

Exodus Chapter 17 v 1 - 7 & Numbers Chapter 20 v 1 - 13

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[0 : 00] I had two readings from the scriptures. First one from Exodus chapter 17. The second one from Numbers chapter 20. And there's a remarkable similarity about the stories, isn't there?

So much so that there are liberal Christians. Forgive me if that's an oxymoron. Which means that these two words don't really come together and they're contradictory.

Because they are. To talk about somebody being a liberal and being a Christian seems to me to be really misplaced. But there it is. There are those who believe themselves to be Christians who have a very, very critical spirit towards the word of God.

And such people will look at these passages in the Old Testament and they'll say, Ah, well that's just the same event that occurred and two different records have come down.

They've got muddled up over the years and they've been placed in different parts. One in the early part of the time of the Israelites in the wilderness and the other later in the experiences of the Israelites.

[1 : 11] Well, that's to them. And their misunderstanding. Sadly, those who take such an approach know neither the scriptures nor the power of God.

Let's look at these occasions. They're very, very different when you study them carefully. Very different indeed.

Let's first of all consider the first one. First one in Exodus chapter 17. What had happened? Well, they were something like six weeks, five or six weeks out of Egypt.

They traveled from Egypt. They'd gone over the Red Sea miraculously. The water had divided and they traveled over from one side of that stretch of water to the other side on dry ground.

And there were 1,700,000 Israelites. I was staggered when I read that some years ago now.

[2 : 18] But it had been calculated on the number of men who were able to fight. And the number is given, 660,000. From that, a conservative estimate of the number of Israelites who came out of Egypt is placed at around 1,700,000.

Can you imagine how long it would take over a million and a half people, men, women, boys and girls, over that stretch?

Can you imagine what it was like for Moses to have to lead them at 80 years of age? To lead them all that way. God had given instructions that he was to lead them over that stretch of water, over the Red Sea.

And they were to travel down south to the Sinai Peninsula. And they were to worship God on Horeb Sinai, on Mount Sinai.

That was where they were heading before they began the trek north to enter into the Promised Land. So they were going in the opposite direction from the Promised Land, virtually.

[3 : 32] They had to go down to worship. And then they had to travel north. So a number of things occurred on that journey. And time does not permit us for us to go into detail, though it's a fascinating, fascinating history.

A wonderful history of God providing for them, caring for them, watching over them. He provided bread. Remember the manna? That miraculous bread provision that was on the surface of the ground.

As they woke up on the morning, they saw it all around the camp. God provided. God watched over them with a pillar, led them by the pillar of cloud during the day and the pillar of fire by night.

He wonderfully provided for them. He provided for them miraculously. When they came across some water, they ran out of drinking water. And they wanted drinking water.

And someone at the head of the group saw water in front, ran to it, took a drink of it. Well, they'd sort of get rid of it straight away. I can't think of a nice, pleasant way of saying that they would remove it from their mouths.

[4 : 45] But they would get rid of it because it was bitter, horrible. It wasn't fit to drink. They couldn't cope. It was that occasion where Moses went to the Lord and the Lord said, There's some wood over there.

Throw that wood in. And that's a lovely thing that you can consider yourself and work through. A marvelous picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Calvary.

God's bitter wrath. Oh, you have to look at it to be convinced. So we move down. They come down. And they're just one day's journey from Sinai. One day's journey from their destination where they are to worship God.

That a place called Rephidim. And they run out of water again. No water. And the people start grumbling. They're prone to grumbling, as I said this morning.

They were constantly finding complaint with God and with Moses. And they had no water. And they went to Moses. And Moses prayed.

[5 : 47] And God gave him a strange instruction. So many of the instructions that God gave Moses didn't make much sense. There's no explanation for it.

Except that God has said, do this. And this is what will happen. And what God said was to Moses, take your rod. The rod with which you struck the Nile and turned the Nile into blood.

Take that rod with you. And take some of the elders. And go before the congregation to Horeb. Take that day's journey.

Just a few of the elders. You and your rod. And you go. And so they were to go to Horeb. To Sinai.

And then God said, stand before a rock. That I'll show you. And I want you to strike that rock. There at Horeb.

[6 : 51] Strike that rock with your rod. And water will come out. There's no explanation for it, is there? People have tried to find natural.

There isn't a natural explanation. It was a plan devised by God himself. And it was a miracle.

A miracle. Take your rod and strike the rock. And water. So much water poured out. That we're told all the Israelites were able to drink.

One and a half. Over one and a half million people. And all their livestock that they had with them. Was able to find satisfaction.

In that water flowing from the rock. That was some river flowing. So God provided miraculously.

