



# EXODUS

A STORY OF  
**REDEMPTION  
AND COVENANT**





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# Cry Out to God

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- Whenever we feel anxious, we can cry out to God for help
- Exodus 15:22–27, John 3:14–16
- The Israelites experienced this amazing miraculous rescue at the Red Sea and exploded into songs of thanks and praise.
- They were on a spiritual high, maybe even feeling invincible, as if this were their God, nothing could ever harm them again.
- They would never have any hardships or troubles again.

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- Three days into the wilderness, they came to Marah and found that they couldn't drink the water there.
- They went straight to grumbling. It's understandable they were concerned. Water is our most basic human need. We cannot survive more than a few days without it. And they had been walking through a desert for three days.
- But they would have had several days' worth of water packed when they left the Red Sea, so they hadn't been out of water for three days. They likely still had some fresh water with them.

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- Why wouldn't their first reaction be to ask God to do a miracle like that again? Why wouldn't they have cried out to God in prayer rather than grumbling?
- The story of the Israelites in the wilderness shows us the reality of our human nature without the change that comes from regeneration – being made a new creation in Jesus.
- Paul says the wilderness story happened as an example to us, “to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did” (1 Corinthians 10:1–10).

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# Cry Out to God

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- Paul tells us that all the Israelites experienced the same miracles from God, but most of them did not really believe in God.
- Most of them grumbled and did not pass the test of faith.
- It may feel strange to us in our modern culture to think about God's testing our faith.
- In our modern English language, we tend to think of "faith" as just an intellectual belief in something.

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- But in the biblical languages, Hebrew and Greek, “faith” isn’t just belief, it’s putting your trust in something.
- It’s acting in faith.
- In the Old Testament, God often talked about His people honoring Him with their lips, but their hearts being far from Him (Isaiah 29:13).
- When we really believe in our hearts, it results not just in lip service, but in actions and in a lifestyle of trust in the Lord.

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- Some theologians have called anxiety “functional atheism,” meaning that if you are worrying about things, it means you don’t really believe in God.
- Of course we all have moments of worry or times when we feel anxious.
- Just having those moments doesn’t mean you don’t have faith.
- Some people have clinical anxiety, which is a legitimate health concern, and they may need medication and/or therapy for that.
- That, however, doesn’t mean you don’t have real faith.



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- Worry is a natural feeling; we can't help the way we feel.
- What do we do with it? God tells us that when we feel worried, to bring our anxieties to Him in prayer and He will give us a supernatural peace that surpasses all human understanding (Philippians 4:6–7).
- This may not be instantaneous; it may take praying over and over again. That is why prayer is a spiritual discipline.
- Peace is a fruit of the Spirit, and fruit takes time to grow. But the more we bring anxiety before Him, the more He will grow supernatural peace in us.

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- God responded to their test with a promise – if they follow His ways, He will not send plagues or wrath on them as He had on Egypt.
- Later in the story, in Numbers, when people rebelled against Him, He sent a plague of snakes (21:1–9) and a fire to consume them (11:1–3); He opened up the ground to swallow them whole (16:28–34); He sent a severe plague (11:33–34); and a plague of death through the people (16:46–50).
- God’s wrath will also occur at the end of time, when Jesus separates the sheep and the goats and sends the goats to eternal death (Matthew 25:31–46).

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# Cry Out to God

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- God promised that if they trust in Him, He will be their healer; He will spare them from this wrath.
- This points ahead to the story in Numbers when God sends the plague of snakes, but He heals anyone who turns and looks up at the bronze serpent in faith.
- Jesus told His disciples that this was a foreshadowing of what would happen in Him. The serpent on the pole was a figure of Jesus on the Cross. Whenever anyone turns and looks upon Christ in faith, God will heal them and spare them from the wrath of judgment (John 3:14–16).

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# Cry Out to God

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- God's people didn't come to God in prayer; they grumbled and complained. But Moses cried out to the Lord, and God supernaturally cleaned the water.
- This was a test of their faith.
- Would they trust in the Lord to provide whatever they needed?
- Would they follow Him even when things seemed uncertain in their finite human understanding, trusting that He knew more than they?
- When they felt worried, would they cry out to Him in prayer as Moses did?

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# The Lord Will Provide

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- We can trust that the Lord will provide just what we need
- Exodus 16:1–9, John 6:30–35
- You may think that God's people finally understood.
- They finally learned to trust in Him to provide whatever they needed. But they headed into the wilderness and grumbled because they were hungry.
- Food and water are our two most basic necessities. It's difficult to imagine how they, being in the middle of the wilderness, might be able to find food anywhere.

