, it's probably about thirty-two miles so they could have done that quickly or they could have done that very slowly. They probably had been carrying water from Elim and from Marah where they had the water. Now they come to a place where they had been led by God and there's no water. This is an important lesson for us to recognize. We can be following God and obeying His commandments and we can think that means everything will go well for us. They were doing everything that God had commanded and they still suffer, they're still really thirsty, they still think they're going to die of thirst. The gospel is not a promise that everything will be easy. The gospel is a promise that God cares and does what's good for His people which doesn't mean it's always easy. God can lead us to desert places for His own purposes so He is glorified. He continues to do that to us today. As we went through 1 Peter it talked about wives that have a difficult husband, that's a desert place, their husband is not submitting to the word of God. You can have a boss that's a terrible boss, God can give us difficult children, He can make it hard for us to provide for ourselves. He can take us to the desert so we cry out to Him. He still does that now, He still does it to make sure and to test us and remove our dross. The prosperity gospel is this idea that God comes and saves us and then everything becomes wonderful. That's not the promise, that's not the picture in Exodus. We should never think that trials are anything other than coming directly from the hand of God because God promises them for our good. Instead of seeing that, instead they contend with Moses. They do have a real problem, they lack water, they're saying they're not going to survive. It's not that their problem isn't real, it's a real problem, but instead of going to God they blame Moses. Remember, they were just obeying the commandment of God and when things are going okay, they're following along, but as soon as

things are not going ok and they're afraid they're going to die of thirst, they don't go against God they turn against Moses. It must be pretty bad because Moses thought they were going to stone him. This wasn't just a few complaints, it builds and the language later where the KJV translates it as murmuring, it's just constant. But it starts like this, them asking why he brought them out to the desert to kill them. "And said, "Give us water, that we may drink."" Think of the irrationality of that statement. Where is Moses going to bring water from for three million people? They knew the manna wasn't coming from Moses, but they should have known the water wasn't coming from Moses. Yet, they're looking and saying it's Moses that can solve the problem. I don't think it was Moses taking any glory from God, I think He kept saying that God sent me to deliver you, God is doing this, God is doing that, but yet even standing in the presence of God with the pillar of fire and with the pillar of cloud, God is right there and still they don't look towards God, they look towards Moses and tell him to give them water to drink. Their physical need made them reject what they had seen repeatedly because they couldn't understand it any better than the Egyptians could understand it. We read about the Egyptians and see plague after plague after plague and wonder why these people weren't fleeing to God, what was wrong with them? How could they be so blind? The Israelites were exactly the same, they were no different. The one received cursing and they say God isn't in it and the other ones receive blessing and they say God isn't in it. Carnal man cannot see spiritual things. So Moses tried to reason with them and "said to them, "Why do you contend with me?" What are you wanting to kill me? This is frequently the role of Moses because Moses is a picture of the law. So what do people constantly want to do with Moses? They want to put him away, they want to contend with the law. I've had so many conversations about the Sabbath and it all comes down to, 'How can God tell us to do that?' But it's given as a blessing. People, when they don't want something that God gives, they always argue about the law, they always say that what God told us to do is bad. How can you say it's okay to put witches to death? Because God said so. We just need to recognize that contending with the law is just an excuse because you don't think you can argue with God. They constantly wanted to put the law away because they were testing the Lord. When you are argue with the law, when you say, 'How can God tell me I have to give birth to this child rather than murdering it', they think they are contending with the law and they say these things and people say these things all the time. How can you say a woman can't preach? Who do you think you are? God has given me this gift to be able to preach so how dare you say I can't preach? They think they are contending with the law, but they are never contending with the law, they are always contending with God, they are always testing God. They were tempting the Lord to judge them. They thought they were just attacking the servant, but they are always attacking the one the servant sent. You can't attack an ambassador without really attacking the king. That's what they're always doing and that's what Moses was telling them. "Why do you tempt the Lord?" They were tempting Him to destroy them. "And the people thirsted there for water." I think the idea here is that that's Moses' response and it gets worse, they get more thirsty. When they complained to Moses the first time he didn't do anything, after all what could he do except to continue to go as God led? So the people stayed there without water because the pillar didn't move so the thirst got worst. "And the people complained against Moses." This time the complaining gets stronger. The word 'complaining' which gets translated as 'murmur' in KJV, it's frequently translated 'lodging' or 'staying somewhere all night'. So the idea here is that they came to him and complained and now they're continually complaining. They are constantly