- [7 : 52] Now what do we make of that? From a Christian point of view. Let's remind ourselves that for many, many years. After the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostles went around. And eyewitnesses went around. And preachers went around. Preaching the truth about Jesus Christ. The Son of God. And they'd only got an Old Testament Bible.
- And yet they could teach and preach. From that Old Testament alone. All the major doctrines. Concerning Jesus Christ.
- The Son of God. And his great and glorious and unique work. All the doctrines. All the truths.
- Concerning Jesus. In his person and work. Could be set out. Before the people. To show them that Jesus of Nazareth.
- [8 : 50] Is indeed the Christ of God. And the fulfiller of the prophecies. And the types and shadows. Of the Old Testament period. So if we look into 1 Corinthians chapter 10.
- We discover there. That Paul refers back. To the wilderness. And refers back to this occasion. When the rock was struck.
- And he says some interesting things about it. He says. That rock. That was with them. Was Christ.
- Christ. In other words. That rock. Symbolized Christ. As the spiritual rock. And.
- And so we immediately have a key. You'll find that. There in. 1 Corinthians. Chapter 10. You'll be able to look at it. And see. Because Paul says there. These things happen for our benefit.
- [9 : 52] These things happened like this. In the wilderness. God did things this way. For our sakes. To teach us. To be a blessing to us.
- So we're immediately set with the idea. That rock. Symbolizes the Lord Jesus Christ. So if we go then to Exodus.
- Chapter 17. And we think. That rock represents Jesus Christ. How would we interpret. The event. In relationship to other teaching.
- In the scriptures. There's a lot about water. As a spiritual symbol. Both in the Old Testament. And in the New Testament.
- In Isaiah. Chapter 12. At verse 3. With joy. We shall drink water. From the wells of salvation. We have.
- [10 : 52] Ezekiel. And 48. And that temple. And the water. Flowing down. From the temple. Which is the spiritual life. That flows.
- From the temple. Which is a symbol of Christ. And the altar. Which is a symbol of Calvary. The water of life. Flowing down. We have our Lord Jesus. In the New Testament. Saying to the woman of Samaria.
- Remember how he's. This is the real evangelist. This is the way to evangelize. You don't bang someone. On the middle of the back. As someone did to me. Before I was converted. I was taken along.
- To a Christian meeting. And I just got in through the door. With the friend who'd taken me. And this great hand. Came down. In the middle of my shoulder blades. And winded me.
- Are you saved brother? Well I can tell you. If it hadn't been for the grace of God. The amazing grace of God. I wouldn't have been saved. After that. Ever. That is not.
- [11 : 49] The way. To evangelize. Watch the greatest. Evangelist. And listen. And learn from him. Give me a drink. What's that got to do with evangelism?

Shouldn't he be telling her. That she's a terrible sinner. She's had five husbands. And the bloke she's living with. She's not married to. Shouldn't he be telling her. That she was lost. And subject to the wrath of God. And she needed to repent.

And believe. Give me a drink. How is it that you. A Jew. Ask a drink of me. A woman of Samaria. She's taken back. Apart from the fact that.

He. Has all the appearance. Of a Jew. And he looks a bit like a rabbi. And. He shouldn't be talking with me anyway. Because I'm a woman. You know.

Rabbis were taught. That they shouldn't talk to a woman. Not even their wives. Except occasionally. In privacy. You know. If you had.

[12 : 49] Asked him. He would give you living water. See how brilliant he is. He knows exactly where he's taking her. He's going to reveal himself.

As the Messiah. But he's going to do it. Gently. And you can read through. John chapter 4. And see the master. Evangelist. At work.

So he's here saying. Give me a drink. If you'd ask me. If you knew. The gift of God. He says. John 4 verse 10. If you knew. The gift of God.

And who it is. So he's saying to you. Give me a drink. You would ask him. And he would give you. In living water. He's talking about spiritual life. In the symbolism of the water.

A little later. In John chapter 7. Jesus stands up. In the temple. At the very moment. Probably. The very moment. It was the practice.

[13 : 44] It was the. The feast of tabernacles. And the final day. Of the feast of tabernacles. And on that particular day. The priest. One of the priests. Went down. With a golden jug. Out of the city.

To the pool of Siloam. Brought water. Back. And they brought palm trees. And all sorts of other trees. To celebrate. Before God. And then the priest. Would pour the water. Over.

Over the altar. As he recited. Isaiah chapter 12. And verse 3. With joy. We drink. What we pour water. Draw water. From the wells. Of salvation.

So they were familiar. With this symbolism. Water. And spiritual life. And Jesus shouted out. Didn't just whisper it. In a corner. He shouted.

In the temple. If anyone thirsts. Let him come to me. And drink. Out of his hollow. Will flow. Rivers of living water. It's sometimes translated.

