

Exodus 17:1-7 – The Rock Was Christ
(22-January-2012 Evening Sermon, Harvest Community Church)

Big idea: God took upon Himself the infinite wrath that men deserve

Exodus 17:1-7 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.

²Therefore 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?" ³But 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?" ⁴So Moses cried to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." ⁵And 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. ⁶Behold, 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. ⁷And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

God directs the movements of your life by His mouth (v1)

When you complain, you do not merely grumble, you accuse, you strive, you contend, you quarrel (v2)

You put Yahweh to the test: you flip the universe upside down

You accuse Him of personally mistreating you (v3, "me" "my children" "my livestock")

You agree with Satan's first accusation against God (Gen 3:1)

Moses understood this: "in a little while, they will stone me" (v4)

At this point, there are two people on the hotseat. Moses is on the hotseat with Israel (v4). More importantly, Israel is on the hotseat with God (Ps 95:8-11).

v5-6 are a trial. Moses has been accused. The elders represent the people. The staff is identified as a staff of judgment. At the Nile, the judgment of God struck life and applied a sentence of death (7:17-25). Here, the judgment of God is to strike death and apply a sentence of life.

Where is God in this? He is on the rock. But not only is He on the rock, so that the people can see God representatively receiving their penalty; 1Cor 10:4-6 tells us that Christ Himself *was the Rock*. The substitution was even more complete than the Israelites knew. God made Himself the only source of their life even more completely than the Israelites knew. He is receiving the penalty. By receiving in Himself the penalty, He gives life to His people.

Is Yahweh among us? The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He refused to put God to the test (Luk 4:12-13, cf. Deut 6:16-17). Yet, He who knew no sin became our sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2Cor 5:17-21)

- When was the last time that you complained against God's providence?
 - Did He execute you for so accusing Him?
 - Have you hoped in Christ's substitutionary execution—or is your execution still coming?
- What kinds of things do you tend to try to do to "make up to God" for your unfaithful heart toward Him?
 - Do you see in this passage the utter folly of thinking that you have anything that you can do that would make it up?
- Considering the cost to Christ, what measures are you taking to cut all grumbling and quarreling with God out of your heart and mouth?