asking Moses when he is going to give them water. Their complaining becomes constant, without a break. “And said, “Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt”. The message is the same as they said three times before, you brought us here to the Egyptian army to kill us, you brought us here where there is not water so we will die, you brought us out of Egypt to kill us with hunger and thirst and now you have brought us out of Egypt “to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” Again, they blamed Moses for their plight even though they are following the pillar of cloud. Anybody who’s ever preached, anybody who’s ever confronted someone in their sin, they see the same thing. They don’t like what God says so they attack the messenger. That’s exactly what happens and that’s the promise that Christ says in Matthew 5, that they will lie and say false things about you. Just like they attacked Moses, they do the same thing today. You tell people truth from God’s word and they know they can’t attack God so they attack you. Notice that they’ve been escalating in their complaints. First they basically asked why he didn’t leave them alone and that he brought them out there for the army to chase them and kill them, if he had just left them they would have been fine. At the waters of Marah they basically say, ‘Why do you bring us where there’s no water? That was really stupid Moses.’ Then they go in the Wilderness of Sin, ‘We had all this good food in Egypt, as much meat and bread as we wanted, but you just brought us out here to die.’ Now they go, ‘You brought us out here with the intention to kill us. Not just us, you intended to kill us, to kill our children, to kill our livestock. What’s wrong with you Moses? You’re a murderer who wanted to murder millions of people.’ Their attacks on Moses get stronger and stronger. “So Moses cried out to the Lord.” Moses did the logical thing, he couldn’t provide water for millions of people, but he was walking by faith and not by sight. He trusted in the promise of God and God promised that He would send them to the Promised Land so Moses didn’t say to the Lord to give them water so they didn’t perish. Instead he said, ““What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!”” They are rising up against me, they’re complaining day and night, they’re persevering in their complaints, so what should I do with them? They’re angry enough that they want to put Moses to death. They’ve been accusing Moses of wanting to put them to death, which, what’s the first thing you want to do when you attack somebody? You first have to create lies to justify their death. You’re trying to kill all of us so of course we should kill you, it’s just self-defense. I think it’s very unlikely that he is exaggerating here about how angry the people are. The law is not giving them what they want so they’re response is to be angry at Moses who they should have known was unable to give them water. Just like the law, there is no law by which you can have eternal life. It can’t happen. There’s no law that can give you the Holy Spirit, it comes by Christ. Nobody has ever gotten living water by the law, that’s not the purpose of the law. If all you’re doing is drinking from the law, you will always thirst again. It’s not what the law was given to do.

Verses 5-6a, “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.”” So the Lord now speaks to Moses. The people spoke to Moses, Moses spoke to the Lord, and now the Lord responds to Moses and He says, “Go on before the people.” Moses had just said the people were about to stone him and

