

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

## *The Wilderness*

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### GOD'S PROVISION IN THE WILDERNESS

Exodus 15:22-17:7

Elementary Lesson

Year One, Quarter Two, Lesson Thirteen

[0260]

AIM: to use the stories of God providing for Israel in the wilderness to teach my students that God will provide for them

OBJECTS TO HAVE: A picture of a stream/creek  
A picture of a small tree  
A picture of bread  
A picture of a large rock  
Your Bible

POINT OF CONTACT: Have you ever been REALLY, REALLY thirsty? Especially this time of year when it can be so hot. The sun is burning hot, sweat is pouring down your face, your throat is dry, and you think, "I would give ANYTHING for a drink of water!" You might even say, "I'm DYING of thirst." Of course, even though you were REALLY, REALLY thirsty, you were not DYING of thirst. Thankfully, none of us have ever been DYING of thirst. If a man were crossing the desert in the red hot sun, and with nothing to drink, his lips were dried up and cracked, his tongue was swollen, and he couldn't walk, he could only crawl...that is DYING of thirst. None of us have ever been THAT thirsty.

But imagine being so thirsty that you would give ANYTHING for a drink; and all of a sudden you saw a stream of water in front of you. You run over, kneel down, cup your hands, and began to drink. But as soon as you got the water in your mouth, you realized there was something wrong with this water...it tasted like...a garbage can! You would spit it out, and wipe your mouth, and say, "EEEEWWWWW!!!"

That is what happened to the children of Israel. But God took care of His people. Let me tell you about it.

STORY: Moses had led the Israelites out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and into the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. The people were excited. Everything was great. They were singing, celebrating and praising God. These people had never been happier in their lives.

A little boy tugged on his mother's dress and said, "Mommy, I'm thirsty. Can I have a drink?"

His mother said, "Not now, son. In a little while."

They journeyed along, still happy, when somebody shouted out to Moses, "When are we going to find something to drink?"

Moses said, "There will be something soon." But as they journeyed on the whole rest of that day, they did not pass any water. The Israelites camped down that night, and everybody went to sleep with nothing to drink.

The next day everybody got up, packed up their things, and got ready to go again. They couldn't brush their teeth, they couldn't wash their face, and they couldn't even get a tiny little drink of water. All day that day, they did not pass a pond, a lake, stream or a river. No water all day long. Two whole days with no water.

The third day, people were starting to panic. Most people can't live more than three days without water. This is the third day. People are following Moses, and they are all very, very thirsty. People are starting to complain.

Then somebody says, "Hey! I think I see water!" A few other people look in the same direction, and they see it, too. "There it is! Water!" Everybody started running to the water. People got down and cupped their hands, and started to drink the water. That's when they started to taste it...it tasted like garbage! It was bitter water. There was all kinds of water, but they couldn't drink it. It was contaminated. If they drank it, it would make them sick, and maybe even kill them. People started to cough and spit the water out. And then all of the people started to complain to Moses, "We're gonna die! We're gonna die!"

Moses went right to God and said, "Lord, what are we going to do?"

God said, "Moses, do you see that tree over there? If you will cut down that tree and throw it in the water, everything will be fine." That must have sounded pretty strange to Moses; but Moses knew that God knew what He was doing.

So Moses cut down that little tree and he threw it in the water. Immediately that bitter water tasted like fresh spring water. Moses told the people, “The water is good; drink all you want!” **God had done a miracle to provide for His people.**

It wasn't long after that that the people of Israel were journeying along, and people started to complain that they had no food. They couldn't grow any vegetables. There were no animals to cook. There were no lakes or rivers to go fishing in. They needed food.

God spoke to Moses and said, “I have a way to feed the people. Every morning, just as the sun comes up, I am going to send you bread from heaven. When the people get up and walk outside, they will see little pieces of fresh bread on the ground. They can gather up enough bread for the day, and that will feed them.” God gave Moses some other instructions about the bread, and Moses gave those instructions to the people. Fresh bread on the ground? Was that really going to happen?

