

LIFE'S WILDERNESS SHORTAGES AND GOD

Part IV: Looking To God To Handle False Credibility Charges In Our Ministry Efforts (Exodus 17:1-7)

I. Introduction

- A. God calls us Christians today to make disciples of all nations, Matthew 28:19-20.
- B. However, this great service is not always easy! The servant of God can be misrepresented to where he becomes mistrusted as to motive and means where others think he might be functioning for evil reasons.
- C. Moses faced this challenge, and God showed him the practical steps to face this challenge effectively:

II. Looking To God To Handle False Credibility Charges In Our Ministry Efforts, Exodus 17:1-7.

- A. The **Lord** told the people of Israel to travel from their current location to Rephidim, Exodus 17:1a.
- B. However, there was no drinking water there in this location when they arrived, Exodus 17:1b.
- C. Noting this problem, the people of Israel immediately confronted **Moses** with the charge that he was not to be trusted to lead them, Exodus 17:2-4:
 - 1. The people (lit.) **argued** with Moses as though **HE** was the cause for their water shortage problem, Ex. 17:2a; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, fn. They thought Moses was their problem when in reality they were criticizing the **Lord** who had led them **through Moses** to come to Rephidim, Exodus 17:2b with 17:1a.
 - 2. As a result, the people claimed Moses had either in foolishness or malicious motives brought them up out of the land of Egypt to die a terrible death of thirst in the wilderness, Exodus 17:3.
 - 3. This conviction became great enough that the people were close to executing Moses for sin, Ex. 17:4b!
- D. Moses called unto God for help (Exodus 17:4a), and He supplied a way for Moses to solve his credibility problem that exemplifies how God's servants who face similar credibility crises can handle them well:
 - 1. God made Moses **CONTINUE** ministering in **full view** of his **critics**, Exodus 17:5a.
 - a. The worst thing Moses could have done to handle the charge against his credibility would have been to have fled from the people; that would only have served to discredit him the more!
 - b. Thus, God had Moses do what Paul directed pastor Timothy do centuries later -- stay on at the task in full view of the critics, showing he have nothing to hide, cf. 1 Timothy 1:3-4; Exodus 17:5a.
 - 2. God had Moses take the **leaders** of Israel as a **witness** to His power **in** Moses' ministry, Ex. 17:5b.
 - a. The Lord told Moses to take the elders of the people with him to solve the water need, Ex. 17:5b.
 - b. Similarly, Paul had Timothy recognized for his ministry by the laying on of the hands of the elders of a local church, an effort to establish credibility for him before God's people, 1 Timothy 4:14.
 - 3. God had Moses use the vehicle of His ministry gift of power in front of the people, Exodus 17:5c.
 - a. Moses was to take his rod, the rod God had told him to use back in Exodus 4:1-5 that initially gave him credibility before the people of Israel as it was used to demonstrate miraculous signs unto them.
 - b. Likewise, God called Timothy to use the supernatural spiritual gift for Christian ministry God had given him, that he use it before the people (in part for credibility), 2 Tim. 1:6-7; 1 Tim. 4:14-15.
 - 4. God had Moses follow precedents of his ministry in past events as guidance for the current needs:
 - a. In Exodus 17:5d, God reminded Moses he was to take the rod with which he had struck the Nile River some time back when miraculously turning that river into blood, cf. Exodus 7:20.
 - b. That rod had also been used miraculously to part the Red Sea so Israel could escape Egypt, Ex. 14:1.
 - c. Thus, God had used Moses' **ROD** in miracles dealing with **WATER**, hinting that **as** it was involved in **those** events, **he would use it again to meet the current NEED** re: **WATER**, cf. Exodus 17:5d.
- E. When Moses struck the rock in the presence of the elders in front of the people in accord with God's will, drinking water flowed from the rock, and Moses' credibility was confirmed before all, Exodus 17:6-7.

Lesson: When coming under false charges as to his ministry credibility, Moses was to (1) **KEEP** serving God in **VIEW** of all, (2) **ESPECIALLY** the **LEADERS**, to (3) **use the rod** God had given him to serve Him miraculously (4) **in the way** God had used him to that date to squelch the false charges!

Application: May we follow Moses' lead in handling unjust charges against our ministry credibility by (1) **CONTINUING** to minister **TRANSPARENTLY** before others, (2) **especially** before the **LEADERS**, (3) **using our spiritual gift** (4) **in accord with the precedents of God's former ministry blessings!** God will give us the credibility we need so we can fulfill His calling for us, cf. 1 Tim. 4:14-16, esp. verse 15b.