

“And the woman conceived and bare a daughter, and she called her name Miriam, because in those days the Egyptians had embittered the lives of the children of Israel.” (*The Book of Jasher* 67.3)

**15:21 And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.**

**15:21** “**Miriam answered them**” – *Comments* - In Exodus 15:21 Miriam was prophetically answering the children of Israel. Note Exodus 15:1, “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

**15:22 - 18:27** **The Journey to Mount Sinai** – Exodus 15:22 to 18:27 records Israel’s journey from the shores of the Red Sea to Mount Sinai. This journey contains symbolisms of the Christian’s early journey immediately after water baptism as God divinely provides for his needs, guiding him to a place of greater spiritual maturity through the knowledge of His Word.

*1. Israel Encamps at Marah (15:22-26)* – Exodus 15:22-27 records Israel’s journey immediately after their deliverance from the Egyptian army in the crossing of the Red Sea. This pericope takes the children of Israel from the shores of the Red Sea to Elim.

Israel’s first test of faith takes place at Marah, which means “bitter,” located in the Wilderness of Shur (meaning “journey”) where they become thirsty after three days of following the Lord through the wilderness. In the midst of their labours, they come to a spring of water, but find the waters bitter. Moses cuts down a tree and throws it into the water to make it sweet. The Lord then gives them a statute to obey His Word as an opportunity for them to prove their love and devotion towards Him. God had blessed the Israelites with prosperity and health as they departed Egypt. His statute promised them that if they would obey God’s Word, they would be able to walk in the blessings continually. This event could symbolize the first trial that a child of God experiences in which he must put his faith in obedience to God’s Word. Their choices would make life bitter or sweet. God gave them the choice. As God’s children, the things of this world no longer have to be bitter, for in obedience to Christ Jesus, He makes everything sweet. From the first day we believed in Jesus Christ as our Saviour, there is not a situation that we face alone. If we will seek the Lord, He will give us wisdom to deal with every difficult, bitter situation so that it becomes sweet, a blessing to us and others.

*Illustration* - The Lord spoke to me the night of 18-29 January 2005 and said, “The bitter and the sweet are all used by God to mould and shape your life.” This word came the same day that my sister-in-law Dyan was told by her Muslim “husband” called Nabal to leave her home and was only allowed to take one of her two children with her. It was “sweet” news for us that she has decided to leave this environment for the sake of her eternal salvation, but it is “bitter” news to know that her oldest child is being left behind. However, I know that God will work in her life in the midst of this heartache to draw her to Him and to work miracles for her as she learns to trust in Him. The following night the Lord spoke to me saying, “Be patient and you will see Me working in the midst of this situation.”

*2. Israel Encamps at Elim (15:27)* – The children of Israel found twelve springs and seventy palm trees when they encamped at Elim, which means, “trees.” In the Scriptures, trees can symbolize men, and leadership among men (Judg 9:7-15), and wells are symbolic of the anointings of the Holy Spirit (Jn 7:38, 2 Pet 2:17). These twelve springs may represent the twelve apostles of the Lamb and the seventy trees the first seventy disciples upon which the early Church in Jerusalem was founded in the upper room. This symbolizes the need for the new believer to join the body of Christ in order to continue his life of being refreshed by the Holy Spirit and walking in freedom and liberty from this world. It is in the local fellowship

that a believer will find times of refreshing, in the midst of worship, the teaching of God's Word, and genuine love from the brethren.

Judges 9:8, "The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us."

John 7:38, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

2 Peter 2:17, "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever."

However, these twelve springs and seventy trees may better represent the times of refreshing that God provides each of His children. Along our spiritual journey, the Lord leads us in paths of rest and peace, as described in Psalm 23. These times of refreshing follow seasons of trials.

*3. Israel Encamps in the Wilderness of Sin (16:1-36)* – In the wilderness of Sin, which means, "bush," the children of Israel are given manna from Heaven and quail to eat. The manna symbolizes the daily word that God speaks to every one of His children as a part of His fellowship with them. God speaks to His children each day if he will just take the time to listen. The quail represent the stronger meat that God can give to those who are mature in Christ (Heb 5:12-14).

