

Chapter 17

17:1

Then all the congregation Psalm 22 and Hebrews 2:11 make the equivalence between this word and *ekklesia* translated 115 times in the NT to “church.” **of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of ^bSin,** They have been there since 16:1. We know from there that we are about a month out of Egypt, but not yet 45 days (19:1).¹ **according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim;** God put them in this place of now water. Blame God. Thirst, here, was God’s idea. **but *there was no water for the people to drink.*** Solved in Exodus 15 with a tree in the river. Solved in Numbers 20 through Moses’ sin.

17:2

Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, “Give us water, that we may drink.” In addition to seeing bread from the sky, they already saw God provide water through the tossing in of a tree. That’s if we don’t look back to a deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 13) and deliverance from Egyptians (Exodus 14). **So Moses said to them, “Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?”**

17:3

And the people thirsted there for water, and the people ^fcomplained against Moses, and said, “Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, When God gave bread in Exodus 16, they gave glory to God. When they lacked things, they gave blame to Moses. Why is their theology so small that God only gets the credit for the good and not the bad? Job asked the very same question to his wife (Job 2). We, likewise, thank God for godly men in charge and get angry with the voters for giving us wicked leaders. **to kill us and our children and our ^glivestock with thirst?”**

17:4

So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!” A short prayer: “What do I do about this?” How should I handle this? Desperation spurred naturally from the urgency of an impending death by a mob in a merciless fashion springing from heartbreak: A man left his cushioned life to partake in a perilous deliverance with no promise of relief –not to mention family issues of his own (Zipporah, chapter 4) is now being undervalued and written off. “What am I supposed to do” (holding his slowly wagging head in his hands)?

After all, Moses appears a lot like Jesus: “I’ve done lots of good works. For which of them are you stoning me” (John 10:31-32)?

17:5-6

And the LORD said to Moses, “Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod 17:9 calls it “God’s rod” intensifying the work of God in Christ (or, rather, through Christ). If Paul is right, and the rock is Jesus (1 Corinthians 10:4) and the rod is “God’s rod” then God struck Christ to quench our thirst. **with which you struck the river, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock,** Isaiah 53:4 introduces the idea that Jesus would be “smitten” as does Matthew 26:31. **and water will come out of it,** John 6:35 speaks of life coming from “thirsting”/“believing” on Jesus.² **that the people may drink.”** 1 Corinthians 10:4 removes all the mystery and makes the Christ connection.

And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. Psalms 36 & 78:14ff. seems to say that this was a faith-building and memory-building event in Israel’s history.⁷ If you say that there were 3 million Hebrews coming out of Egypt (as Adam Clarke does in his commentary). Let’s say he’s 33% wrong and the remaining 2 million each need 2 feet of “stream” to get water to drink. They cover both sides, and the still need 2 million feet of

^b Num. 33:11–12

¹That is if this is the first day of the 3rd month.

^f Ex. 16:2, 3

^g Ex. 12:38

²“You don’t need a Rock; just come to me.”

stream. Let's say everybody gets water for 10 people, and we now only need 200,000 feet. What if they take turns 4 deep (for 40 folks' water, each column taking two feet). They now need 50,000 feet of stream. What if we're half right. We only need five miles of stream. Well, Psalm 78 and Psalm 105 says it "gushed out." So we don't need a stream when we have a "gushing" river. And that doesn't even include their animals.

So he called the name of the place ^mMassah and ³Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they ⁴tempted the LORD, as you might expect, the Scripture tells us that these two proper nouns are defined in the very same Scripture. Furthermore, just as manna was named because of the actions of the Hebrews (who said "what is it?"), so also this water-yielding rock was named after what they did in this event. **saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"** Are they that stupid? A flame in the night and a cloud in the day; bread in the morning and water from a bitter river..."Is Jehovah with us?"

^m Num. 20:13, 24; 27:14; Ps. 81:7

³ Lit. *Contention*

⁴ tested