

Water From The Rock

Jeremy Main
(Class of 2005)

God led the children of Israel in the wilderness to test their faith (Deut. 8:2-3, 15-16). He sustained them forty years (Neh. 9:15, 20-21) and showed wonders (Acts 7:36). One of the greatest was water from the rock (Psa. 105:40-41; 114:8; Isa. 48:21). He did so at Horeb near Rephidim (Num. 33:14) and Kadesh (Num. 33:36).

Israel camped in Rephidim (Exo. 17:1-7). There was no water to drink. The people contended with Moses and tempted the LORD. Moses prayed and was instructed: Gather the elders, take the rod, “strike the rock” at Horeb, and water will come out. Moses did so. He called the place Meribah (contention) and Massah (temptation).

Israel stayed in Kadesh (Num. 20:1-13). There was no water to drink. The people contended with Moses. He prayed and was instructed: Take the rod, gather the congregation, and “speak to the rock before their eyes” and it will yield its water. Moses took the rod as commanded and gathered the assembly. Yet Moses spoke to the people in rebuke, and struck the rock twice with his rod. While it is true that water came out abundantly, God was displeased.

What did Moses and Aaron do wrong? The LORD said: “you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel” (Num. 20:12). You "rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah" (Num. 20:24). You "rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes" (Num. 27:14). You "trespassed against Me...because you did not hallow Me in the midst of the children of Israel" (Deut. 32:51).

God tested Israel (Deut. 33:8; Psa. 81:7). They tempted (Deut. 6:16) and provoked Him to wrath (Deut. 9:22). They hardened their hearts at Meribah and Massah (Psa. 95:7-11; Heb. 3:7-11).

The people were questioning God's presence. Moses and Aaron knew better but failed to hallow God. Remember to praise God. Ω



Publishing Peace

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“Behold on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace!...” (Nahum 1:15)



From the Associate Director's Pen

Go to the Source

Jefferson A. Sole

James began chapter 1 with detailed instructions to Christians (“brethren”) on how to appropriately cope with the *presence* of trials (Jas. 2-4). In verses 5-8 he offered detailed instructions on how to deal properly with the *absence* of wisdom. Perhaps, it is the absence of wisdom that prevents Christians from fully appreciating the benefits of trials identified by James earlier in the chapter. Therefore James found it essential to remind Christians of the source of wisdom, the stipulations to receive wisdom, and the instability of those who do not follow his inspired instruction.

James identified the source of wisdom with these words, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God” (Jas. 1:5a). Most easily defined, wisdom is knowledge properly applied. Consequently, it is possible to acquire knowledge on a subject but lack wisdom, and it is impossible to have wisdom on a subject but lack knowledge. The only true, unadulterated source of spiritual wisdom is God (Prov. 8:35), so why are some inclined to go to deficient sources such as their favorite author, creed book, or philosopher in search of wisdom (Jas. 3:13-18)? Only they know! James commanded Christians lacking wisdom to continually ask God to supply them with wisdom. Remember, Solomon was the wisest man in the world, but even he received his wisdom from God (1 Kings 3:3-11). Those that ask are assured that God “giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not” (Jas. 1:5b). The word translated “liberally” comes from a root word that means “singleness, simply” (Col. 3:22). In other words, God gives *generously* with singleness of mind, without bargaining. God also gives *happily*, without reproach (“upbraideth not”), though Christians can be flippant, rarely looking upward to thank God for the blessings in their lives (Jas. 1:17).

James continued to stipulate what must take place to receive the bountiful wisdom of God. It is not enough to be a Christian who approaches God in prayer. Rather, James wrote, “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering” (Jas. 1:6). Again in the form of a command James instructed Christians who are lacking in wisdom to continually, faithfully (“in faith”), and unwaveringly (“nothing wavering”) ask God that it be supplied. Faith is necessary in all things to please God (Heb. 11:6) and our prayers are no exception (Matt. 21:21, 22). The word translated “wavering” carries with it the idea of disputing or to be at variance with oneself. Sadly, it is common for some Christians to question whether God is answering their prayers; such should not be so!

James concluded with a stern warning to Christians who do not meet the stipulations previously mentioned, “For let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (Jas. 1:7, 8). Who is “that man”? He is the man that faithlessly asks God for wisdom and thus is like a wave of the sea tossed to and fro by the changing direction of the wind (Jas. 1:9b; Eph. 4:14). James instructed “that man” not to expect (“think”) to receive anything from God. A “double minded man” has never and will never be rewarded by God (Jas. 4:8; Deut. 6:5; Psa. 12:2,3; Hos. 10:2; Matt. 22:37, 38). Why? A faithless, wavering, double minded man is in direct opposition to God who is faithful, gives with singleness of mind, and without question.