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# The Lord Will Provide

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- They were not thinking rationally. They even looked back on their time in Egypt, saying they were better off there. They romanticized their time there, but in reality, they were slaves in Egypt.
- They didn't "sit by the meat pots and eat bread to the full."
- But this is also typical human nature that when we are suffering or struggling.
- We look at someone else's situation or our own past and think "the grass is greener" even when it's really not.

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# The Lord Will Provide

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- Again, the people grumbled and yet God provided what they needed.
- He didn't punish them or send His wrath; He showed them grace.
- God performed another supernatural miracle for them – raining bread from heaven – so that they would know beyond a shadow of a doubt that He was the God of the universe.
- He would even send just enough for each day and double on the sixth day, so they didn't have to gather on the Sabbath.

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# The Lord Will Provide

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- God didn't just give them the minimum they needed to survive, just bread.
- He gave them meat, too. He gave them what they had said they had in Egypt but didn't really have.
- Think about the image of God as a Father. If His children came to him grumbling, a good, loving, compassionate father responds with empathy and grace. He understands that His children are worried and scared.
- Instead of browbeating them for their lack of faith, He shows them that they can trust in Him to provide.



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# The Lord Will Provide

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- God's glory appeared to them tangibly and physically so they could not deny that this was a supernatural act of God.
- They gathered as much as they could eat – not too much or too little – and they knew that God would provide just what they needed.
- This supernatural provision lasted for 40 years, the whole time they were in the wilderness, week in and week out. It never failed.
- Even though His people did not trust in Him, and all they did was grumble and complain, the Lord provided for them, like a loving Father.

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# The Lord Will Provide

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- In the New Testament, Jesus supernaturally fed the 5,000 physical bread as God had done in the wilderness.
- He told His disciples that He was the true bread which comes down from heaven (John 6:35).
- God's provision is more than just tangible things that we need for this life; it's about giving us eternal life in heaven through Jesus.
- That is what we really need.

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# The Lord Will Provide

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- Jesus tells us that we can trust God to provide what we need like a loving Father. He encourages us to come to God in prayer and ask Him for what we need, trusting that He will provide what is good for us (Matthew 7:7–12).
- God is our great provider. He can make whatever we need appear out of nothing and send it just where and when we need it. This is another issue of trust and faith.
- Can we follow God through the wilderness, trusting in Him to provide what we need? Can we trust that whatever He provides is what is best for us and not try to take more?

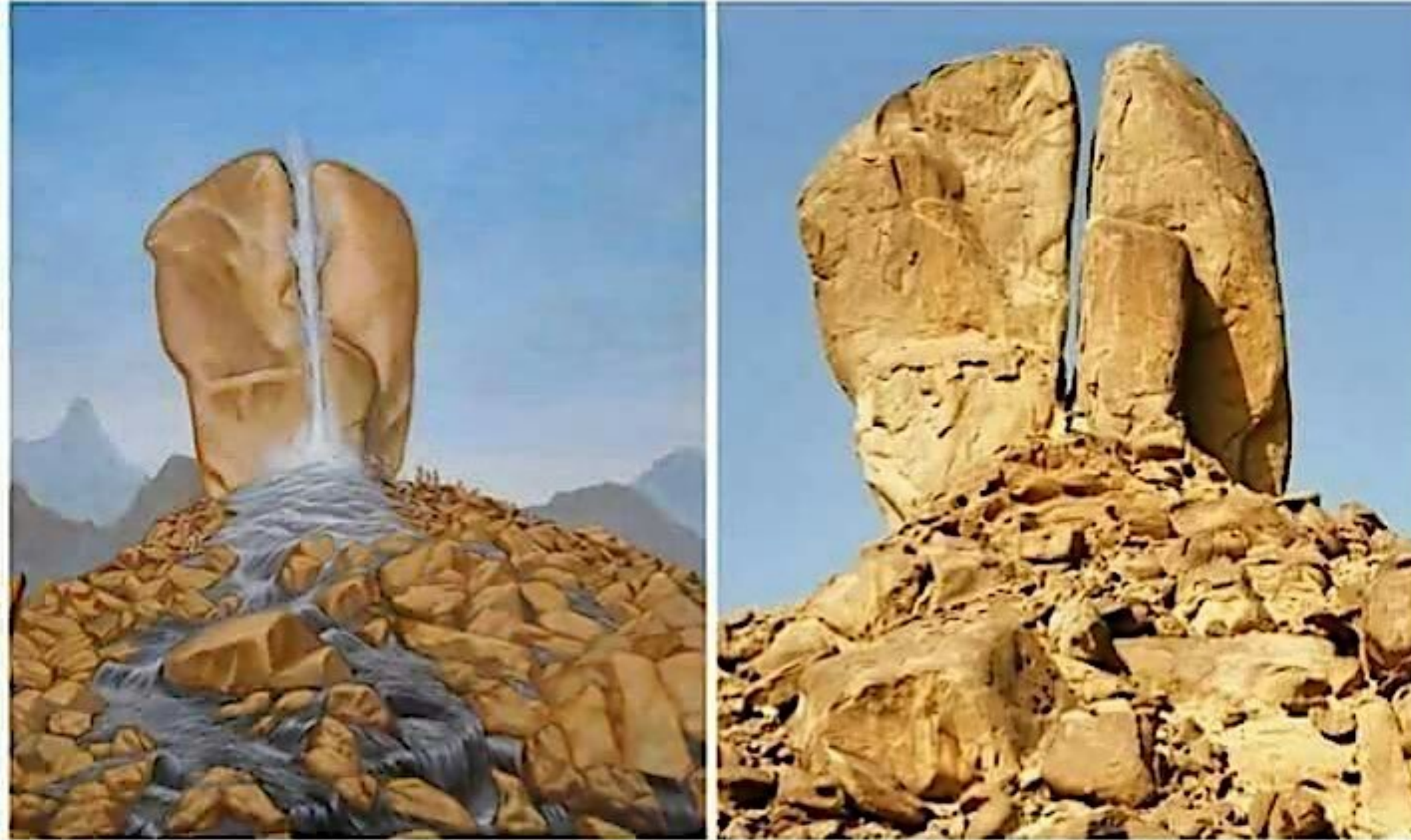
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# The Test Israel Failed

