**Study Three:**

As mentioned earlier it is important to read what precedes this passage and what follows this passage. In chapter fourteen we have the Exodus. Before the Exodus, in Egypt, the Israelites had plenty of fish, fruit and vegetables and there was no shortage of water. After the Exodus passage we have the Songs of Moses and the Song of Miriam (chapter 15) concluding with the Israelites wishing they had died in Egypt. However, the Lord made food rain down upon the people. Now we come to the text for this week.

 The Israelites had moved from the wilderness of Sin to Rephidim, but there was no water.

As in chapter sixteen the Israelites complained to Moses. Once again they found fault with Moses. Despite the Israelites displeasure with Moses, the Lord guided Moses and people of God experienced another provision, another blessing from God. Moses followed divine instructions in what could be seen as the face of adversity. Moses hung in there. This raises the issue of how well we hang in there and wait on God!

Following the blessings of the Lord, the Israelites found themselves at war with the Amalekites.

As mentioned on page 21 of the study booklet, this is the third crisis concerning water.

Verse seven, the names Massah and Meribah become bywords for rebellion. Also see Hebrews 3:7 onwards.

7Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, 8do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, as on the day of testing in the wilderness, 9where your ancestors put me to the test, though they had seen my works 10for forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and I said, ‘They always go astray in their hearts, and they have not known my ways.’ 11As in my anger I swore, ‘They will not enter my rest.’” 12Take care, brothers and sisters, that none of you may have an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. 13But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end. 15As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” 16Now who were they who heard and yet were rebellious? Was it not all those who left Egypt under the leadership of Moses? 17But with whom was he angry forty years? Was it not those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, if not to those who were disobedient? 19So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.”

Also see 1 Corinthians 10:3-4.

**Psalm 95.**

As mentioned in the study booklet, this Psalm is well known to Anglicans as the "Venite" as it is one of the canticles in Morning Prayer.

This Psalm (verses eight and nine) connects with the Exodus reading for the week. Additionally, the Psalm is an invitation to sing and to hear; to sing His praise and hear His word.

The Psalm can be divided into two sections; verses 1 to 7 and verses 8 to 11.

In verses one to seven there are seven exhortations that lead us to want to worship our Lord, our God.

Verse one - O come let us sing out to The Lord and shout in triumph to the rock of our salvation

(There is great strength and comfort in knowing that God is our rock, the rock of our salvation.)

Verse two - let us come with thanksgiving and cry out joyfully.

(Do we come to God in worship joyfully? It concerns me that there is often a lack of joy expressed by those who worship.)

Verse three - our Lord is a great God

(From time to time people ask the questions Who is your God? Why is He is a great God? It is important that we can answer these questions.)

Verse four - all creation comes from him, the depths of the earth and the peaks of the mountains.

(God's creation is diverse and glorious and we are called to be wise stewards.)

Verse five - the creation theme continues - the sea is his and The Lord moulded the dry land.

(These verses four and five highlight the supremacy of our God.)

Verse six - let us come and bow down to The Lord our maker.

(We come to our God in reverence.)

Verse seven - He is our Lord, and to to pick up with Psalm 23, we are his sheep.

(We follow our Lord.)

As we move to verses eight to eleven the mood changes and so does the speaker. Water is a theme. God had brought the Israelites out of slavery and they sought water. Moses prayed to The Lord and he struck the rock and gave the names Meribah and Massah the meaning of the names is explained on page 22.

Forty years later there was another water crisis for the Israelites - see Numbers 20:1-13

Verse nine - God's people tested God. Even though they had seen the works of God, including the Exodus, they still had not faith in God. In verse ten - God said that He "loathed that generation". Here in the Psalm we see God as a God of love, but also a God of wrath. We see God as a God of goodness as well as severity. God hates sin, but loves the sinner with an everlasting love.