

Study Notes and Questions for Exodus 17 and 18

- Why do you think the Lord purposely brought the people of Israel to a place that had no water and what does that action tell you about God's methods?
- We don't think much about being thirsty because we can get a drink whenever we like. Why was thirst a much bigger deal for these people at this time and in that place?
- How did Moses react each time the people complained and argued with him (see 15:25; 16:6–7; 17:2–3)?
- Exodus 17:1–4 shows a total breakdown of trust between Israel and Moses—the people were ready to stone him. How did God go about restoring the nation's respect for Moses' authority (see 17:5–6)?
- Reading how the people of Israel responded to the test of faith causes us to wonder if we are trusting God for our physical and spiritual nourishment. How are we actively showing that kind of trust for God's provision?
- Does trusting God mean we don't have to do anything to appropriate what He provides? Why or why not?
- What lessons should Israel have learned about the Lord from these experiences?
- Study Note: **Amalekites** (17:8). A group of Bedouin tribes who lived in the desert south of Canaan. Since they occupied the southern approach to Canaan and had presumably heard that Israel was marching that way, they sent a detachment of soldiers down to Rephidim to forestall the Israelites before they could make trouble.
- By what two means did Israel defeat Amalek?
- What do you think was the point of Moses raising his staff and his hands?
- What was Moses told to write down for Joshua's benefit (see 17:14) and why do you think it was important?
- Because of the Amalekite's unprovoked attack on Israel, it became a permanent object of God's wrath. How do the actions and character of one generation affect the spiritual condition and destiny of its descendants? Is the case of Amalek typical or atypical?
- How is the leadership of Moses a good example for Christian leaders in 17:10–12; 18:13–26?
- What does 18:13–16 reveal about Moses' personality and leadership style?
- What was Jethro's advice and why was it wise? What benefits did it provide?
- Is it generally true that sharing responsibility ultimately weakens or strengthens authority? Why do you think so?