

August 10

Lesson 7

**August 9-15*

The Bread *and* Water of Life

NEXT TIME

COVENANT AT SINAI

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Exod. 15:22-16:36, Gen. 3:1-6,*

Exod. 17:1-7, 1 Cor. 10:4, Exod. 18: 1-27, 1 Cor. 10:11.

Memory Text: "And the LORD said to Moses, 'How long do you

refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? See! For the

LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on

the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in

his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.' So the people rested on the seventh day" (*Exodus 16:28-30, NKJV*).

After leaving Egypt, Israel was on an unknown journey to the Promised Land. The people faced a demanding and long trek, and they needed to learn a multitude of new lessons. The Lord would lead and care for them; and, yes, He desired to help them grow, but they must learn discipline, self-control, sacrifice, unselfishness, trust in the Lord, and especially obedience.

Moses was a visible leader, and the people had to follow him and his leadership if they were to triumph. It was crucial for them to stay together, to cooperate as a community, and to assist each other. There were many hindrances and challenges ahead. So much of their spiritual growth would depend on how they met those challenges and how they responded to Moses, especially when the challenges became great.

The familiar Chinese saying that "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" was true in their situation, and they needed to trust the Lord's directions with every footstep. Tragically, as we will see, they didn't learn those lessons so easily.

But then again, who does?

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, August 16.*

SUNDAY

August 10

Bitter Waters

In biblical narratives, different roles are played by different characters, good or bad, and we need to pay close attention to plots, places, timing, and villains. However, the most important point in a storyline is usually the solution and the lessons learned. It's no different in these accounts.

As the episodes show, God is the Problem Solver and the Peacemaker; however, His work is complicated by people's unbelief. Due to their constant murmuring and disobedience, the Hebrews experienced serious complications, even tragedies. They brought upon themselves many difficulties because of their incredulity and unrepentance.

Read Exodus 15:22-27. After crossing the Red Sea, what was the background to the first miracle performed?

THEY HAVE JUST SUNG THE SONG OF MOSES AND DELIVERANCE FROM THE EGYPTIANS:

“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.

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. AND THE PEOPLE MURMURED AGAINST MOSES, SAYING, WHAT SHALL WE DRINK? 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:”

THE BIBLE SAYS THAT JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED ON A TREE (1 PETER 2:21:

24 Who his own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

SO THEN THIS STORY SPEAKS TO US ABOUT JESUS AND HIS GREAT SACRIFICE FOR US (AS DOES EVERY STORY OF THE BIBLE IN SOME WAY OR FORM) .

THE THE WATERS OF LIFE ARE BITTER WHEN PEOPLE THEMSELVES TREAT US IN WAYS THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO SWALLOW.

WHEN YOU ARE THIRSTY FOR GENUINE FRIENDSHIP, COMPASSION, SYMPATHY AND LOVE, LOOK TO THE CROSS OF CALVARY. THERE WE SEE

THE HEART OF HEAVEN BROKEN ON THAT TREE OUT OF LOVE FOR YOU AND ME.

JESUS HAS BEEN CAST INTO THE BITTER WATERS OF THIS WORLD, THIS WORLD THAT CANNOT TRULY SATISFY OUR THIRST. HE LIFE, HIS DEATH, HIS HEART OF SORROWS THAT WAS ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF SWEETENS THE BITTER WATERS OF OUR OWN LIVES.

AND JESUS CAN SWEETEN NOT JUST OUR SPIRITUAL AND MENTAL EXPERIENCE IN THE BITTER WATERS OF THIS WORLD, BUT ALSO OUR PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE.

HERE IS WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS AS WE CONTINUE TO READ EXODUS 15:25

"THERE HE MADE FOR THEM A STATUTE AND AN ORDINANCE, AND THERE HE PROVED THEM, 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."