Well, the very next day, the people woke up and walked outside of their tents. Sure enough, right there on the ground all around them was fresh bread from heaven. The people gave the bread a name: *manna*. Every single day, the whole time they traveled to the Promised Land, God provided manna for His people. Of course, on the seventh day, Saturday, they were not allowed to work, so God did not send manna on the seventh day. They were to gather double on Friday, and God would make it last for two days. **God had done another miracle to provide for His people.**

Time went on. The people continued to follow God to their destination: the Promised Land. They came to a place called Rephidim, where they stopped and pitched their tents to stay for a while. People were setting up camp, working hard, getting their things in order, when once again they began to say, “We're thirsty.” They looked around, and just as before, they couldn't find any water to drink. What did they do? They started complaining. “I can't believe this! This is ridiculous! Moses doesn't know what he is doing! We're all gonna die!” They went to Moses and they said, “We need water! What's going on here? We need water and we don't have any! You don't know what you're doing, Moses!”

Moses warned them, “Don't complain against me, because God has put me in charge of Israel, and God isn't pleased when you complain about the person He puts in charge.”

But that didn't stop them. “You're not a good leader, Moses. You don't know what you're doing. You're going to kill us all.”

Moses went to the Lord and prayed, “God, these people just keep on complaining. They just will not trust you. They want water. Can you please show me what to do?”

God told Moses to take the leaders of Israel and go over to a Rock. God said that He would meet them there. God said, “Moses, take the rod in your hand, and hit the rock.”

Moses did exactly what the Lord told him to do. He took the rod, and hit the rock with it. Suddenly, water started gushing out of the rock like a giant waterfall. Water was flowing all over the place. People came running, filling up buckets, getting water for themselves, their animals, and their families. **God had done another miracle to provide for His people.**

These are just three of the times that the Bible tells us about, when God provided for His people while they were in the wilderness. God takes care of His people. That means that He will take care of you.

Let me tell you some things that you need to remember about how God provides for His people.

1. When you have a need, don't complain; pray.
2. Even though you don't know what to do, God knows what to do.
3. God can do anything. He can do the impossible to provide for you. He wants to, and He will. But you must trust Him, and you must ask Him.

Let's learn our memory verse. **Philippians 4:19** – *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

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## GOD'S PROVISION IN THE WILDERNESS

**Exodus 15:22-17:7**

**Teen and Adult Lesson**

**Year One, Quarter Two, Lesson Thirteen**

**[0260]**

*Teacher, choose one of the following truths to expand upon in teaching this portion of Scripture to your teen/adult class. Teach and apply the truth that you choose using statements and illustrations that are most helpful and applicable to your students.*

- I. **WHEN YOU'RE TEMPTED TO COMPLAIN ABOUT GOD, PRAY TO GOD INSTEAD.** Exodus 15:22-27. The book of Psalms, God's inspired prayer book and song book, contains so many examples of people who SEEM to be complaining; yet, we find God JUDGING complainers in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. What's the difference? The difference is in 1) the condition of your heart, and 2) the person to whom you are talking when you complain. If you complain to God about your problem, with a desperate, yielded heart, God responds to that with mercy and grace. If you complain to others ABOUT God, with a rebellious, angry heart, God responds to that with judgment.
- II. **GOD USES OUR NEEDS AS A MEANS TO TEST OUR FAITH IN HIM.** Exodus 15:25, 16:4. Faith that has not been tested cannot be trusted. God must test our faith so that it will be on the record for all to observe that we do indeed trust Him. This faith-testing process is priceless. 2 Peter 1:7. When we are not in a position of being aware that we have real needs, our faith cannot be tested; but when we are in need and we KNOW it, God can test our faith in such a way that the results are known by all. Therefore, sometimes we need to be needy. The more public the need, the public your faith will be.
- III. **WHEN YOU COMPLAIN AGAINST GOD'S WAYS AND GOD'S MAN, YOU ARE COMPLAINING AGAINST GOD.** Exodus 16:8. Whether or not you intend for your complaints against the church, the leadership and the preacher to be aimed directly at God, God sees them that way. Be very careful about your willingness to complain against any element of the work of God.
- IV. **GOD IS MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS TO US WHEN WE ARE WEAK, AND COMPLAIN.** Exodus 16:9-15. God was merciful; He did not let them starve, though their complaining may have earned them starvation. God was gracious; He provided them with regular meals, though they certainly did nothing to earn those meals.
- V. **AS GOD PROVIDES FOR US, HE REQUIRES CERTAIN THINGS OF US.** Exodus 16:16-30. There were procedures attached to the gathering of the manna. They were not complicated and strenuous, just simple and clear. God's grace does not mean "do what you want, and I'll pour out my blessings;" God's grace means, "I love you and I will bless you; and here are a few simple things that I ask of you if you accept my covenant of grace."
- VI. **GOD'S PROVISION MAKES FOR SWEET MEMORIES.** Exodus 16:31-36. The nation of Israel would remember forever those days when God fed them in the wilderness. There is something very special and sweet about those times of need when you are aware that your needs were met directly by God. Though you do not miss being in need, you do cherish the memory of God showing you His love by meeting those needs.

