

GOD PROVIDED FOOD AND WATER FOR ISRAEL

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: EXODUS 16:1-17:7



God will provide for the salvation of Israel in spite of their sin.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Israel grumbled against Moses – In spite of all that God had done in leading Israel through the Red Sea, and destroying the Egyptians, the people of Israel quickly lost faith and began to complain. In light of the wonders the Lord had done, it is important to view their actions as faithless rebellion rather than simple complaining. We want to remember that this passage has been preserved for us because of our tendency to fall into the same sins they fell into. It is natural for readers to identify with Moses, who had to put up with grumbling. But we probably resemble the people of Israel more than we do Moses. Remembering this will keep us from self-righteous judging. We are like the Israelites who often lacked faith and complained.

God provided bread from heaven – In response to the grumbling of the people, God gave them quail and manna. Manna was a kind of bread -- from heaven. God was looking forward to the day when he would send Jesus, the ultimate bread from heaven, to die on the cross for the sins of His people. Because of this, God overlooked the sins of Israel and gave them the life-giving quail and manna. God provided the manna for forty years until they reached the border of Canaan.

Israel charged God – The charge brought against Moses was much more serious than grumbling for lack of water. This is not just a complaint but a legal action. The people, seeing that they were going to die of thirst, brought a charge against Moses to stone him. If they were going to die in the wilderness they would stone the one who led them there. Ultimately, their charge was against God.

God calls Moses to strike the rock – God called Moses to pass before the people with some of the elders of Israel. God would hold His own trial. Moses was directed to bring the staff with which he struck the Nile. Then, what God said next is truly amazing. God Himself would stand on trial on behalf of the people. God would stand before Moses to be judged at the rock at Horeb. Moses was instructed to strike the rock.

Rather than judge the people, God judged Himself on their behalf. The resulting grace was that water flowed to satisfy their thirst and to save them from impending death. In this event, God gives us a marvelous picture of Jesus, our divine and holy sin substitute.

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WHERE IS JESUS?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

God provided food for the Israelites in the desert. This food is a picture of Christ, who is the true spiritual bread, come down from heaven. Just as the Israelites needed to gather bread each day, so each day we need to draw near to Christ for the sustenance which comes from being in His presence.

Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. (John 6:31-36)

In 1 Corinthians 10:4, Paul tells us that the spiritual rock struck by Moses was Christ. In other words, Christ bore the blow of judgment for the forgiveness of the sins of Israel, foreshadowing a day when Christ would bear the wrath and judgment of God for all our sins.

... and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:4, ESV)



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ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Psalm 72:1-2

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Jesus is the royal son of righteousness who will judge people in righteousness and justice. See 2 Timothy 4:8.

Questions for reflection:

- Solomon, a man of wisdom, was likely praying this for himself, but there is another king who fits the description. Who is that king? (Jesus is the king of righteousness that fits Solomon's description.)
- How does Jesus better fit the description in this passage than Solomon? (Solomon, though very wise, was not perfectly righteous in his judgments. Only Christ is perfect in righteousness and all His ways. See Psalm 18:30.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.



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ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

SMITE THE ROCK

Supplies

- Moses costume
- large rock with a red cross painted on it
- large wooden stick or staff

Tell the story of Israel's complaining to the class. Their charge was more than grumbling. Explain to the class that when the Israelites got thirsty they charged Moses with a crime. Act out the role of Moses dialoging with God and then have him strike the rock. Read 1 Corinthians 10:4, which identifies the rock as Christ. Then, still in character as Moses, tell the class what the meaning of the rock is. (See Where is Jesus section for more detail.)

Lift the rock and show the class the red cross painted on it. Then ask the class the following questions:

- When God saw the rock, what did He see? (God could see into the future to a day when the grumbling and all of Israel's sins would be paid for by the death of Christ.)
- How is the rock like Jesus? (In 1 Corinthians 10:4, we are told that the rock is Christ. The rock bore the brunt of the blow by the hand of Moses for the sins of Israel. Christ on the cross bore the brunt of the blow of our sins when God poured out His wrath on Jesus. The rock brought forth the blessing of water and life. The cross brought forth the water of the Spirit poured forth onto sinners for eternal life.)



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A BUILDING THIRST

Supplies

- pretzels
- saltine crackers
- pitcher of cold water
- cups

The object is to award crackers and pretzels for children who can answer simple review questions from the past few lessons and then create a thirst in them to be able to identify with the Israelites. Have the boys compete against the girls. Choose a different boy and girl for each question. The first child to raise their hand and answer correctly gets their choice of crackers or pretzels for all their team. Do this for all the questions to make sure they have all had plenty to eat. Then offer a cool glass of water only to certain children. Interview those who did not get water to ask them just how thirsty they are.

Trivia questions:

1. What is the name of the bread from heaven? (Manna)
2. What animal did God provide with the manna for meat? (Quail)
3. What is one of the names given to the place where Moses struck the rock? (Massah or Meribah)
4. What were the people supposed to do differently with the manna on the day before the Sabbath? (They were to collect a double portion and save one portion for use on the Sabbath.)
5. What is the name of the sea the Israelites crossed? (The Red Sea)
6. What country were the Israelites fleeing from? (Egypt)
7. How many plagues were there before Pharaoh allowed the Israelites to go? (Ten)
8. What did the people give the Israelites as they left? (Gold, silver, and clothing)
9. Who was Moses' helper? (Aaron)
10. What river did Moses float down as a child in a basket? (The Nile River)



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Then ask the class the following questions:

- How did you feel when you didn't get any water? (Interview several children to whom you did not give water. Ask them about thirst and what it might have been like to be an Israelite in the desert.)

