

# Water from the Rock at Horeb

When the Israelites cry out for water in the desert, Moses strikes a rock at God's command, and life-giving water gushes forth for the thirsty multitude.

Exodus 17:1-7

CHARACTERS: Moses, Israelites, Joshua, Elders of Israel

THEMES: God's miraculous provision, Testing God, Christ our Rock, Unbelief and complaining

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FOLLOWING THE LORD'S command, Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin and camped at Rephidim. There was no water. What should have been an opportunity to witness God's continued faithfulness became instead a moment of crisis and rebellion. The people, their throats parched, 'did chide with Moses'—they quarreled and contended with him violently. Their complaint escalated from request to accusation: 'Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?' They questioned the very exodus itself, suggesting Moses had brought them to the wilderness to die. Their unbelief was so fierce that Moses cried unto the LORD, 'What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.' God's response demonstrated both His patience and His power. He instructed Moses to take the elders of Israel and his rod—the same rod that struck the Nile and brought forth plagues—and go before the people. '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.' The imagery is profound: Moses struck the rock, and living water gushed forth for the people to drink. Moses named the place Massah (testing) and Meribah (strife), memorializing Israel's sin: 'Is the LORD among us, or not?' Despite seeing ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, the pillar of fire and cloud, manna from heaven, and quail in abundance, they still doubted God's presence

and provision. Paul later identified this Rock as Christ, struck once that streams of living water might flow to a thirsting world. The geological impossibility—water from solid rock in a desert—became a spiritual certainty: our Rock was smitten that we might drink freely of salvation's waters.

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