

I want to ask those of you who struggle with this, some people say, *“I don’t believe in any God because of the injustice out there.”*

But if you don’t believe in a God, then there is no such thing as injustice because everything is just nature, the strong eat the weak. It’s just natural.

If you get rid of God, you have a bigger problem with injustice it doesn’t exist, and you have no basis for your moral outrage.

So you say instead, *“Oh, okay.” There is a God, but he is to be blamed. I’m mad at him.”*

So if you’re mad at God, the most you could ask for is that he would be punished, for all the evil and the suffering in the world.

Well guess what? He was.

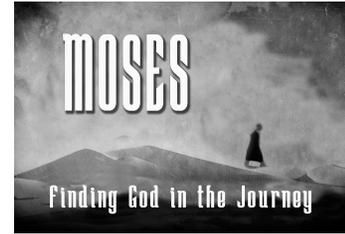
But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.
Isaiah 53:5

But if there’s a judge and the judgment is upon the judge himself, then finally we have two amazing things coming together.

1. A way for God to deal justly with evil and suffering and wipe it out without wiping us out.

2. We have a way to endure hardship and suffering, because we know God has a plan that uses suffering and evil.

So who can separate us? What can come between us and the love of God’s Anointed? Can troubles, hardships, persecution, hunger, poverty, danger, or even death? *The answer is, absolutely nothing.* Romans 8:35



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Dan Wilvers Part 7

How Suffering and God Work Together

Exodus 17:1-7

All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ²Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” ³But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” ⁴So Moses cried to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” ⁵And the LORD said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

I. The Patience of God

Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" Exodus 17:2

And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?" Exodus 17:7

There's a Hebrew word here that's used that's translated *quarrel*, but its technical meaning is to bring a formal charge.

Moses is being accused of criminal negligence and basically manslaughter before the fact because he has brought them to a place where they could die of thirst.

So Moses cried to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." Exodus 17:4

What Moses is saying is, "I've had it, my patience with them is at an end." But God's patience is not at an end at all.

Do you know what the answer of God is?
We're going to meet their needs.

- **What's the first thing we learn here?**

If you could just get the big perspective of God's patience with us, you could handle the situations in the wilderness.

- **What's the second thing we learn here?**

We do the same thing in life as these Israelites do, we have a very selective memory as it relates to God's goodness in our life.

In other words, here's how the human heart works. When awful things go down in our lives, isn't the first temptation to ask God why are you allowing this to happen to me?

2. The Rock of God

...and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink." Exodus 17:6b

Here's the point:

God's grace tends to flow from the unlikeliest of places.

The metaphor of a desert goes like this. *Until you get into a troubled place, you're drawing on water from other things.*

It's not until you get into a place where God is all you have that you realize all along, God was all you needed.

3. The Justice of God

And the LORD said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go." Exodus 17:5

Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb,... Exodus 17:6a

"to stand before" in ancient terminology was the language of an inferior in the presence of a superior.

This unprecedented language means we now know God is standing in the place where the prisoner gets tried and executed.

When things get unjust according to our moral compass, somebody has to pay. In our world God gets called out.

The astounding thing about Exodus 17 is that God, in his infinite mercy, goes beyond and gives them more than they should get after having wrongfully pointed their finger at God.