

## March 4

**Scriptures:** Read Exodus 17

**Key Verse:** “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.

### Overview

As soon as the children of Israel felt thirsty, they began to complain once again. Had they forgotten so soon the provision of the Lord with the meat and manna? When believers find they are in a dark place they tend to forget the light of yesterday; however they must learn that this Light, God’s presence, never abandons them. Israel failed on this test of faith. Their hearts were not right before the Lord; it seemed they loved Him when everything went well, but when problems arose they forgot the love and trust they should have for God and complained against Him.

There is a lesson for believers not to worry about anything (Matthew 6:33) but to love, worship, and praise God in all circumstances. Like Moses, when we face a problem, we need to cry out to the Lord in prayer (17:4) for He hears and is faithful to give us the strength to overcome. The trials we face today often lead to spiritual growth. In the same way, the difficulties Israel had were tests so God could teach them trust, obedience, and love for Him before they would be spiritually mature enough to enter Canaan (Deut. 8:2-5).

In God’s gracious and miraculous provision of water, He met their evil doing with His goodness, their complaints with His great love. The elders, as eye witnesses, told their tribes of the miraculous flow of water from the solid rock; thus all the Israelites would clearly know that the water was provided directly from God, and with Him nothing was impossible.

In the New Testament writings of the Apostle Paul, we learn that just as the manna typified Jesus, so also do the water and the Rock which he called “spiritual: (1Corinthians 10:4). The water flowed out in abundance as do the blessings of the Lord and living water flow out from Jesus Christ, the Source of life eternal (John 4:14). And Jesus has said that whoever believes in Him will receive by His Spirit, rivers of living water flowing out of His heart (John 7:38, 39). The rock which was struck represents Jesus, whose life-giving blood was shed for us that we might see His salvation. Jesus is truly our Rock; He is our refuge and strength on whom we can always depend.

After the miraculous provision of the water, Israel was forced for the first time to engage in battle. This was the first attempt of interference with their journey to Canaan. Amalek represents evil which tries to prevent the work of God, but with intercessory prayer the enemy is defeated and the Lord is the victor. The Amalekites (descendants of Esau; their name meaning giants) were mighty men of war who did not fear God and, as we are told later, ruthlessly attacked him weak from the rear. Their unrighteous behavior caused them to be considered an abomination to the Lord and their judgment was total destruction (Deuteronomy 25:16-19; Exodus 17:14).

In verse nine we have the first mention of Joshua, whom Moses gave responsibility to choose men to fight. Moses must have taken note of Joshua’s leadership capabilities and, in the providence of God, selected him to lead the people in battle. Joshua later became their leader.

In the previous encounter with their enemy, the Lord had fought for His people (Exodus 14:14); now we see here that the Lord fights through His people. This is exactly illustrated in the New Testament: the first battle was won on the cross by Jesus Christ alone as He crushed the enemy and was victorious over death so that we may enjoy the peace of His salvation. The second battle was, and still is, the war of the Holy Spirit through us—a continuous battle against the flesh, but we have assurance that the victory is ours and with our faith we can overcome the world (1 John 5:4, 5).

Prayer is essential for victory. As we see, Moses held up his hands as an act of intercessory prayer and dependence upon God, showing all the people the reality of this dependence. With the help of his supporters, Aaron and Hur, the battle was won. God’s leaders (our pastors) need to be held up in prayer and encouraged so they may remain strong, for they are engaged in spiritual warfare with our enemy, Satan. When we constantly and fervently hold them and ourselves up in prayer, we will see the victory!

### Prayer

Dear Lord, You are our Rock, smitten on the Cross. We partake of You, Living Water, and our thirst is quenched.