

# Psalms 81:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

## Analysis

**Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee** (בָּאָה בְּרָאָת אֶחָלֶת)—Tsarah (distress, trouble) recalls Israel's groaning under Egyptian oppression (Exodus 2:23-24). Achalletskha ('I rescued you') emphasizes God's powerful intervention. **I answered thee in the secret place of thunder** (be-seter ra'am)—likely Mount Sinai, where God descended in thunderous glory (Exodus 19:16-19, 20:18).

**I proved thee at the waters of Meribah** (Exodus 17:1-7, Numbers 20:1-13)—Israel's rebellious testing of God ('Is the Lord among us or not?') despite His proven faithfulness. The tragic irony: God answered their cry, gave them law in thunder, and provided water from rock, yet they still doubted. This pattern of divine faithfulness meeting human faithlessness runs throughout redemptive history.

## Historical Context

The exodus narrative progressed from cry (Exodus 2:23) to deliverance (Exodus 14) to covenant (Exodus 19-20) to testing (Exodus 17, Numbers 20). Meribah ('contention') became synonymous with Israel's rebellion, costing Moses the Promised Land. Despite their failure, God's covenant faithfulness never wavered—the water still flowed, the manna still fell.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. How quickly do you forget God's past deliverances when facing new trials, and how can remembrance combat doubt?
2. What does God's response 'in the secret place of thunder' teach about His transcendence and the awe proper to worship?
3. Why does God 'prove' or test His people after deliverance rather than simply rewarding them with ease?

## Interlinear Text

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בָּסָתָר אָעַת בְּאַת הַנְּאָתָה תְּאַמְּרָת לֹא בְּאַת אַת בְּאַת הַנְּאָתָה  
in trouble Thou calledst and I delivered thee I answered thee in the secret place  
H6869 H7121 H2502 H6030 H5643

סָלָה: מְרִיבָה הַנְּאָתָה עַל אַבְתָּה בְּעַמְּךָ  
Selah of Meribah the secret place at the waters I proved of thunder  
H4809 H5542 H4325 H5921 H974 H7482

## Additional Cross-References

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**Exodus 19:19** (Parallel theme): And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

**Psalms 50:15** (Parallel theme): And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

**Exodus 2:23** (Parallel theme): And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

**Numbers 20:13** (Parallel theme): This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.

**Exodus 14:10** (Parallel theme): And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.

**Exodus 14:24** (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians,

**Deuteronomy 33:8** (Parallel theme): And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah;

**Numbers 20:24** (Parallel theme): Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.