[14 : 41] Out of his heart. It's a word. Greek word. Koilios. It means. An opening. An emptiness. Sometimes it's. It's a reference to. A woman. In the womb. Where she.

Produce a child. Sometimes it's stomach. But our Lord Jesus is. We think of it. In its strictest way. Emptiness. Is hollow. Out of his hollow.

Will flow. Rivers of living water. And then John explains it. As he's inspired. By the Holy Spirit. This Jesus said. About the Holy Spirit. Who was not yet.

For the Holy Spirit. Did not yet come. Until. Jesus. Was glorified. In other words. Jesus. Had to suffer. At Calvary. He had to die.

And rise again. He had to ascend. Back to the Father. And when he ascends. To the Father. Then. He and the Father. Send forth. The Holy Spirit. In a new way.

[15 : 38] A new. And powerful way. Into the hearts. And lives. Of those. Who love God. And believe. In his Son. Come. So.

They're familiar. With water. As a symbol. Of spiritual life. So we have this rock. This rock. Struck.

By Moses. Who is Moses? What does he represent? Moses is the leader. Isn't he? He's 80 years old. He's going to live through. To 120. Amazing.

He's going to live through. To 120. The leader. Of the children. Of Israel. And John. In his. Gospel record. At chapter 1.

Verse 17. Says. The law. Was given through Moses. Grace. And truth. Comes. Through Jesus Christ.

[16 : 35] Moses. Is a symbol. Of the law. He was. Very gifted. And used. Mightily. For God. God. And he symbolizes. The law.

Of God. And he uses. The rod. Of judgment. His rod. With which he struck. The Nile. And he strikes. The rock.

That symbolizes Christ. Can you see it? Can you understand it? Can you see how. Wonderful it is. And how. Full of meaning. Is. How profound. It is. Christ.

The rock. Smitten. Stricken. By the law. Of God. The judgment. Of God. Falls upon him. It is a symbol. Of Calvary. That is what happened.

At Calvary. That holy one. That sinless one. Was stricken. Of God. And afflicted. Bruised.

[17 : 29] It was the will of God. To bruise his own son. It must have broken. God's heart. Calvary. Broke God's heart. To bruise his son.

And out comes. Living water. Out comes life. For those. Who will turn. In repentance. And faith. We.

Who love the Lord Jesus here. Have benefited. From that flow. That comes. Spiritually. From Calvary. So the meaning.

Is beautifully. Explained to us. In the scriptures. That event. There. At Rephidim. In the year. 1444. BC.

But then. There was this other. Occasion. And that. Other occasion. Was something. Rather. Different. First of all. It happened. 100 miles away.

[18 : 35] Almost. Directly north. 100 miles away. And 38 years. Later.

And it happened. Up. In. Kadesh Barnea. Which is. Very. Close. To the border. With Canaan. The promised.

Land. And what happened here. Well. They ran out of water again. They grumbled again. They went to Moses. And Moses went to God.

And God said. There's a rock. Take. The rod. Of the testament. The rod. That's before the testament. In other words.

This time. Take. Aaron's rod. The rod. That budded. You'd have to trace it through. In the scriptures. It's not. Set out.

[19 : 29] Absolutely. Clearly. In one page. You've got to compare. One passage. With another. But it is. Actually. A different rod. This is not. The rod of Moses. It's the rod.

Of Aaron. The priest. The rod. That budded. Take. That rod. And take. Take the whole congregation. And take Aaron.

The high priest. And stand before this rock. And speak to the rock. And water. Will pour out.

That was the instruction. Straightforward. But it seems. That Moses. The meekest man. On the earth. So it is recorded.

Next of course. To the Lord Jesus. That man. Meekness is not weakness. Meekness is being able. To control yourself. You can be very. Very strong.

[20 : 24] And yet meek. Because you're able. To control yourself. And be as gentle. As gentle. Can be. When the occasion. Warrants it. So.

Moses. The one. Who had coped. So well. For those 40 years. In the wilderness. With these. Israelites. Who were so often. Given to complaint.

He. Lost his patience. And he went up there. And he stood before. The whole congregation. And he stood before Aaron. And he went up.

With the rod. And he hit. The rock. Twice. Shall we. Bring water. Shall we. He said. Meaning Aaron.

And himself. Shall we. Bring water. From this rock. For you. Come now. You rebels. Gather round. And he struck.

[21 : 24] The rock. Twice. The water. Came out. But God. Wasn't pleased. God said. You've not honoured me.

Before the people. And therefore. Neither you. Nor Aaron. Are going to enter. Into the promised land. You haven't honoured me.

Moses. Disobeyed. And you might think. It's a bit rough. On poor old Moses. He'd had a real hard job. With 1.7 million people.

And always complaining. It'd have been a tough 40 years. On anybody's reckoning. And you might have thought. Well. Lord. Can't you just overlook this one.

