

Series: Exodus
Title: That Rock Was Christ
Text: Exodus 17: 1-7
Date: September 23, 2018
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Exodus 17: 1: And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink.

When it says they journeyed “*according to the commandment of the LORD*” it means they were obeying the LORD, doing the will of the LORD and the LORD led them to this place—“*And there was no water for the people to drink.*” The LORD led them into a trouble by leading them to a place where there was no water to drink. That should end this notion that every time trouble comes to a believer, it is because they have done something wrong. Here that was not the case. But this is always the case: God always leads his child and God leads his child into trials.

Exodus 17: 2: Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? 3: And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?...7: And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

Every true believer—made honest by God—will confess sadly that this is us. We might think “*after all they had seen God do for them*”—we ought to say “*after all that WE have seen God do for us!*” Far too often we murmur and doubt, for a people who profess to believe that God is sovereign over all things, including salvation.

The only thing God has to do to reveal to us that we are still have a sin nature is to send us a little trouble. One old writer said this speaking of our flesh, “[*We*] would rather lean upon a cobweb of human resources than upon the arm of an omnipotent, all-wise, and infinitely gracious God”

Now, they had a need. There was no water, only dry land and they were thirsty. Everyone without Christ, has no water of life in you: your wisdom, your will, your works are all dry death. But I have good news!

Exodus 17: 4: And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. 5: And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. 6: Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7: And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

The Holy Spirit used the apostle Paul to tell us that Rock was Christ. The children of Israel “*did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*” (1 Cor 10: 4)

Proposition: Christ is the smitten Rock from whom comes the water of life by the Holy Spirit which makes those who believe on him never thirst again. Listen carefully and I will try to show you this.

CHRIST IS THE ROCK ON WHICH THE LORD STOOD

Exodus 17: 6: Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb

Before the foundation of the world, *there* in eternity, God stood on Christ the Rock. God the Father purposed to create a people for himself to reveal his glory unto. He chose his Son to be the one who would glorify him. God the Son entered covenant with the Father to declare him just and Justifier as he saved God's elect. So God the Father stood all on his Son trusting him to glorify his holy name, his holy character, in saving his elect. It all rested upon Christ's shoulder.

Isaiah 9:6: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 22:22: And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

Ephesians 1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

But there is more, God stood on the rock when Moses smote it. Smiting the Rock, Moses smote God because the Lord Jesus Christ, our Substitute, is himself God (Acts 20:28; 1 Jn 3:16). God was in Christ reconciling the world of his elect unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. (2 Cor 5: 19) In order to redeem our souls, God was forsaken by God! God was wounded by God! God was slain by God! Isaac Watts understood this. His lyrics have been edited by hymnal committees but the original lyric said,

“Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glories in,
When GOD the mighty Maker died
For man, the creature's sin.”

Knowing God the Father stood all his eternal glory on Christ the Rock, knowing God was in Christ, sinner, know that God will take nothing less than for you to stand all hope of eternal salvation on Christ the Rock.

CHRIST IS THE ROCK SMITTEN

Exodus 17: 6:...and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. 6:...and thou shalt smite the rock,...

Here, Moses and his rod represents the law and justice of God. All those God chose to save sinned in Adam and became guilty before the law of God. God is just “*He will by no means clear the guilty.*” (Ex 34: 7)

Romans 6: 23: For the wages of sin is death;

Ezekiel 18:20: The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

In our day, the world scoffs at this. But for those who were not smitten in Christ, for those who do not believe on Christ, God shall make them suffer that living death under the rod of God's justice forever in hell. But for a great multitude that God chose, he sent his Son and Christ bore that living death so that we never will.

Christ Jesus was born to die. If he had lived on this earth and never died under the rod of God's law, he could have never saved anybody. But he said, "*For this cause came I unto this hour!*" (Jn 12: 27) God is just and the Justifier of his people. That is why the Rock had to be smitten!

Romans 8: 3: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

When we were at Niagara Falls there were these massive rocks at the base of the falls. All the force of the water pounded on those rocks but they never moved. But as massive as those rocks were, they were at the bottom of those falls because they had been moved by the water over time and had fallen there.

Christ the Rock is solid, immovable, durable because he is the LORD our Righteousness. God would have to cease being God, cease being holy and just, for this Rock to be moved! Were it moved all the laws upholding the universe and society would be removed. Everything would fall into lawless chaos! But Christ the Rock upholds all things!

Isaiah 28: 16: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

He said, "*I am the Lord; I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*" (Mal 3: 6) Our holy and just Rock "*is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*" (Heb 13: 8)

CHRIST IS THE ROCK SMITTEN TO FULFILL GOD'S PURPOSE

Exodus 17: 6:...and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.

God purposed who he was smiting the rock for—"the children of Israel." God purposed why the Rock was smitten—"that the people may drink." God purposed from eternity and Christ knew who he was smitten for—God's elect Israel, the Israel of God, the sheep, those God chose in Christ and blessed with all spiritual blessings from eternity. And God smote Christ to fulfill the purpose of giving all those for whom he died eternal life.

