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GOD PROVIDES

8.20.2017

EXODUS 15:22 - 17:16

- **The LORD chose the people of Israel long ago when it was just Abraham.** After he had many descendants, the people became enslaved in the land of Egypt. The story narrative of the book of Exodus details how God *SAW* their suffering, *SENT* a savior, *JUDGED* idolatry in Egypt, *REDEEMED* Israel from slavery, is *LEADING* them toward the promised land, he *FIGHTS* for them while they stand still and watch, they walk through the parted Red Sea and see the Egyptian army destroyed as the waters crash down on their heads. Now they're on the other side of the Sea, their enemies defeated, free from the bondage and fear of returning to slavery. But now...they're in a *DESERT*...

1. WHY DID THE LORD LEAD ISRAEL THROUGH THE DESERT?

EXODUS 15:22-26 22 Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. 23 When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; therefore it was named Marah. 24 And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" 25 And he cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.

There the Lord made for them a statute and a rule, and there he **tested** them, 26 saying, "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, your healer." **EXODUS 16:4** Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.

The LORD lead Israel through the desert in order to test them. *test not tempt*

- **Q. Why do we take tests? A1.** Not simply to pass them or fail them. **A2.** We take tests to see if we have learned—if we *KNOW*—what we need to know in order to do what we need to do.
- **In the Desert they had to trust the LORD** to provide their *EVERY NEED*. Water? Food? What if an army attacks?
- **The testing wasn't for The LORD**, it was for them. It was to prove to *THEM* whether or not they trust Him and will lovingly obey what He has commanded.
- **He did it to make them into the people they were meant to be & to strengthen their faith in Him as the PROVIDER** of everything they need.
- **So the next time you feel like you're going through a Desert think why?** I guarantee you the ans. is at least this:
- **The LORD leads us through deserts**—through places we have to completely rely on Him—because we so easily forget that it's only through the constant provision of the Lord we survive at all.
- **That's why in Acts 14, Paul says to the those from Lystra**, "The LORD did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." (**Acts 14:17**)
- **And that's why the author to the Hebrews writes**, "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power." (**Heb. 1:3**)
- **Q. How did you wake up this morning?** How did you provide for yourself or your family this week? How did you eat? How did you drink? Every bit of that was a providential gift from the LORD. The desert just it that plain as day.
- **The LORD lead Israel through the Desert to make them HOLY & to remind them they're SUNK** without Him.

2. HOW DID ISRAEL DO? A. Spoiler alert! NOT WELL...

EXODUS 16 2 And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, 3 and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

EXODUS 16 19 And Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it over till the morning." **20** But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. **21** Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat; but when the sun grew hot, it melted. **22** On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each. And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, **23** he said to them, "This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning.'" **24** So they laid it aside till the morning, as Moses commanded them, and it did not stink, and there were no worms in it. **25** Moses said, "Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field. **26** Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none."

EXODUS 17 1 All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. **2** Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" **3** But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

ISRAEL FAILED ALMOST EVERY TEST. They still did not trust the LORD; they continued to suspect He was going to abandon them; they still had not learned that He is not dealing with them according to their works or merits—He was dealing with them according to His grace, for His glory.

• **Q.** So how did the LORD respond to their despicable lack of trust in Him which lead to out-right disobedience?

3. HOW DID THE LORD RESPOND (TO THEIR FAILURE)?

The LORD unwaveringly provided for Israel—giving them bread that came down from heaven, quail that fell at their feet, and water that sprung from a rock. Though they complained and grumbled and generally distrusted and dishonored the LORD, He kept providing for His people.

EXODUS 16:35 35 The people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

Though they don't deserve it; though they deserve to be starved to death and plagued, the LORD provides for them. He said if they disobey they would deserve to be struck with His justice like the Egyptians.

Look at EXODUS 15:26 again! "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, your healer."

What's going on here; why do they not get JUSTICE? The answer is in verses 4-6 in chapter 17. **LOOK!**

EXODUS 17:4-6 4 So Moses cried to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." **5** And the Lord said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. **6** Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Q. Did you notice I said Israel failed **ALMOST** every test? What'm I talking about? It seems they failed **EVERY TEST!**

The only thing they truly did right was this: they **ATE & DRANK** what the LORD provided, & they lived. **O** How much we can learn here about eternal & abundant life both now & forever in Jesus Christ!

• **JOHN 6:35,49-51 35** Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst... **49** Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. **50** This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. **51** I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." ***Jesus is the bread come down; Jesus is the rock struck to give us water!**

• **MATTHEW 5:25-26 25** "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? **26** Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"