*Illustration* - As a young Christian in 1980, the Lord gave me a dream in which I saw an old, wooden, screen door with the familiar, metal sign "Colonial is Good Bread" fastened to the center of this door. This sign became famous because it was found on the wooden screen doors of so many country stores across the United States. The makers of Colonial Bread invested in an advertising campaign using these signs because they wanted everyone to buy a loaf of their bread when they entered the grocery store. This metal sign was not just fastened in the center of the screen door as a push plate to prevent damaging the screen; the message on this sign became embedded into the mind of every customer that entered the store to buy groceries. The Colonial Bread Company wanted everyone to partake of their bread. The unique aspect of this dream is that the metal sign on this old, wooden screen door did not read, "Colonial is Good Bread," but rather, "The Bread of Life." As a young Christian I interpreted this dream to mean that the Lord wanted me to open this door in my spiritual journey and partake of that bread that comes from heaven. He wanted me to read and study His Holy Word diligently, and on a daily basis.

*4. The Water from the Rock (17:1-7)* – Exodus 17:1-7 records the story of God providing the children of Israel water from the rock. During Israel's encampment at Rephidim, which means "support," Moses struck the rock and water poured forth to refresh the children of Israel. The striking of the rock represents the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and it symbolized the fact that God used men to crucify Jesus on the Cross (1 Cor 10:4). God, through man, brought about this act. God struck Jesus once for all that we might have living water. In Numbers 20:8 God told Moses to speak to the rock. When Moses struck the rock the second time out of anger (Num 20:11), it was a type of crucifying the Son of God a second time (Heb 6:6).

The water represents the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues that is available for every believer who desires more of God's presence in his/her life. It also represents the daily infilling of the Holy Spirit that every child of God can experience by praying in tongues and worshipping the Lord (Eph 5:18-19). God sends His children the gift of speaking in tongues to support and strengthen the believer.

1 Corinthians 10:4, “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”

Numbers 20:11, “And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.”

Hebrews 6:6, “If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

Now man can speak to Jesus, call upon his name, so that we may have living water (eternal life).

*Illustration* - Over the Christmas and New Year's holidays of 1986, work was slow. Therefore, I spent extra time praying. One morning the Lord as I awoke, the Lord said to me, "You will never walk in victory in your life unless you spend two hours a day praying in tongues." During this time, I had become concerned and was asking Him why my life lacked so much victory, peace and joy. So the Saturday after New Year's day, while praying in tongues at the church altar, I was led to turn to Ephesians 6:10-18. Immediately the Lord showed me that I would never have the total, abiding victory as a Christina unless I spend time daily, constantly praying in the spirit. I began doing this two hours a day then. And a heaviness lifted and peace and joy came from within, all day long.

*5. Israel's Battle with the Amalekites (17:8-16)* – Exodus 17:8-16 records the story of Israel's first battle, which took place at their encampment of Rephidim with the Amalekites. The Lord allowed the children of Israel to be refreshed with a continual source of fresh water from the rock that Moses struck (17:1-7) prior to their attack. The water of Marah was symbolic of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. The water from the rock struck by Moses is symbolic of the continual filling of the Holy Spirit through a lifestyle of praying in the Spirit (Eph 5:18).

Ephesians 5:18, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;”

The Amalekites could symbolize the flesh or the demonic realm that comes against the children of God on their spiritual journey. The lifting up of the rod of God in the hands of Moses could represent a believer's declaration of the name of Jesus in taking dominion over the powers of darkness. As Moses held up the rod of God, which symbolizes the authority of the name of Jesus, the enemy was defeated. God's children must learn to use the name of Jesus when Satan attacks the body of Christ. Had Israel remained in Egyptian bondage, the Amalekites would not have attacked them. Neither would Satan attack God's children if they would return back into the world. The Lord once spoke to a friend of mine, saying, “A king does not fight against a city he has already conquered.”

*Illustration* – The Lord gave me a three-part dream, which opened my eyes and taught me how to exercise the authority of the name of Jesus in every area of my life. I had learned how to pray and make my requests to the Lord known using Jesus' name. Now, I was going to learn to use His name to take authority over Satan. The first part of the dream was a vision of a pastor friend of mine sitting in his house peacefully reading his Bible in a chair. I still remember how peaceful and tranquil the scene appeared. Then, the Lord spoke these words to me, "There is peace in a home when there is dominion in that home." Finally, the Lord brought the words "Luke 11:21" to my mind. I had no idea how that verse read nor if it applied to the dream. I woke up and read this passage, "When a strong man armed keepeth

his palace, his goods are in peace." I knew immediately that this dream was from God. Through the next few months, I began to study the Bible and learn how to use the name of Jesus to set my household at peace. (4 July 1988)

6. *Moses Honours Jethro (18:1-12)* – In Exodus 18:1-12 Moses encamps at Mount Sinai, while the children of Israel are still at Rephidim. While Moses was encamped at the mountain of God, he honours Jethro, his father-in-law. Jethro offers the sacrifice and they eat together. Jethro's visit to Moses could symbolize Jesus Christ as He offers His blood at the Father's throne. Perhaps the fact that he went ahead of the encampment symbolizes that fact that Jesus went before us to God's throne to offer His atoning sacrifice in our behalf. There he met his father-in-law, who made a sacrifice unto God. This may symbolize God the Father receiving Jesus' sacrifice, which was actually a sacrifice that God gave to mankind for his salvation.

