

Exodus 26 – Waters of Bitterness and Rebellion

Exodus (Names) - Changing the World

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Exodus 15:22-27

Waters Form a Triad

- Reed Sea Crossing
 - God's deliverance over demonic spiritual forces
- Waters of Marah
 - Demonstration of the Hebrew's innate sinfulness
- Waters of Elim
 - Demonstration of God's unmerited grace

Reed Sea Crossing

- They people had just witnessed this power of God in the defeat of the demonic spiritual forces, and Pharaoh's army
- They sang about God's power to defend them



Waters of Marah

- Within a very short time the people are angry because God has led them to bitter waters
- Why would God, who is their protector, lead them to bitter (bad) water?



Getting Our Bearings

- The suggested location of Marah suggests the bitter waters were probably salty
- The wells contained leeches that leached salt from the sea probably by osmosis
- Death could take days



Look at the Words

- Marah
 - It's primary definition means bitterness, unusable
 - It's secondary definition means rebellious, angry
- Mathoq
 - It's primary definition means sweet, usable
 - It's secondary definition means to relish, desire

Look at God

- God is “testing” (nasah) His people
 - God is not testing them for His knowledge, He is omniscient and *knows* their sinful hearts
 - God is testing the people so that *they* will know how innately sinful they are based on their
 - Thoughts
 - Words
 - Deeds

Repentance Requires Knowledge

- The Hebrew people cannot repent, cannot understand their need for God until they understand their own innate sinfulness
- It was not just Pharaoh who was sinful, it was them also; there could be no repentance, no seeking for grace until there was understanding of sin (He 3:7-12)

God Led Them to Bitterness

- God deliberately led them to these wells of bitter water
- The people tested the waters and could not safely drink
- The people went to Moses
 - Grumbling which implied anger
 - Their sinful, unfaithful hearts were revealed for all to see and there is no mention of shame on their part

Bitterness Based on Rebellion

- They were not simply angry, they were rebelliously angry against God and against their visible intercessor, Moses, because their hearts were sinful
 - This is mob mentality ready to follow the loudest voice
 - There was no looking to God expecting deliverance
 - There was only complaining with the barely veiled threat of action, violent action (Mt 9:21-22)

Moses Prays

- Moses also displays a complaining (sinful) spirit but without the rebellion - he prays to God
 - His prayer reveals his complaining spirit, his sin
 - He brings their need to God asking for guidance
- Ancient faiths relied on an intercessor (god) between the society and their god(s)

Ancient Worldview

- Before we condemn the people for not praying we need to adjust our thinking to their worldview
 - In *no faith* was the individual allowed to come to god
 - The people would bring their offerings and petitions to the intercessor (priest) who would then intercede to god for them, individually and collectively
- These people could not think to pray to God directly

Real Issue

- The real issue in this passage is not prayer, but sin
 - God does not condemn them for not praying to Him
 - Moses acts as intercessor and prays to God receiving an effective solution
- The message from God mentions nothing about their supposed lack of prayer but about their obedience

First Mention of Obedience

- God is preparing them to receive His statements, and later His Law
 - *If you will listen to God*
 - *If you will obey God*
 - God will be your *healer*
- The implied message is, "healer of sin" (new covenant)

Healer of Bitterness (Sin)

- Moses told to throw wood into the waters to make them desirable to sinners
- This will occur approx. 1400 years later when Christ dies on a tree for sin - New Covenant



Water Symbol of Spirit

- Through the cross God will change sinners'
 - Bitter, rebellious spirits (hearts) (bitter water)
 - Giving them new hearts of flesh (desirable water) (Ex 36:26, Jn 4:13-14)
- This is a dramatic picture of their future, and ours
 - Corporately - Christ shall have come from the Jews
 - Individually - Salvation is for each person (Jn 11:31-50)

Waters of Elim

- Lesson complete, though poorly understood, even today (Ps 107:30-32)
- God leads All His people to the desirable waters of Elim sheltered by date palms for shelter and food



Palm Tree Sign of God's Goodness

- Bible likens the righteous man as one who will "flourish like the palm tree" (Ps 92:12-15)
 - Planted in the house of the Lord
 - Flourishing in the courts of the Lord
- Lives in the realization that God:
 - Is his Rock
 - In Him there is NO unrighteousness - ever