God basically says to cross in front of them all, make sure they can all see you. This is an act of faith for Moses to go because that's what the word means, to go before the people. So God says to Moses to do what He is telling him to do. They're about to stone me, I'm telling you to go walk in front of them "and take with you some of the elders of Israel." Go in front of them, but also take some of the elders. I think the right explanation is that they were to know what happened. The people were, the congregation was supposed to know this is because Moses went there, but they didn't see it. The only people that saw it were the elders. Again, this is a picture of the gospel. We say that Jesus Christ was crucified, but we didn't see Christ be crucified. The elders in the church saw Jesus Christ crucified, the only way that we know Jesus Christ was crucified is actually if the Holy Spirit takes our heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh. That's how we know Jesus Christ was crucified. We can just see the results of His crucifixion, we don't see His crucifixion. The congregation didn't see the striking of the rock, only the elders saw the striking of the rock. So it's a picture of the gospel, a small group witnesses it but the whole congregation is affected by it. When we think of Israel being this type of church that His Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, all the church gets the water, but only a few saw the rock being struck. "Also take in your hand your rod." When he takes the elders and crosses in front of him, the rod that enabled Moses to do all these miracle, when we think what this is picturing, the only way the law could strike Christ, it could kill Christ because God enabled it to, it was a miracle that Pilate was able to crucify Christ. It was only because God directed it, it was only because Jesus Christ laid down His life, it was only because of the work of God. The rod was in the hand of Moses, but the rod's ability was strictly from God just like man's ability to kill Christ was strictly from God. "With which you struck the river." Again, Moses used this rod for a lot of things, but the specific instance that God reminds Moses of was striking the river in Exodus 7:17, "Thus says the Lord: "By this you shall know that I am the Lord. Behold, I will strike the waters which are in the river with the rod that is in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood." This is the picture of what the law does. You have water, which in this passage water is life, water is a representation of life and Moses takes the rod and he struck the water, he struck the Nile and the Nile became death. The wages of sin is death, the law says what sin is, the law is what condemns you to death, the law strikes life and produces death. When he says this is what the rod is, he points to that example. He doesn't point to just any of the other many examples because in this example the law striking the rock produces life while the example in Egypt was the law struck life and it produced death. "And go." This literally means to walk, He says to take the rod, take the elders and go, get walking. It would be understandable if Moses was nervous about going in front of this congregation that wanted to stone him, but God tells him to go. Then He says, "Behold". Moses was supposed to take note of this. Obviously we're supposed to take note of this as well, this next statement is an important statement that we're supposed to remember. "I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb." This isn't just that he struck some rock, this is that he strikes a rock where Christ is standing on that rock. It's very clear that this is what you do with a sacrificial animal, you put it on the rock and then you kill it. The altars were usually made out of rock, this was the picture of slaying a sacrifice on the altar. Christ was going to stand there before Moses on the rock and only in this case God is literally coming to the rock to be figuratively slain. Just like the waters in the Nile were figuratively slain by the rod when the water became blood. When Moses strikes that rock, that word 'strike' is frequently translated 'slain' or 'slew', it's about killing. It's not just tapping, it's like hitting

someone hard enough to die. So the word means to kill. He's supposed to kill the rock and the picture there is Moses killing. We need to understand Moses got this. It's really easy for us to read this and wonder how they understood that. Read the song of Moses, read Deuteronomy 32, it keeps talking about the rock because Moses understood who the rock was because through the eyes of faith he could understand these things. Through the eyes of faith Moses could understand that parable. Deuteronomy 32:3-4, "For I proclaim the name of the Lord: Ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He." Moses is talking to these people who got water from the rock for thirty-eight years and He's saying, God was the rock, you got it? Understand, I struck the rock and you got water for thirty-eight years because that was God. Moses understood the picture. It's really easy for us to think that these people in the Old Testament didn't understand and that they didn't have the same understanding we have, but Moses understood enough to say He is the Rock, His work is perfect for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice, righteous and upright is He. Moses understood the picture, how much greater is our obligation to understand the pictures? How much greater is our obligation to fulfill the pictures because God has given us understanding. "And water will come out of it." Water comes out of the rock. There are so many references in Scripture that it's clear that it wasn't just Moses that understood it. Isaiah understood it, Jeremiah understood it, a lot of people got the picture so let's make sure we understand it too. Specifically it's tied to the Redeemer, the coming of the Messiah in Isaiah 48:20-22, "Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! With a voice of singing, Declare, proclaim this, Utter it to the end of the earth; Say, "The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob!" And they did not thirst When He led them through the deserts; He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them; He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out. "There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked." He says the Messiah is going to come, you know that because the rock was struck in the wilderness. "That the people may drink." As we think of the people drinking, I think it's important to consider how long they drank from the rock. It wasn't just a short time like in Meribah and Massa that they drank from the rock. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:4, "And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." The water follows them for thirty-eight years, whether it's the rock following them and the water flowing from the rock, they're not thirsty for thirty-eight years. They have as much water as they want. I tend to think it's the water that follows them rather than the rock, I think that's more logical and it does say in Psalm 114:8, that the rock itself became a fountain of water. "Who turned the rock into a pool of water, The flint into a fountain of waters." The picture there is when he strikes the rock, a lot of water starts flowing from it. Or in Psalm 78 it reads that multiple rivers flowed out of it. He splits this rock in the wilderness and gives them drink in abundance like the depths. This isn't like a little water, it's like the seas, that's how much water was flowing out of this rock. He brought streams out of the rock and caused streams to run down like rivers. This wasn't just a little bit of water, this is showing the abundant pouring out of His Spirit. For as long as they received the manna from heaven, almost as long because the water stops in Numbers 20, and they receive the manna until they go into the Promised Land, but that's probably just months different.