7. *Jethro Advises Moses (18:13-27)* - Exodus 18:13-27 records the incident in which Jethro advises Moses on how to delegate judges to assist him in judging the matters of the people. After Moses honours Jethro, his father-in-law gives Moses wisdom regarding organizing leadership among the children of Israel so that all of them can receive wisdom and ministry. This event symbolizes High Priesthood of Jesus Christ, seen in Jethro's comment to Moses, "You be for the people an advocate before God, and you bring the problems to God."<sup>68</sup> (Ex 18:19). The ordaining by Moses of leaders over the people represents church order and service. Jesus is seated at the Father's right hand to judge His church, while sending forth the Holy Spirit to anoint the five-fold ministry and give the gifts of the Spirit to the body of Christ (Eph 4:8-13). If a child of God will submit himself to the leadership of a local fellowship, he will be able to experience the gifts and anointings of the Holy Spirit and join in the ministry of helps.

8. *Indoctrination (Ex 20:1 to 24:8)* - The next phase of a believer's life after regeneration is called indoctrination. The giving of the Law and statutes (Ex 20:1 to 24:8) represents this phase in the Christian life. It is important to note that God guided them to Mount Sinai and throughout their entire forty-year wilderness journey with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Ex 13:21). This divine guidance symbolized the fact that every child of God must learn to be led by the Holy Spirit throughout his spiritual journey.

Exodus 13:21, "And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:"

*Motifs found within Exodus 15:22 to 18:27* - John Durham notes a number of contrasts within this passage of Scripture. (a) *Israel's Need verses God's Abundance Supply* – The children of Israel entered the wilderness journey totally dependent upon God's provision for their every need. Time and again God reveals Himself as having more than enough to supply their needs. (b) *Thirst verses Abundance of Water* – This passage of Scripture opens with Israel in desperate need of water, only to find bitter water; and the passage closes with Israel encamped at Elim, where there was an abundance of water and trees. Understanding that God was leading them with a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night (Ex 13:21-22), it is easy to conclude that God was testing His children. (c) *Israel's Grumbling verses God's Loving Patience* – An underlying motif found in Israel's forty-year wilderness journey is Israel's constant grumbling and complaining, beginning in this passage, being met with God's continual intervention to meet their need. (d) *Health verses Sickness* - Another contrast is made between Israel's promise of health and healing against the backdrop of the

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<sup>68</sup>Translation by John I. Durham, *Exodus*, in *Word Biblical Commentary: 58 Volumes on CD-Rom*, vol. 3, eds. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas: Word Inc., 2002), in *Libronix Digital Library System*, v. 3.0b [CD-ROM] (Bellingham, WA: Libronix Corp., 2004), translation of Exodus 18:19.

Ten Plagues of Egypt (Ex 15:26). (*e*) *Disorder verses Order* – The multitude of Israelites began this journey in an awkward manner, in their encampment, in their travelling, in their lifestyles, so that Moses was overwhelmed with their problems. God sends Jethro with the wisdom to begin setting their lives in order. These contrasts reveal that God was gradually guiding them into an orderly lifestyle of faith and obedience to Him, a lifestyle that would meet their daily needs. However, the multitude of the Israelites were grumbling against change because it clashed with their old habits and customs.<sup>69</sup>

## 15:22-27

**Israel Encamps at Marah and Elim** – Exodus 15:22-27 records Israel's journey immediately after their deliverance from the Egyptian army in the crossing of the Red Sea. This pericope takes the children of Israel from the shores of the Red Sea to Elim.

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John 7:38, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

2 Peter 2:17, "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever."

**15:22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.**

**15:22** *Word Study on "Shur"* – *Strong* tells us the Hebrew name "Shur" (שׁוּר) (S 7793) mean, "a wall." This name is used six times in the Scriptures (Gen 16:7; 20:1; 25:18, Ex 15:22, 1Sam 15:7; 21:8). *Gesenius* says when this word is used as a noun, it is translated "a liar in wait, an enemy," or "a wall." As a verb it means (1) to journey, to go about (most likely definition), (2) to sing (least likely definition), or (3) to put in order, hence, a wall.

