

So, Israel journeys through the wilderness, and they begin to encounter difficulties. They have a concern. Is it a legitimate concern? Yeah, it is! No food, no water. Next event, they're going to face enemies coming against them. So, they've got issues which are down-to-earth, basic issues about survival. And we could see that, in many ways, this is a kind of parallel with our experience as well. We need bread, we need water, and we need the victory over the enemy, as we shall see in the next part of the chapter.

Israel complains. And they complain against Moses, and they complain against God. They remember the pots of meat and the bread which they had in Egypt and think: *'we were better off there than we are now'*. They don't remember the slavery in Egypt, they remember some of the good things they had in Egypt. And that's another kind of tendency which people have: to remember the good things which they had in the world, but not to remember the bad things which they had before they came to Christ. And they question, they've been questioning Moses, the key question is in **verse 7**:

Is the Lord among us? **Chapter 17 verse 7 Is the Lord among us or not?** And as you think about this, what makes the difference, when you go through a hard time, is whether the Lord is among you or not. If the Lord is with you and you're going through a bad time, it's okay, and the Lord is going to bring you through it. If you don't think the Lord is with you, if you don't know the Lord, then you can go through a bad time, and it's not okay. And that's really the issue which is before them. The heart of the issue: Is the Lord with us or not? They should really have known that the Lord was with them. They'd seen the amazing events of the Passover. They'd seen the events of the Red Sea, of the Lord parting the Red Sea. They'd gone through it. And if they had thought about it,

**Without the Lord there was no possibility in the natural of these things happening. It was only God who could have done this miracle to set them free.**

### Biblical examples of the Lord really being 'AMONG US' or not, according to our obedience and intentions

Joshua 22:31

**ONE POSITIVE**

Thus says the whole congregation of the Lord: 'What treachery is this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the Lord? ... Then the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the divisions of Israel: "The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, He knows, and let Israel itself know—if it is in rebellion, or if in treachery against the Lord, do not save us this day. If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following the Lord, or if to offer on it burnt offerings or grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it, let the Lord Himself require an account. But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, 'In time to come your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, "What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord has made the Jordan a border between you and us, you children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the Lord.'" So your descendants would make our descendants cease fearing the Lord.' Therefore we said, 'Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice, but that it may be a witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the Lord before Him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your descendants may not say to our descendants in time to come, "You have no part in the Lord.'" Therefore we said that it will be, when they say this to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say, 'Here is the replica of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made, though not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between you and us.' Far be it from us that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn from following the Lord this day, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for grain offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the Lord our God which is before His tabernacle." Now when Phinehas the priest and the rulers of the congregation, the heads of the divisions of Israel who were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them. Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh, "**This day we perceive that the Lord is among us**, because you have not committed this treachery against the Lord. Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord." have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord."

**ONE NEGATIVE**

**Micah 3:11** - And I said:

"Hear now, O heads of Jacob, And you rulers of the house of Israel: Is it not for you to know justice? You who hate good and love evil; ... Then they will cry to the Lord, But He will not hear them; ... But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, And of justice and might, To declare to Jacob his transgression And to Israel his sin. Now hear this, You ... Who build up Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with iniquity: Her heads judge for a bribe, Her priests teach for pay, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, "**Is not the Lord among us?**" No harm can come upon us." Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple Like the bare hills of the forest.