This is where people get angry, when we say God saves on purpose. But man plans what he intends to do. So why can God not save according to his purpose? Would you send your only son to pay a debt not knowing for whom? Why do men imagine God would do something ignorant men are not even ignorant enough to do?

Still, let us describe the people for whom Christ died and the same objectors deny that is who they are. Christ died for the "*ungodly.*" (Rom 4:5) Christ laid down his life for a people "*without strength, without hope, without God in the world*" (Rom 5:6; Eph 2:12), whose hearts were "*enmity against God.*" (Rom 8: 7) His elect are included in that number of whom God says "*there is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none good, no, not one.*" (Rom 3: 10-12) Christ said, "*I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.*" (Lu 5: 32)

Christ knew for whom he died and Christ accomplished their redemption. See the water and the blood flow from his side. It is blood that justified each one for whom he died. It is water that sanctified each one for whom he died.

About 40 years after our text, the children of Israel murmured against Moses again. That time, he lost his temper and smote the rock twice. And God killed him for it because Christ cannot be smitten twice. Neither can any for whom he died be smitten twice. Justice is satisfied by the one offering of Christ for every sinner for whom he died.

The rock was smitten specifically for the people of Israel, "*that the people may drink*" (v. 6). God gave no water from this rock for the Amalekites, the Amorites, or the Moabites. The rock was smitten for the Israelites and God gave the water to the Israelites only. Likewise, God says, "*For the transgression of my people was he stricken.*" and "*with his stripes we are healed.*" (Is 53: 8, 5) Therefore, Christ gives each one for whom he died repentance and faith to drink and live forever.

John 4:10: Jesus answered [the woman at the well], If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. 11: The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?...13: Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The water is a picture of the Holy Spirit

John 7: 37: In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38: He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39: (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Like as the water poured out of the rock, the Holy Spirit is poured out upon chosen sinners as the Spirit of Life from the crucified, risen, exalted Christ.

Galatians 3: 13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:...14...that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The water flowed out of the rock in fulfillment of God's covenant.

Psalm 105: 41: He opened the Rock, and the waters gushed out: they ran in the dry places like a river. 42: For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.

The Holy Spirit gives Christ's redeemed eternal life, "*which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began*" (Ti 1:2). It is the fulfillment of God's covenant as he promised, "*I will put my Spirit within you*" (Ez 36:27). All the children of Israel drank the water that gushed out of the Rock and all who Christ redeemed receive the gift of the Holy Spirit according to God's eternal purpose.

CHRIST IS THE SMITTEN ROCK BEHELD THROUGH FAITH

Exodus 17: 5: And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel;

God did not allow the children of Israel to see the Rock being smitten. By their murmuring they represent a people without faith. Those who do not believe God and his word will never see Christ. Christ is seen only with the eye of faith. Without eyes of faith you cannot see Christ in the smitten Rock, without eyes of faith

you cannot see Christ in that man born of Mary. Natural sight says, *“That’s only a rock.”* Faith says, *“That Rock was Christ!”*

But since God uses the preaching of the gospel to quicken his people and give us faith, God made Moses take the elders of Israel to be witnesses of him smiting the rock and the water coming out. These were the twelve chiefs of the twelve tribes of Israel. They were dependable men who would tell the truth of what they saw. They represent those God gives faith who bear witness of Christ in the preaching of the gospel.

Do you get the point? Everything God does is done in truth and in light. His works are pure and righteous. God is honest and cannot lie. In him is no darkness. (1 Jn 1: 5) He said, *“In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.”* (2 Cor 13: 1)

Therefore, in the beginning of his ministry, Christ chose twelve apostles like these twelve elders to be his witnesses. The purpose of a witness is to do what the apostle John did. He said, *“That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”* (1 Jn 1: 3) Read Hebrews 11. You will find many witnesses testifying of Christ our Rock. This book is full of them. This room is full of them. His church is full of them. And our message to you who are without Christ is *“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat.”* (Is 55: 1)

Sinner, do you believe God? By God’s grace, I believe God. He was wounded for *my* transgressions. He was bruised for *my* iniquities. The chastisement of *my* peace was upon Him. With his stripes *I* am healed. Christ justified *me!* *My* sins are purged by the blood of Christ! *I* am reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Sinner, believe on Christ and eternal life is yours, too!

For you who believe on Christ, remember this, that Rock followed them throughout their journey. Christ our Redeemer promises, *“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”* (Heb 13: 5) Christ our Rock shall be with us through all our journey and for all eternity. He promises, *“he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”* (Jn 6:35) Do you want assurance that God is able to furnish a table for us in this wilderness? Believe on Christ.

Hebrews 12:1: Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2: Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Our full provision and our provider is Christ Jesus the Rock Smitten!

Amen!