*Scripture References* - Note other references to the place named Shur in Scripture:

Genesis 16:7, "And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur."

Genesis 25:18, "And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: and he died in the presence of all his brethren."

**15:22** *Comments* - Once leaving Egypt, the children of Israel had to take the pilgrimage by faith in God. We also walk a spiritual pilgrimage as we enter a journey with salvation.

**15:23 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.**

**15:23** *Word Study on "Marah"* - *PTW* says the Hebrew name "Marah" means, "bitter."

**15:23** *Comments* - Examples of bitterness in the Holy Bible:

1. Naomi called herself Mara, meaning "bitterness," because she lost her husband and two sons. The family name was cut off.

Ruth 1:20, "And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me."

2. Hebrews had had led bitter lives in Egypt and needed healing.

Exodus 1:14, "And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour."

3. Bitter water causes death.

Revelation 8:10-11, "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."

4. 2 Kings 2:19-22 - Salt healed waters.

2 Kings 2:21, "And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land."

5. 2 Kings 4:38-41 - Death in pot, Meal heals pot.

6. If a believer drinks any deadly thing, will not harm him.

Mark 16:18, "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

7. Numbers 5:11-31 - Jealously, so a woman drinks bitter water.

8. Affliction brings bitterness.

2 Kings 14:26, "For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel."

9. Job's complaint was bitter.

Job 23:2, "Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning."

10. A strange woman's end is bitter and sharp.

Proverbs 5:4, "But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword."

11. To the hungry, every bitter thing is sweet.

Proverbs 27:7, "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."

**15:24 And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?**

**15:25 And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,**

**15:25** "And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet" - *Comments* - Why was a tree used to heal the bitter waters? The tree was figurative of life in a desert, and symbolises healing. The tree was symbolic of Jesus, who makes the bitterness in our lives sweet. When we apply the Cross of Calvary to our lives, it causes every bitter circumstance in life to be made sweet. Jesus tasted the bitter cup of suffering so that we might be free from the bitterness of life. See:

Deuteronomy 20:19, "When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege."

A tree represents healing. This tree had to die or be cut off for their healing Jesus died for us to have access to God is healing.

Note similar stories:

2 Kings 2:21, “And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.”

2 Kings 4:41, “But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.”

**“there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them” - Comments** – God proved the children of Israel’s obedience by giving them their first charge. He was testing them in proving their obedience and devotion towards Him. God has brought Moses into the wilderness forty years in order to prepare him as a leader over His children Israel. Moses had been humbled during his forty-year exile and he had learned to obey the Lord. Now God had to bring the children of Israel into this same season of training.

God was also testing their faith in Him, as He tested Abraham (Gen 22:1). God had to teach them how to walk by faith in Him and not to lean on their own senses and will. They were going to have to walk by faith in order to conquer giants and take the Promised Land.

Genesis 22:1, “And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.”

In a similar manner, God tested Adam’s love and devotion towards Him by giving him a charge to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. How can a person prove his love towards someone except he be given rules by which love can be genuinely proved?

**15:26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.**

**15:26** *Comments* - Exodus 15:26 records the first statute and ordinance that God gave to Israel, which says that obedience to God in general will deliver them from all the sickness that they saw in the land of Egypt. This is not only a reference to the terrible plagues they had just seen. The Lord had brought them into a new life and is now trying to renew their minds, trying to teach them about divine health so that they would have strength to serve God. The Lord once spoke to Norvel Hayes and told him that people are rewarded in two ways if they will serve the Lord. They will receive health and prosperity in this life. The Lord then referred him to 3 John 1:2.<sup>70</sup> God had given the children of Israel prosperity through favor with the Egyptians (Ex 12:36). He then gave them healing through the atonement of the Passover lamb, which meal was a miracle of healing so that none who left Egypt were feeble (Ps 105:37). A teaching on divine health should be one of the first teachings taught to newborn Christians, since this is the first teaching that the Lord gave the children of Israel. When a child of God has sickness in his body, there is a cause and a cure in God’s precious Word, for He promises His children health when they obey His Word.

3 John 1:2, “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”

Psalms 105:37, “He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.”

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<sup>70</sup>Norvel Hayes, “Sermon,” Word of Faith Family Church, Dallas, Texas 1989-99; Norvel Hayes, *Financial Dominion: How To Take Charge Of Your Finances* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Harrison House, c1986), 9-17.