Verses 6b-7, "And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 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?" So Moses didn't do it in the sight of the congregation. "And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel." Again, the emphasis is on the elders. The main people saw the water, but they didn't see the striking of the rock. Very much like the church, we receive the water but we don't see the striking of Christ. When you understand, for instance from Isaiah 44:2-3, "Thus says the Lord who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you: 'Fear not, O Jacob My servant; And you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring" This water is a picture of the Holy Spirit. The water that comes from the Rock and the receiving of the Holy Spirit is how we know the Rock was struck. Not because we are witnesses to it, but we see the effect of it. 1 John 1:1-2, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us." The elders that went before, they say this is what happened, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John say this is what happened, but now the way we know that it's true is because of the work of the Holy Spirit, because we taste the water and not because we see the rock being struck. "So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah." Moses named them two names, but the names are used differently going forward from this place. Massah is the name of the place. When it refers to the place it uses Massah, when it refers to the waters it uses Meribah. Now, as I went through this, you look at Meribah and every place it says the waters of Meribah and then we sang this morning Psalm 95 which says Meribah, but I think that's actually abad translation in the song because the rebellion that's happening there is when they refuse to go into the Promised Land so it wasn't at Meribah. They were still testing God, but if you look at the KJV or NKJV, the places where Meribah is used, it's always the waters of Meribah. So Moses used those names to remind them of what happened "because of the contention of the children of Israel." Which is what Meribah means, it means contention, strife. The children of Israel fought with God so he calls it the waters of contention. Remember, this is picturing what happens 1,400 years later. What did they do with Christ when He comes? They contended with Him, they fought with Him, they plotted to kill Him. This is what they did repeatedly, this is why Jesus Christ was crucified, because they contended with Christ. The coming of the Holy Spirit is because they're the waters of Meribah, it's because they contended. When it says in Romans 11 that blindness came upon Israel so that everybody could be saved, they had to strive with Christ even as He is healing millions, even as He is raising people from the dead, even as He is doing all these things, they still fight with Him because we need the waters of that contention because without it the Holy Spirit wouldn't have come. Without it the gospel wouldn't have gone out to the Gentiles and God is showing this when they are fighting with Moses, this is the picture that they will fight with Christ so we can have life. Remember, we see this picture with them where they just received the manna, they just received the waters of Mara, they just saw the Red Sea swallow them up, but when Christ rides into Jerusalem they're singing, 'Hosanna, hosanna to God.' They're declaring Him the Son of God and then like six days later they kill Him for being the Son of God. They're no different, 1,400 years later they're no different and because of that we can have life.

“And because they tempted the Lord.” That’s the meaning of the word Massah, to test or to prove. Even as they are telling Moses that he brought them to kill us, they’re also “saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”” This of course parallels what happened to Christ. During His trial before the High Priest, Matthew 26:63-65, “But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!” Jesus said to him, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, “He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy!” That is exactly the question they ask. They knew it was the Lord that was among them, just like they knew the pillar was the Lord, just like they knew manna was from heaven, that this was the Lord being among them. Just like with Christ they asked if the Lord was really among them and when Christ says that He is, they say to kill him and then from those waters of contention we get life.

