

Let the Journey Begin

a study in the book of Exodus

Bitter Waters Made Sweet - Exodus 15:22-27

Lesson 15

After the miraculous Red Sea deliverance, *Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea into the Wilderness of Shur*. God had revealed Himself to the children of Israel as their Deliverer. As they journeyed three days without water, only to discover the waters of Marah to be *bitter*, God's people were about to discover Him to be their Provider.

Read Exodus 15:22-27

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to the *LORD, Moses, and Israel*

Key Words: *LORD, Moses, Egyptians, and Israel*
3. When the people *found no water* that they could drink (verse 23), they *complained against Moses*. *Moses cried out to the LORD*. From the remaining verses (25-27), what was *the LORD's* response?

Read Exodus 15:22,23

1. Exodus 15:22 begins with the words, *so Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea*. If you heard someone telling the story of the exodus of Israel beginning with the day they left Egypt, bypassing the events of chapter 14, and picking up with these words, what would you add to the story?
 - a. What can be the benefit in remembering the hard places that we were in and what God did to deliver us, whether it be from the circumstance or from fears and discouragement in that circumstance?

2. The children of Israel were about to go from celebrating God's miraculous deliverance to another time of challenge. God often has lessons for us to learn after a victory. In what ways do victories help us when they are followed by a time of testing?
 - a. What have you learned as you studied Exodus 14 that helps you in your own life's challenges?

3. Moses again led them into a place that did not seem to be the best of choices. They *went three days in the wilderness*. What did they not *find*?
 - a. Three days without water is man's physical limit. Israel would have again found themselves in a desperate place. After three days *they came to Marah*. What did they discover about the waters there?
 - 1.) How might you have reacted if after three days without water, you arrived at a place where the waters were not drinkable?

Read Exodus 15:24

1. What was the response of the people when they discovered the *waters of Marah to be bitter*?
 - a. In what way might the statement, "*What shall we drink,*" be a complaint rather than a simple question?

2. Read the promise of God to Israel as spoken to Moses in Exodus 6:6-8. List the promises followed by God's words, *I will*.
 - a. How would reminding yourself of these promises help you in times of desperate need?
 - 1.) What would you say to your children (or new believers) in a moment like this?

Read Exodus 15:25

1. What was Moses' response to the *complaint of the people*?
 - a. Each of us have experienced times when people have *complained* to us about something they considered us to be responsible for. What are some reactions that are available to us (positive or negative)?

 - b. What can we expect when we take those *complaints* and *cry out to the LORD*?

2. Record the words of David in Psalm 18:6.
 - a. What was the LORD's response to David's *cry*?

 - b. What does Psalm 91:15 add to God's promised response when we *cry out to Him*?
 - 1.) What does this personally mean to you?

3. The LORD's response to Moses' prayer was that *He showed him a tree*. What happened when Moses *cast the tree into the waters*?
 - a. God's answers to our prayers are very often not what we expect. God could have turned the bitter waters into sweet without any action from Moses. Why do you think that God enlists our actions before He performs on our behalf?

4. Ponder the words of Exodus 23:22. Write them in your own words as they apply to your life today.

Read Exodus 15:25-27

1. Exodus 15:25 ends with the words, *There He made a statute and an ordinance for them. And there He tested them.* What promise did He make to His people in verse 26?
 - a. Much of the book of Leviticus would contain ordinances that pertained to their health. Israel had their part in the prevention of diseases. This promise related to more than their health. What four conditions did He place before them?

1.) Record the words of Deuteronomy 12:28.

a.) This is not a promise that they (or we) will not face hard times. Jesus promised *tribulation* to those who follow Him. Record what He promised in John 16:33.

b.) Explain how you have discovered the truth of Deuteronomy 12:28, even in *tribulations*.

2. What title did God claim at the end of Exodus 15:26?
 - a. Record His promise in Jeremiah 33:6.
 - 1.) What are your thoughts as you meditate on God's intentions for His people (and for you personally)?
3. *Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters. After this time of testing, God had a time of refreshing for His people. The day of our ultimate refreshment is described in Revelation 7:17. Record the refreshment promised in this verse.*
 - a. We have each experienced times of refreshment that give us a taste of this time to come. What is your favorite thing about those times?

Review Exodus 15:22-27

1. God's purpose in allowing His people to thirst only to arrive at bitter waters was to *test* them. What did you learn from this lesson that you can personally apply?

Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

- Isaiah 12:3

Observation Worksheet

Exodus 15:22-27 So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water.²³ Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah.²⁴ And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"²⁵ So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them. And there He tested them,²⁶ and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."²⁷ Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.