Let each of us, when we lack wisdom, approach the right source and meet the stipulation of unwavering faith when we ask, that we may receive the bountiful blessings of God. Ω

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We Love Our Students

Spotlight on:
Joshua Hetrick
Andy Robison

Joshua Hetrick (2nd year student and life-long seeker of truth) has been on quite the journey. His teenage years in Monroe County, Ohio were filled with both church attendance and personal Bible study in affiliation, albeit, with the Christian church. At the tender age of eighteen, he traveled to, in, and around Jerusalem for a year, studying the history of Zion, its people, and its culture. Upon his return he came into contact with the West Virginia School of Preaching. Interaction with the instructors proved to challenge Josh's thinking on issues that divide the Christian church from the church of Christ. He studied, questioned, and honestly sought answers. Josh is a vociferous reader. A book on the subject of instrumental music caught his attention, in which he read that even denominational preachers like Charles Spurgeon (many of whose works Josh had already read and admired) despised the use of instruments in worship. The seeker was challenged concerning a fundamental issue.

This conscientious wrestling was not a light thing. As he describes it, the issue came not to be about the use of the instrument, but, as it ought to be, about the larger issue of the establishment of Biblical authority. If the argument from silence forbade the silly idea of taking cookies and cake at the Lord's Table (which it did), then the specification of singing forbade, by the same silence, the addition of mechanical instruments. The issue had come to a pointed head; Josh could rationalize away this obvious conclusion, or submit to it. In the spirit of a true-hearted searcher, he submitted. He changed his ways, and was re-baptized. He says it was the biggest change of his life, yet became a really easy transition, for it was only he who was fighting it.

In a ready display of courage, he preached the truth to the folks in a Christian church setting. He was reprimanded and instructed not to preach on that subject again. (As a historical footnote, it is interesting to observe that many from that aforementioned Christian church have converted to the Lord's body. Who knows about the Providence of God?)

Josh left school in the mid-90s and eventually was called upon in many local churches to preach. While doing so in Somerton, Ohio, he met Betty Mann, who would become his supportive wife and the mother of their two children: Elizabeth, now age eleven, and Joscelin, now age nine. Through several more transitions, the work went on. After spending five years at the Jerusalem, Ohio church of Christ, three years preaching in Sterling, IL, and then two years in Pennsylvania, Josh decided to come back

to finish school and get his certificate. While in Moundsville this time, he, as one might expect, has been an exemplary student. His background in life and study has made him a help to the other students and many of the faculty, for that matter. Betty is just about to finish at West Liberty her criminal psychology degree, and Elizabeth and Joscelin just keep growing up—probably all too fast for their loving parents.

Josh is set to graduate in June. We'll miss him. He'll miss school, for he loves the atmosphere and the study. The church in Cambridge, Ohio anticipates his arrival for their work together. We hope for a smooth transition for this sincere seeker of God. Thank you, Josh; it's been a pleasure. Ω

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Perverting God's Grace Jude 4

Emanuel Daugherty

A statement in verse four of Jude speaks of "ungodly men who turn the grace of our God into lewdness (lasciviousness, KJV)..." Consider their marks of apostasy: they are "ungodly" i.e., impious, irreverent, blasphemous and doomed to destruction as surely as the angels that sinned and the wretched men of Sodom and Gommorah (6-7). They are guilty of "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness (unrestrained immorality). This ancient false practice is still being practiced today.

First, there are those who teach that salvation is "wholly by grace," that man has nothing to do with his salvation. If man has nothing to do with his salvation, then faith in Christ is eliminated. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him..." Also excluded is repentance that causes one to cease from sin, and baptism which washes away sin. Grace is what God has done to save men, faith (used inclusively) is what man does to accept that grace. We do have a part, we do contribute to our salvation! (Acts 2:37-41; 9:6, 22:16 with 9:18; 10:5-6 with 11:14). Second, men in error say, "We are under grace, not law," and by this they mean that we are not under any spiritual law whatsoever. This is antinomianism. It turns amazing grace into cheap grace that covers all sinful indulgences; this is pure Calvinism. The consequences of this false doctrine are horrendous! Robert R. Taylor, Jr. quotes a modern day religious leader as saying, "The Christian is the only person in the world who can sin all he wants to" (Commentary James and John, 94). Sam Morris, a Baptist preacher of a past generation said, "How a man lives has no ill effect on his salvation." We are under "the law of Spirit of life" (Romans 8:2), the "law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2), "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25).

Third, grace is turned into lasciviousness as expressed in such words as "I know I am living in sin, but I'm just going to depend on the grace of God to save me." In the words of the apostle Paul, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we who are dead to sin continue any longer therein" (Romans 6:1-2). Elders, preachers, and members who do not correct such statements are holding out a false hope of grace that God has never promised! When Christians believe they can say and do what they please, go where they please, indulge in their fleshly appetites as they please, are ungodly and perverting God's grace; they are asking Him to do something that He will not do! They deny the Deity of Christ both with their doctrine and their deeds, by their teaching and by their fruits. "He that saith

I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." "And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 2:4, 3:3). Jude concludes concerning them: They have been marked for condemnation from ancient times. God has a place prepared for men of this nature (Isaiah 30:33). Ω

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