#### Applications:

1. It’s really important to recognize this, you can follow all the commandments of the Lord, they were going exactly where they were supposed to go, they were doing exactly what they were supposed to do. They were told to stop keeping it overnight so they stopped keeping it overnight, because they didn’t want the stench in their tent. They said to keep it overnight on the sixth day and they kept it overnight the sixth day because they wanted to eat on the Sabbath. Externally it looks like they’re just obeying. The pillar goes someplace and they follow the pillar and they camp wherever the pillar is and it looks like they’re obeying, but they’re a rebellious people. In all of it they’re a rebellious people. Too often we can think, and especially with children, that they have this form and we say he’s someone who loves God. No, what he figured out is it goes better for him at home if he does the things that his parents tell him to do which line up with Scripture. It has nothing to do with them not being rebellious towards God. I don’t agree with this, but Capitol Hill Baptist, they won’t allow anybody to be baptized until after they’ve moved out of their parents house because they say, ‘How can they possibly tell if they don’t have any choice except to do it?’ That’s exactly what happens here. Again, I don’t think they have biblical justification for that, but we need to make sure that we understand this. Somebody can be conforming to everything, they can look so righteous and like they are obeying, but they’re only obeying like the Israelites obeyed. They didn’t have any other choice. If they wanted to eat they picked up manna the way they’re told to pick up manna. If they’re expected to get manna the next day, they go where the pillar goes. That’s walking by sight and not by faith. It’s easy for children in this church to think they’ve been born again by doing what they only have one choice to do because they don’t want to get spanked by their parents, so they make the choice to do what God says. Children, don’t deceive yourself, that doesn’t mean you’re saved. All it means is you are smart enough to choose the way that is best for your flesh. It doesn’t mean that you’re walking in the Spirit. Some people who walk in the Spirit, they are doing the same things, but don’t judge yourself by your behavior, judge yourself by your attitude. Judge yourself by your response towards God. Do you say you want to find out what God

wants? Judge yourself by if you really want to do this or are you just doing it because it's best. Understand it's really easy to deceive yourself. Don't think just because you're doing what your parents tell you to do that that means you are serving God. It's really easy to serve yourself by doing that, it's really easy to walk in the flesh by doing that. It's really easy to be contending with God and think that you're obeying everything because that's what the Israelites did and they all died in the wilderness because God still knew they were disobeying and they were in rebellion.

2. Understand how blind the carnal man can be. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." It's really easy for us to say they can kind of get it, but see the picture of how blind they are. They're saying the pillar's right there, the manna just came that morning, they just got water that was bitter and all of a sudden it becomes sweet and it becomes life instead of death and they say, 'Is God anywhere?'. Spiritual things cannot be discerned by a carnal man. Someone who has a heart of stone can't understand spiritual things, that's why they immediately went to Moses. Even though they have all this testimony and witness, they still say it's Moses doing this whole thing, it's Moses' magic trick. They couldn't fathom that it could be God. When you're talking to people, understand this is the level of blindness that people can have that they just cannot discern at all because they don't understand the spiritual things at all. That doesn't mean that we don't declare to them spiritual things, we do because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, but don't be surprised when they don't hear. They still saw the pillar and asked if God was there. That pillar of fire in the middle of night is normal. That's what carnal men think so we shouldn't be surprised when people don't listen to us.
3. Make sure you don't think your children are any different than the Israelites. Children, don't think you are any different than the Israelites. The Israelites obeyed because they were forced to. You see the Egyptians and the Israelites and you say how different they were, but they were exactly the same. They were both in rebellion to God, they both didn't want to obey and just because God showed mercy to one and judgement to the other, it doesn't mean anything other than their hearts were all still against God. Don't look at yourself and say how good you are because you go to this church and you're with these people. It doesn't make you any more righteous, it didn't make the Israelites any more righteous, not in a salvific sense. It made them more sanctified like it talks in 1 Corinthians 7, it made them turn from sin and that's what happens to you, but it doesn't mean you're any different than the Israelites in the desert that want to contend with God. God's mercy is to force us to obey and He does that with unbelievers, that doesn't make the unbeliever any more righteous in the sight of God. You have to have the Holy Spirit.
4. People always think they can contend with the law and think they can do it without contending with the Law-giver. As I said before, I've heard women in Nigeria when I was in Nigeria say that they had the gift of preaching so therefore God has said this to me and the fact that the Bible says not to preach means nothing because God gave this to me. They think they can contend with women staying silent in church and not mean that they're contending with God because they say they've got this gift so it might be