# God's Provision in the Wilderness

**Exodus 15:22-17:7**

[0260]

## *The LORD Meets His People's Needs*

### **I. EXODUS 15:22-27 BITTER WATER MADE SWEET**

22 After the Red Sea, they find no water for three days

23 In a place called Marah they find bitter water

24 The people murmur against Moses

25 God shows Moses how to make the bitter water sweet

26 God makes a covenant with His people

27 They find sweet water in a place called Elim

### **II. EXODUS 16:1-36 FRESH BREAD EVERY MORNING**

1-12 God hears the murmuring of the people

13-31 God gives the people quail to eat in the evening and bread every morning

32-36 God tells the people to remember how He has provided for them

### **III. EXODUS 17:1-7 WATER FROM THE ROCK**

1-4 The people complain against God and Moses

5-6 God shows Moses how to get water from a rock

7 They name the place for the people's doubt

**Philippians 4:19**

*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

# GOD'S PROVISION IN THE WILDERNESS

## Exodus 15:22-17:7

[0260]

Match the answer from the right column that best fits the clue in the left column. Write the LETTER of the correct answer in the SPACE beside the matching clue.

- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| _____ <i>Were happy to leave Egypt</i>                       | <b>A MOSES</b>       |
| _____ <i>God parted its waters for the Israelites</i>        | <b>B THE ROCK</b>    |
| _____ <i>The man God appointed to lead the Israelites</i>    | <b>C A TREE</b>      |
| _____ <i>The Israelites discovered this kind of water</i>    | <b>D THE RED SEA</b> |
| _____ <i>Told Moses how to cure the water</i>                | <b>E PRAY</b>        |
| _____ <i>The water became fresh when Moses threw this in</i> | <b>F MANNA</b>       |
| _____ <i>The bread that God provided every day</i>           | <b>G BITTER</b>      |
| _____ <i>Water gushed out of it when Moses hit it</i>        | <b>H COMPLAIN</b>    |
| _____ <i>What we should NOT do when we have problems</i>     | <b>I ISRAELITES</b>  |
| _____ <i>What we SHOULD do when we have problems</i>         | <b>J GOD</b>         |

*But my God shall supply all your need  
according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:19**

# GOD'S PROVISION IN THE WILDERNESS

## Exodus 15:22-17:7

[0260]

*The answers to this week's puzzle*

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| <u>I</u> <i>Were happy to leave Egypt</i>                       | <b>A MOSES</b>       |
| <u>D</u> <i>God parted its waters for the Israelites</i>        | <b>B THE ROCK</b>    |
| <u>A</u> <i>The man God appointed to lead the Israelites</i>    | <b>C A TREE</b>      |
| <u>G</u> <i>The Israelites discovered this kind of water</i>    | <b>D THE RED SEA</b> |
| <u>J</u> <i>Told Moses how to cure the water</i>                | <b>E PRAY</b>        |
| <u>C</u> <i>The water became fresh when Moses threw this in</i> | <b>F MANNA</b>       |
| <u>F</u> <i>The bread that God provided every day</i>           | <b>G BITTER</b>      |
| <u>B</u> <i>Water gushed out of it when Moses hit it</i>        | <b>H COMPLAIN</b>    |
| <u>H</u> <i>What we should NOT do when we have problems</i>     | <b>I ISRAELITES</b>  |
| <u>E</u> <i>What we SHOULD do when we have problems</i>         | <b>J GOD</b>         |