



## **“The God Who Provides”**

*Exodus 16-17:7*

The Lord answered Moses, “Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. *Exodus 17:5-6*

### **Getting on the Same Page**

The Israelites have just been delivered from the Egyptians by God, who miraculously parted the Red Sea, then collapsed it onto Pharaoh and his mighty army. You would think that the Israelites would never have problems trusting God again. We like to think that, if we saw God do something so incredible, we would also never doubt him again.

But that’s not how the human heart works. The Israelites are in the desert, hungry, thirsty, and exhausted. So they complain. God continues to provide for them, and through Moses, asks them to trust him. But their complaining gets stronger. One of the Hebrew words used is ‘quarrel.’ This means they confront Moses and threaten to kill him. The narrator also says the people put God to the test; they take him to task as if they are suing him. Very strong words.

The Israelites finally get to Rephidim, and they are very thirsty. So they grumble again. Moses is afraid for his life. So God tells Moses to stand on one side, with the people on the other. God says he is going to stand on the rock. He wants Moses to strike the rock with his staff, and water would come out that the Israelites can drink. So Moses does this, water comes out, and the Israelites' thirst is satisfied.

Do you see what is happening here? God's response to the Israelites' sin is not to strike them down, but to strike himself. When Moses strikes the rock where God is standing, blessings come to the people. God takes the punishment and the people get the undeserved blessing.

Fast forward many centuries. Jesus is on the cross. And God is putting the consequences of our sin on Him. Jesus got the curse; we got the blessing.

## **Discussion Questions**

### ***Getting Started***

- Read Exodus 16-17:7. What stands out to you in this passage?
- Discuss something that you tend to regularly complain about. Why do you tend to complain about this? What effect does it have on your mood?

### ***Study***

- Many people say the following: "If I saw God work miracles like the parting of the Red Sea, I would never doubt him." Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
- Why do the Israelites keep complaining even though God rescues and continues to provide for them?
- Respond: We don't just have to be rescued from our circumstances. We also have to be rescued from ourselves.
- Respond: An unchecked grumbling spirit always leads to a hard heart.
- The Israelites' sinful hearts ultimately lead them to test God. Respond: Although it is always appropriate for God to test us, it rarely appropriate for us to test God.
- Instead of striking the people, God has Moses strike the rock...right where God is standing. Moses strikes God and blessings go to the people (water). How does this foreshadow the cross?
- Respond: The remedy for grumbling/complaining is gratitude.

### ***Apply***

- How can you encourage each other with the beauty of the Gospel, in order to be more thankful for God's provisions?