righteous for me to use it. You cannot contend with the law without contending with the Law-giver. The law is simply His expression of righteousness and if you say that's not righteous, it always is and you are contending with the Law-giver. They thought they could attack Moses and this doesn't mean anything about God and Moses says that if they attack him, they are really just attacking God. When we attack the law of God, when we say slavery is always wrong, when we say there is never a point where parents should cause their children to be put to death, when we say witches shouldn't be put to death, when we say homosexuals shouldn't be put to death, understand what we're saying is that we are against God. You cannot contend with the law without contending with the Law-giver, you cannot separate the two. People always want to pretend that contending with the law somehow means that that's not rebellion towards God and it's always rebellion towards God. The law is passive, it's never the actor. The Israelites blamed Moses even though he couldn't do anything. Professing Christians blame the law all the time, 'This is what the Bible says but it has to be wrong, that's got to be for just that society, it's all cultural. Women staying silent in church was just cultural.' No, if you contend with the law you are contending with the Law-giver.

5. Don't think that you can attack a servant of God and God not take it as a personal attack. The Israelites thought they could attack Moses, they could stone Moses and what would God do? Moses says if you attack me you are attacking God. Now, sometimes we do things wrong that we deserve the attacks so I'm not saying when we're failing to serve, but I'm saying if you attack the servant of God you are attacking his Master. You can't attack the ambassador without attacking the King. We should remember that when we discuss other churches. We should also remember when it's tempting to not be bold about declaring something, where we want to just not say something because it will offend too many people and people will attack me. Instead say that it's not like God can't defend you along with Himself because if they're attacking you for speaking the word of God, they are attacking God and God will defend Himself. That should be the basis of why we can have humble boldness, we can come with great humility and say things that are very bold and very blunt and very direct from Scripture because the answer is, if they attack us they are always attacking God, if they attack us for speaking the words of God. Don't be wishy washy, don't be trying to temper your words. If you are truly serving God and they attack you, God will defend Himself because He's being attacked.
6. Don't think that the law can give life. Moses couldn't give them life, works cannot give you life, obedience to the law cannot give you life. There was no way Moses could have produced water, we all know that and see that picture. How does Moses produce water for three million people? It took the work of God. Regardless of how much you try to conform yourself to the law of God, it will not give you life as it says in Galatians 3:21, "Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law." Moses couldn't give them water, He couldn't give them life, it required the sacrifice of God.
7. Remember the sin of grumbling and complaining, it's exactly the picture of what the Jews did when Christ came. He healed them and provided them with food and what the

Scriptures actually mean and all they did was grumble and complain against Him, 'You didn't wash Your hands right. You had the audacity to have Your disciples pick grain on the Sabbath day, we need to kill You for that.' All they did was grumble and complain. He provided what they needed, He blessed them in every way and unlike Moses who they wanted to stone, Christ they actually put to death. Moses was a picture, Christ was the reality. When they're all complaining about Moses, we should remember this is a picture of John 1:11, "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him."