After the interviews, give them all water.

- When we read this story, who should we identify with? (The children may give you various answers. Help them to see that it serves us best to identify with Israel. We can get angry when we don't get what we want. Though that anger may be directed towards a person, as in the case of this story against Moses, it is ultimately directed toward God who is in control of all things.)

- Ask the children to share stories of times when they got angry and did not get what they wanted. (Help the children identify with Israel who needed a savior because of their sin.)



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GRUMBLING AGAINST THE LORD

Read Exodus 16:8. The object of this section is to help the children to see how their sins against one another are really sins against God.

Write the following situations on the board.

Mary just got a pack of bubble gum for her birthday. When Mary went outside, her brother Mark snuck into her room and took a piece of gum from his sister.

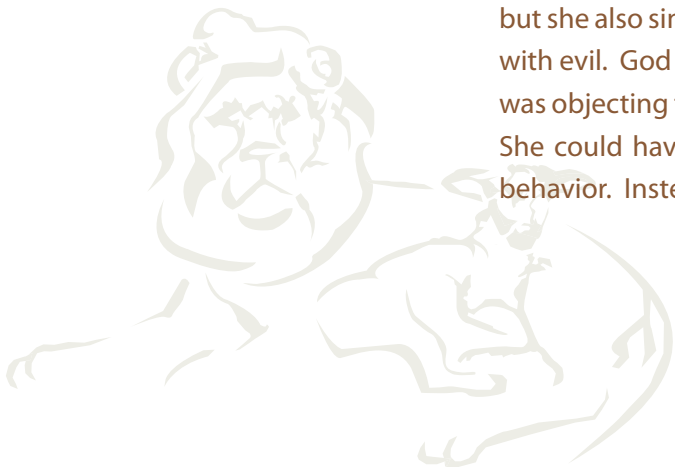
Who did Mark sin against? (Mark sinned against his sister Mary because he stole her gum, but Mark also sinned against God who said in the Ten Commandments, "You shall not steal." Mark also sinned against God by taking the gum because he was showing that he was unhappy with what the Lord had given him. Rather than wait for the Lord to provide, he took control of his own provision by stealing the gum from his sister.)

Anthony's mom told him that it was time for bed. Anthony's brother, three years older, was allowed to stay up longer. Anthony became jealous of his brother and angry. He questioned his mother's fairness in asking only him to go to bed.

Who did Anthony sin against? (Anthony sinned against his mother for not respecting her decision, but he also sinned against God who said do everything without arguing or complaining. Anthony wanted to stay up just like his brother, which is not a bad thing, but when he did not get it he objected. He was really objecting to God's plan, who is sovereign and in control of all things. Anthony didn't want God to be in control if it meant that he had to go to bed before his brother.)

Margie was playing with a doll when her younger sister grabbed it from her. In response, Margie slapped her sister and told her "No!" and her sister began to cry.

Who did Margie sin against? (Margie sinned against her sister for slapping her but she also sinned against God. God told Margie that she should not repay evil with evil. God tells us that He is the judge. When Margie slapped her sister she was objecting to God's role as judge and placing herself as judge over her sister. She could have appealed to her mother and informed her about her sister's behavior. Instead in her anger, she lashed out against her sister.)



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In all of the sins we commit there is an aspect of our sin which is against God. That is the most serious part of our offense. That is what Israel did not see, and what we often do not see. When we commit a sin we need to both confess to the person we have offended and also confess to God. Isn't it good to know that God sent His Son Jesus to die for our sins so that we could be forgiven and live in heaven with Him forever?

Then ask the class the following questions:

- When you sin against your brothers and sisters or parents, do you realize you also sin against God? (Accept their answers and direct them with the instruction from above.)
- What did you learn about sin from this lesson? (All sin is against God.)

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of a rock with a stream flowing from it. Have them draw a red cross on the rock to remind them that the rock represented Jesus and the judgment on the cross which came to Him.



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FOR OLDER GRADES

Supplies

- river rocks
- red acrylic paint
- paint brushes
- cross templates

Smooth river rocks can be purchased at a garden supply store or mulch supplier. A 3" size works well. Pick out lightly colored rocks. Cross templates can be cut out of thick cardboard and should be the size that fits the rocks you are passing out to the children.

Review the story and the Where is Jesus section and then have the children draw a cross with pencil using the templates. Then have the children think of patterns of sins they commit in their lives. Have them write at least one of them on the inside of the cross on their rock. Then pass out the brushes and paint. Have the children paint red inside the outline of their crosses, covering over their written sin. The object is to demonstrate that Christ's death on the cross is sufficient to cover over our sin. The children can take the rocks home and use them as a reminder of Moses striking the rock.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Rock – A rock or stone is used in many different passages to illustrate the character of God. In our passage today, Jesus is the rock which is struck in judgement. In the song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32:4, God is called a Rock.

A rock is a symbol of strength. It can be heavy and unmovable. Jesus is called the cornerstone (1 Peter 2:6; Ephesians 2:20) and the stumbling stone (Romans 9:32). Jesus causes men to stumble because of their disobedience to the Word of God and His work of grace. Men rejected His salvation and therefore stumbled over the rock which was meant as a sure foundation on which to build their lives (Matthew 7:24).