GOD HAS A HEALTH MESSAGE. THE BIBLE LAYS OUT A SIMPLE PLAN FOR HELP WITH DISEASE. IT IS INTERESTING TO UNDERSTAND THAT MODERN MEDICINE DOES NOT DO WELL WHEN IT COMES TO HEALING DISEASE. YES IT DOES DIAGNOSE WELL MUCH OF THE TIME. IT CAN PRESCRIBE WELL TO

HELP RELIEVE THE SYMPTOMS. IT CAN ALSO OPERATE WELL TO REMOVE OR REPAIR BODY PARTS. HOWEVER, WHEN IT COMES TO ACTUAL HEALING OF THE BODY WE NEED TO TURN THE CREATOR AND HEAVILY PHYSICIAN. IF WE WILL DO THAT, DILIGENTLY HARKENING TO THE VOICE OF THE LORD OUR GOD, HE PROMISES TO HELP US WITH DISEASE. HE EVEN SAYS THAT HE WILL PUT NONE OF THE DISEASES OF THE WORLD UPON US. THIS TELLS US THAT A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF DISEASE IS LIFESTYLE RELATED. THE ESTIMATE IS OVER 70 PERCENT WORLD WIDE IN OUR PRESENT DAY. SO GOD'S WORD IS PRESENT TRUTH FOR THIS TIME AND WE KNOW THAT THIS IS TRUE BECAUSE 1 TIMOTHY 4:1-6 REMINDS US OF A SPECIFIC WARNING FROM THE SPIRIT IN THE LATTER DAYS:

"NOW THE SPIRIT SPEAKETH EXPRESSLY, THAT IN THE LATTER TIMES SOME SHALL DEPART FROM THE FAITH, [WORD OF GOD RO. 10:7] GIVING HEED TO SEDUCING SPIRITS, AND DOCTRINES OF DEVILS; SPEAKING LIES IN HYPOCRISY; HAVING THEIR CONSCIENCE SEARED WITH A HOT IRON; FORBIDDING TO MARRY, AND COMMANDING TO ABSTAIN [HOLD OFF] FROM MEATS, [FOOD] WHICH GOD HATH CREATED [FOUNDED, FORMED ORIGINALLY] TO BE RECEIVED WITH THANKSGIVING OF THEM WHICH BELIEVE AND KNOW THE TRUTH [GENESIS 1:29]. FOR EVERY CREATURE [ORIGINAL FORMATION THAT GOD MADE FOR FOOD] OF GOD IS GOOD, AND NOTHING TO BE REFUSED, IF IT BE RECEIVED WITH THANKSGIVING: FOR IT IS SANCTIFIED BY THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER.

IF THOU PUT THE BRETHREN IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS, THOU SHALT BE A GOOD MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST, NOURISHED UP IN THE WORDS OF FAITH AND OF GOOD DOCTRINE, WHEREUNTO THOU HAST ATTAINED.

AND THEY CAME TO ELIM, WHERE WERE TWELVE WELLS OF WATER, AND THREESCORE AND TEN PALM TREES: AND THEY ENCAMPED THERE BY THE WATERS.

The first test of Israel's faith is associated with the need for water, not surprising given the harsh, hot, and dry desert environment. After three days of traveling, the people finally found water, but it was undrinkable. Marah means "bitter," and because the water was bitter, Israel's faith in their caring Lord quickly floundered. However, God reacted with compassion, and the first miracle was performed with a piece of wood. Of course, it was not the wood but the Lord who made the water sweet and drinkable. The people had to learn important lessons: (1) patience in waiting for the Lord's timing, and (2) that God does things in cooperation with humans.

However, the children of Israel took so many things for granted and quickly forgot the great miracles that God had done

for them—miracles for which they had just so passionately sung praises to Him, declaring: " 'Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?' " (*Exod. 15:11, ESV*).

And yet, even after their grumbling, God promised that He would not bring upon the Israelites "any of the diseases" (*Exod. 15:26, NIV*) that had plagued the Egyptians. He would protect them. They could experience this promise only on the condition that they stayed faithful to Him.

**What trials and struggles have you brought upon yourself?
What comfort can you get in knowing that God will still work in
your behalf if you cooperate with Him?**

