

Is the Lord Among Us or Not

Exodus Chapter Seventeen

~ Our Spiritual Safari ended the last leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God with Manna coming down from Heaven and the children of Israel packing up camp to move out. We broke camp and continued on the wilderness march again; and we have now come to Rephidim. Since the accounts we are given happened to them as examples unto us then we can reasonably conclude that the Spirit of God has a whole bunch of things to say to us in His Word. You and I will do well to read and heed – trust and obey – these lessons. All Biblical accounts have been given to us in picture form; I don't see how we could miss them except we not examine them. We also have a long way to go in the Bible and a whole lot of examples to consider!

Well, the children of Israel are thirsty again as we begin this chapter and the Lord is, naturally, going to provide water and provision for them; but what we are witnessing is a cycle of everlasting complaints by these people. God graciously meets their needs one day but immediately some other problem comes up. They always cry out and find fault as soon as a need arises. Well, Moses is a little impatient here; because he thinks they are probably going to kill him. I think Moses was willing and ready to hand in his resignation and turn this deliverance business over to somebody else at this point, too. As a result of all of this, Moses gets to his own place of complaining and whining and finding fault. So many – so many – churches that think they are in excellent spiritual health suffer from this deadly spiritual disease and they aren't even aware they have it....

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.

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?

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?

~ This is the first rock smiting experience we're going to see. The rock represents Christ, of course. They are all eating Manna now and that also speaks of Christ. Christ is the bread of life; but Christ is also the water of life - and He is the Rock foundation we build on. Christ is everything, friends. He is God; and He is what the Bible is about. The people doubt God as they stand with Moses at this desert rock. It's just a small cloud of doubt - but it hid the entire face of God from these people. Christ here is a rock with living waters in a weary land. A rock is the last place I would think of to go to for water, though. I think about getting water from a rock about as much as I think about getting orange juice from a doorknob! Christ is everything! However, His teaching will not redeem you and His rock-like strength will never save you. We must fall on that Rock for salvation or It will fall on us and grind us to powder.

There was no human effort involved in Moses extracting the life-giving water from out of the rock in Horeb. The crucifixion of Christ is what assures our salvation and, likewise, there is no contribution we make to our salvation. God didn't leave us orphans down here. The Lord has sent the Holy Spirit to indwell us and live through us. That premise has been in place since the Day of Pentecost. Later in our safari, Moses will smite the rock a second time. It was not necessary to smite the rock twice; in fact, it was not necessary to smite the rock AT ALL. God said Moses should have spoken to the rock - because Christ was already crucified; slain since the foundation of the world. The Lord Jesus didn't - and won't - and doesn't need to die again for us. When He returns it will be to rule and reign on this earth - not to be crucified afresh for the sins of the world again.

God is satisfied with what Jesus did on the cross; are you? Christ died to save us from eternal death. Spiritual blessings flow unto us from that Rock today. Christ, as our Rock, has the fullness of blessings and the pure waters are gushing out to our parched lips. I'm just trying to bring someone a small cup of it. All spiritual blessings flow unto us in the Heavens in the form of Living Water. The fountain is full; and the banks of the river are overflowing swollen. The world is neither able to contain Scripture nor control it; and yet, so many souls are so far away from God. Because of a lack of the teaching of sound doctrine, many spiritual lives are shriveled up to nothing. Those people are dying for lack of Living Water. Their fellowship with our Father is utterly disconnected by unconfessed sin and the mouth of their rivers of life has become polluted by doubt that is seemingly not to be overcome. Their lives are insulated by indifference and they damn themselves by professing to know Christ when they do NOT know Him - and He doesn't know them! I'll be honest with you dear readers - because I always am honest with you - I am disturbed greatly by what's going on around us in the church today; but I have a question for you dear readers: have you been to that smitten Rock for a drink of the real and Living Waters? We are told that if we drink of that water then we will never thirst again....

8 Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.

10 So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

~ So, let's press pause in our safari at the top of this hill for just a moment. The Amelekites represent the flesh in the Bible. Amalek was a grandson of Esau, you may recall. The Amelekites are an enemy that never ceased to be an enemy to the children of Israel. What that means is that we can never overcome our flesh by self-effort; and we can never make a peace treaty with it. The flesh is the enemy of mankind, by de facto. This is the first account of the nation Israel being involved in conflict and warfare, too, by the way. The flesh wars against the spirit and the spirit wars against the flesh, my beloved. These things are contrary to each other; and this is the picture we are presented with all the way through the Word of God. Well, Moses and Aaron and Hur are up here on the top of the hill with us now....

11 And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

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.

~ So, it's correct to say this battle was fought up on the top of the hill by Moses, Aaron and Hur because this battle was fought and won by prayer. I don't think the warfare abilities of Israel matched that of the Amelekites at all at this point in their history. The moment Moses hands came down the battle went badly. What a terrible burden for Moses to look upon! The Holy Spirit is the only One Who can bring victories in our lives over the flesh. Power over the flesh is only obtained as a believer walks in the Holy Light of the Spirit of God. Every time we act independently of God the flesh, Amalek, gets an easy victory over us. As soldiers, we are apt to spare the

flesh in mercy, too, usually; let's just keep it real! You and I will never be able to overcome the flesh under our own willpower....

13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

15 And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi:

16 For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

~ So, we are introduced to Joshua for the first time as we end this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God. Joshua is the man that will succeed Moses when Moses passes away. God is already preparing this ordinary man, Joshua, for His service - long before the time comes. God says He is going to get rid of the flesh, friends. One day - you're moving out of the flesh. Thank Him for that! If the church were taken to Heaven in the condition it is in today, then Heaven wouldn't be Heaven; it would be just like where you and I are at right now - wrecking the place even further with our old nature. God is going to utterly put out the flesh from under Heaven. He says so. Personally, I'm glad God will be getting rid of this old nature that I have. It's been hanging on like a corpse for decades and I would really like to get rid of it. Every day when I wake up, I find it reasserting itself against me again and again. How about you? Is that your experience? Equally as important is that God will never compromise with our old nature. God will never bend one fraction of a microdot in the direction of sin. In this life you will war with the flesh from generation to generation. In this body and in this life, there will be constant spiritual conflict.

Alright, our Spiritual Safari heads into a strange section of Scripture as Moses turns to worldly wisdom as opposed to divine revelation in the next chapter of Exodus. Doing so has very bad long-lasting ramifications for the nation Israel. Don't think for a moment that your sin doesn't affect others

long after you pass away, friends. Great sorrow will result from that miscalculation. Thus far, God has led Moses by direct revelation; but next we see Moses turning to the advice of his father-in-law. Zipporah's dad comes to visit and gives Moses some advice that Moses should not have taken. This will be definite mistake number two for Moses in his ministry. Remember, mistake number one was asking God for Aaron to be the spokesman to the nation. Our next account is interesting and important because Moses returns to Midian with the children of Israel. Jethro comes out to bring Zipp to Moses. Remember, after the bloody incident when we dropped by Moses house in Egypt, I think Moses sent Zipp back home to live with daddy. Well, Jethro and Moses are going to have a nice little visit; but this family-reunion will not have good long-lasting repercussions ~

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