I mean. It's only. It's only one occasion. Lord. And it's only just struck the rock. And. Oh. But if we think about it.

[22 : 21] You can understand. Why God was so. Disappointed. The rock. Represents Christ. And the striking of the rock.

Is suggesting. That Jesus Christ. Should be crucified. Twice. More. Again. And again. Beaten. Beaten.

By the judgment of God. When the truth. Is before. All earth. And all heaven. That he. Died. Once. For all.

And he finished. The work. Superbly. When he died. At Calvary. Bearing the guilt. Of sinners. He did his work.

Perfectly. And the idea. Of. Hurting him. Crucifying him. Again. Was horrific.

[23 : 22] To God. And that's why God said. You haven't honoured me. Before the people. And you're not going to enter. Into the promised land.

Let's look at the details. The location.

Was different. They were in Raphadim first. And they were in Kadesh. Second. 100 miles apart.

38 years apart. The locations. The locations. Were different. The rods. Were different. The rod.

On the first occasion. With which. God instructed. Moses. To strike. The rock. Was the rock. The rod. Of judgment. The rod.

[24 : 17] Of God's law. In the hand of Moses. In the second occasion. On the second occasion. The rod. Was the priestly rod.

The rod of Aaron. And he had. A different congregation. On the two occasions. In the first occasion. He took a few elders. With him. As a sort of.

Judiciary. This is. Law. Being enacted. This is. Symbolizing. Calvary. But now. In the second. Event.

It's the priestly rod. And it's intercession. Praying. No symbolism. Of crucifixion. Now. It's the risen Christ.

Now. It's the high priest. Sitting on the throne. Now. It's prayer. Speak. To the rock. Speak. To Christ. And the strange thing is.

[25 : 16] That the rocks. Were different. You can't see it. In our translations. But if you were to look. Just use. Any ordinary concordance. That refers to Hebrew words.

And. To. Greek words. In the New Testament. And you'll find out. As you look. That the word for rock. In Exodus.

Chapter 17. Is a word. Which is. Very. Very. Different. So. Zoha. I hope that's roughly. How it's pronounced. I used to pronounce.

Greek. With a distinct. Yorkshire accent. Or so I was told. By a Greek. Who became a member. Of our church. And when I knew. He was going to be. A member of our church.

I said. That's the last time. I ever quote Greek. And he said. I love to hear it. But it's the Yorkshire accent. So we had.

[26 : 12] Zoha. And then the second one. Is Sila. Very different. In the sound. Isn't it? And different. In its meaning. The one.

Is a low. Level. Bedrock. The other. Is a high. Exalted rock. Can you see again.

The wonderful significance. In the first. Humility. Humility. The humility. The humility. Of the Savior. At Calvary. Bearing sins.

In his own body. On that tree. Stricken. Under the judgment. Of God. Upon sinners. The substitutionary. Work of Jesus.

But now. Exalted. High priest. Speak. Now. And the water. Will flow. If one of those things.

[27 : 08] Had been. The wrong way around. The whole thing. Would have fallen. Apart. It's amazing. That God.

Watches over. The details. The Holy Spirit. Of God. Ensures. The details. Are recorded. So that you.

And I. Can check. God's word. And understand. That the rods. Were different. The congregations. Were different.

The locations. Were different. The rocks. Were different. And the message. Is that the crucified. Savior. That one.

Who suffered. At Calvary. Pours out. Spiritual. Life. Still. And now.

[28 : 03] We speak. To him. We go. To our. High priest. And we call. Upon him. To pour out. That spiritual. Life. On. Lots. And lots.

Of more. More people. Lots. And lots. More people. Lord. We want. That spiritual. Life. To flow. Out. Please. From Calvary. That many. Men.

Women. And young. People. And children. Can come. To see. The blessing. Of God. In Jesus Christ. This sort. Of information.

From God's word. This. Deeper. Understanding. Delving. Into his truth. Consolidates. Christians. Doesn't it?

Doesn't it. Confirm. To you. That this is. Obviously. The finger. Of God. In that history. Fifteen hundred years.

[28 : 58] Or more. Before the birth. Of Jesus Christ. So much. Of the Old Testament. Confirms. To us. That Jesus Christ.

Is. The son of God. Is. The saviour. Of sinners. Is. All. That was promised. By God. Over those.

Four. Thousand. Years. Before his coming. And it challenges. Also. Any who are not yet convinced.

About the Lord Jesus. If you would. Dare. To come with an open mind. And search.
Search. The scriptures.

For yourself. Search. With an open mind. And an open heart. God willing. You'll find him.

[29 : 52] If you seek. For me. With all your heart. I will be found. Of you. Says. The Lord. Bless. The Lord.

Thank you.