**THE ROCKS OF REPHIDIM**

Sunday School Lesson 6

*Wandering in the Wilderness*

Exodus 16

2/2/2025

**Lesson Review:** In last week’s lesson, we examined the miraculous provision that God gave to Israel in the wilderness. He provided them with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Sadly, we find that the whole congregation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ against the Lord again. It had been exactly a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ since the children of Israel had left their homes and lives in Egypt. While the Israelites murmured at first against Moses and Aaron, their real issue was with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It’s clear to see that their irrational, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and murmured responses continued to get \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ after each difficulty. Before giving them bread, God wanted to show Israel His \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This was revealed to them in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. In the New Testament, we see God’s glory revealed when the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Bread came down from Heaven. The Lord provided daily bread from Heaven to test Israel’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on Him. He provided them only what they \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to get through each day. (Likewise, we are commanded to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God seeking daily bread from Him.) Unfortunately, the people tried to gather \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ than what the Lord had instructed them to. The bread was called manna because there was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ like it. Israel called it manna because they didn’t know \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This shows us the special nature of God’s provision to us. For today’s lesson, we are going to be looking at the rocks of Rephidim. There at Rephidim, we find that Israel failed another test, but God continued to show them mercy:

1. **IN REPHIDIM, ISRAEL WAS READY AND DETERMINED TO THROW ROCKS AT MOSES.**
2. **Notice that Israel’s frequent failures show us how hard it is to live by faith and not by sight and how easy it is to forget what God has done in the past.** *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. 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?* Here we are again studying the complaining of Israel in the wilderness. They had been brought out of Egypt, miraculously led across the Red Sea, given sweet water from bitter sources, and provided with food from Heaven directly. This had all occurred within the first month of their journey! Yet, they complained again at Rephidim. Their need was a similar one. They needed water again. The difference from last time is that there was no discernible place for them to get water from. One would think that they would have remained calm and trusted in God, but they panicked instead. How quickly we forget the blessings and provisional hand of God in our lives. We get caught up in what we can see.
3. **Notice that their discontentment had grown into full-scale hostility and opposition toward Moses, and they even made a strong challenge against the Lord.** *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? 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?* They no longer limited themselves to only murmuring against Moses. They now were openly chiding him. This means that they were speaking against him and scolding or reproving him. Much of their previous displeasure had been voiced as a young child cries out his fears and displeasures to his parents. They now appeared more as a teenager openly rebelling and opposing the parent. They even challenged God. They demanded to know whether the Lord was really there with them or not. In this challenge, they tempted God and His graciousness. As we have noted before, the natural progression of discontentment is escalated hostility and opposition against leaders.
4. **Notice that their desire to stone Moses shows that they cared more about expressing their anger and vengeance than about being delivered.** *Exodus 17:4 And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.* The people wanted to stone Moses for leading them there into the wilderness to their impending deaths. They likely had the rocks in hand. Reasonably, we must ask what benefit there was to be had by stoning Moses. If they were right, he was going to die there just like them! Why waste their last bit of time destroying someone else who was facing the same destruction? This tells us what we already know about ungodly anger. It makes us do evil things against others. It causes us to be spiteful and destructive. Often, we see people who are so angry that they are more interested in destruction than anything.
5. **IN REPHIDIM, GOD USED MOSES TO SMITE THE ROCK AND GIVE WATER TO THE PEOPLE.**
6. **Notice that God wanted to remind the people what He had done and who and what He had used to do it.** *Exodus 17:5 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.* As he had faithfully done before, Moses took their issue to the Lord. While he was confident that God could provide for them, he did not know what God wanted to do. Moses knew the people were getting more hostile toward him, so he deferred to the Lord to see the path forward. God told Moses to take the same rod with him that had been used previously to smite the river in Egypt. That was the first prominent display of God’s power to both Egypt and Israel. That same rod that had made drinkable water to become undrinkable would not be used to bring forth water for the children of Israel. This was God’s way to remind both Moses and the people who and what He had used. The Lord told Moses to take the elders because these were likely the men leading the hostility against him. These elders would get to see first-hand what God was going to do to bring forth water for them.
7. **Notice that while smiting Moses with rocks could not bring them life, the smitten Rock was able to bring forth abundant waters for Israel.** *Exodus 17:6 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. 1 Corinthians 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.* It seems obvious that Israel was given a Christophany there in the land of Rephidim. God told Moses that He was going to be standing before him there upon the rock. We know that the smiting of the rock and the waters are a picture of Christ’s death and sacrifice for us. Through Him, we have living waters, and we never have to thirst again. Their solution of killing Moses would not help them to live. Just as the rod helped the people to remember that God was using Moses to bring them through the wilderness, the rock helped the people remember that they must trust in the salvation of the Lord in order to have life. That Rock is available to all who are willing to come to Him in faith.
8. **IN REPHIDIM, ISRAEL GAVE MOSES A ROCK TO HELP HIM SECURE THEIR VICTORY.**
9. **Notice that Israel was given a real enemy for them to fight against.** *Exodus 17:8 Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9a And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek:* It’s important for us to note what took place after the smiting of the rock. The Lord brought along a real enemy for Israel to face. Keep in mind that they had never gone to battle before. They never had to lift a finger directly against Egypt. These people were shepherds and farmers. The Bible tells us previously that they were not ready for battle when they left Egypt. Why did God allow the Amalekites to fight against Israel? What is the significance of this occurring right after the previous event? Israel was fighting against themselves and the leadership that God provided. He wanted to redirect their anger and frustration toward the real enemy. Many times, God will provide battles for His children to help unite them and direct them toward the proper enemy.
10. **Notice that God would only give Israel the victory through the hand of Moses and his rod.** *Exodus 17:9b* *to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. 11 And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.* After the smiting of the rock, God was not done making His point to Israel. He wanted it to be clear that He had given His power unto Moses. That same rod that smote the rock would now be required for victory in battle. If the rod came down, the battle would turn against them. They were placed in a position where they absolutely needed Moses in order for them to have victory. That rod represented the power of God that had been given unto Moses. It also represented the will of God. It was the will of God for the rock to be smitten. The uplifted rod was also a picture of the uplifted cross (John 12:32). We cannot have any victory without it!
11. **Notice that Israel was forced to help Moses and provide for him a rock to rest upon.** *Exodus 17:12 But Moses hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.* What a fitting end to this story! Moses was weary. He could not hold up the rod on his own. No one can do what Christ can do! Even Moses needed the help of the rock, and Israel had to be the one to help him. We often want to cast stones at others, but God wants for us to bring them to the Rock!