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- Jesus passed the tests that Israel had failed
- Exodus 17:1–7, Matthew 4:1–11
- Again, the people moved to another place and again they grumbled about not having water to drink.
- These stories create bookends of grumbling and provision: water, food, water. The details of this story were different, but the lesson was the same.
- Last time, they had water, but it was undrinkable. This time there was no water at all.

## THE SPLIT ROCK AT HOREB



Exodus 17:6 records God's instructions to Moses when the Israelites were dying of thirst in the wilderness: "**I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.**" This massive rock split through the middle displays the pattern of water erosion and evidence that numerous streams came forth in several directions.

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# The Test Israel Failed

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- This is the third story where the people's faith in God was tested, and they failed that test.
- For the third time, Moses cried out to the Lord and the Lord showed grace and gave the people what they needed, even though they had grumbled and not trusted in Him.
- Three is a significant number in the Bible. There are three persons of the Trinity; Jesus rose after three days; there were three patriarchs in the Old Testament; and three gifts were brought to Jesus. In Scripture, things are often repeated three times for emphasis.

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# The Test Israel Failed

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- The repetition of a similar thing happening three times emphasizes the lack of faith of God's people. This is the overall story of the Old Testament – God's faithfulness in spite of Israel's unfaithfulness. In the prophets, God repeatedly used the metaphor of God as a faithful husband and Israel as His unfaithful wife.
- All of this points to God's loyal love for Israel based on His grace and His covenant promises, not anything they did to earn His love. This points us ahead to the grace of Jesus and salvation by grace through faith, not by works (Ephesians 2:1–10).

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# The Test Israel Failed

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- Jesus also went through three tests in the wilderness, at the beginning of His ministry, just as Israel went on a journey in the wilderness before they entered God's kingdom.
- The parallel is clear. Israel failed three times, but Jesus passed His test three times. Satan tempted Jesus with three things: bread, testing God, and wealth/power.
- All three of these were parallel to Israel's experience. Jesus had fasted for 40 days and was hungry, just as the Israelites were when they grumbled about bread in the wilderness.



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# The Test Israel Failed

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- The failure of Israel to be faithful to God and His covenant only points to our need for Jesus. Israel's continuing to fail time and time again throughout their history only shows us that all of us are sinners – “there is no one who does good, not even one” (Psalm 14:1; Romans 3:10).
- It reminds us that we cannot obey the Law; we can only be saved by grace through faith (Galatians 3:11).
- Only Jesus could keep the law perfectly, and by keeping it, He fulfilled the law and became the perfect once-for-all sacrifice for all of us (Matthew 5:17–20; Hebrews 10:10).

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# The Test Israel Failed

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- Without the change that comes from regeneration (being made a new creation in Jesus), we cannot obey God.
- We will not trust in Him; we will grumble and doubt and only think of our own physical needs and desires – the gratification of the flesh.
- But when we become a new creation in Christ, God puts His Spirit in us and grows His fruit in us (Galatians 5:16–25).
- It is only through a saving relationship with Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit working in our life that we can trust and follow Him.

# Resources