8. If Moses could see the picture, how much greater responsibility do we have to see the picture and how much more ability do we have to see the picture? For God has poured out the water, He has poured out the Holy Spirit and it is the Spirit of truth that will guide us to truth. If Moses could understand these things, how much more should we understand the pictures? As you read through the Scriptures don't say it's too hard to understand, say that Moses understood it and since you have the Spirit poured out on you, surely the abundance of waters, the promise of wisdom from James, then certainly you can understand it. Moses, Asaph, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel all understood the picture that was here, they didn't require Paul to say that the rock was Christ. They understood because God gave them revelation, but God has given us far more revelation to them. Don't just look at these pictures and pass by them, look at them and ask how to understand them.
9. Are you being careful to order your life around the pictures that God has given us? The husband wife relationship, husbands are you loving your wife like Christ loved the church? Are you a picture of the gospel to your children? Are you a picture of Christ to your children? Are you a picture of Christ to people who are outside? Wives, are you a picture of the church? Are you a picture of submission because the Church must submit to Christ. We know in our society that the church doesn't think it needs to submit to Christ at all so we know we have the picture wrong, but make sure in our homes that we have the picture right. God really cares about the picture. Do you chasten your children so Hebrews 12 is pictured in your home? As God says to see the picture, when you chasten your son, this is the picture of how I train every child. When you hear people go out on Sunday morning and you say there's another child crying, and we've had this discussion in men's meeting about if we should stop doing this, should we do it so it's done in quiet or have a place? You know what? This is the gospel, every time you hear a child go out and get spanked and cry, remember that is what God promises for His people and if you're not receiving that then you're not His person, you're not His. So why would we hide that? As a church we shouldn't be hiding the pictures of the gospel. It's like in a wedding ceremony and not having the bride say she will obey, well why do we hide that? Because we don't want the picture of the church obeying Christ? Why do we hide chastising our children, because we don't want the picture of God scourging every son He receives? We should be happy with the pictures, we should be diligent to fulfill the pictures. We should recognize when we fail to do it that we are blaspheming God. When we fail to chastise our children, when we let our children just run wild, we are blaspheming God. When a wife won't submit to her own husband she is blaspheming God because she is causing God and the gospel to be a different thing than it is, it's

declaring things about God that are false. Our actions matter. It doesn't mean our words don't matter, I'm not saying to just do this action and somehow people will recognize the gospel. No, there is general revelation and we've been given special revelation, we are supposed to declare the revelation we've been given, but also we should be declaring general revelation. This is what's normal and we should be doing it deliberately.

10. Even as we consider these shadows of striking and speaking to the rock, let's not forget the substance. John 7:37-39, "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." Even as we think of this picture and the rock being struck so we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit so the water flows from us to others, it does not stop with us. Now's the time to check your heart, do you have that living water that out of his heart will flow rivers of living water? Does out of your heart flow rivers of living water? If you believe in Him that's the only way to have living water, it's the only way to have eternal life.
11. Remember the promise of the living water because that's what Ezekiel talks about, he describes what this water is like, when the Messiah is killed in Ezekiel 47:1-5, "Then he brought me back to the door of the [a]temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side. And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed." This is the water that comes from the rock that is Christ. It is this water that doesn't decrease, it increases and it increases and it increases. This is the promise of this rock, it is a water the increases until it covers the whole earth. So let's not go, 'Oh no, is there sufficient water?' Yes, there is sufficient water, He promises it will increase until Jesus Christ returns.

Let's pray. Oh Lord God, we do thank You for this passage that You have us in. We thank You for these wonderful pictures that You gave us. We thank You for the understanding that You give us through the New Testament so we can understand the things that are pictured here. Lord, let us be bold to understand these pictures, to apply it to our own lives, and to let living waters flow from our hearts so the truth of the gospel goes through the world. Lord, we thank You that You promise that Your kingdom is the stone that was cut without hands and will grow to be a mountain that fills the whole earth, that this water that came from You being struck will come and it will flow and it will flow and it will heal the nations, it will heal the marshlands, it will cause the destruction that came from Adam to be healed and it will continue to flow. Lord, we

thank You that You are the God who provides an abundance of water. Lord, let us be a people who delight in Your ways, delight in seeking You and who have the Holy Spirit in our heart so that we're furthering that kingdom. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, amen.