



DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

Turning away from the Bitterness of Heart ... by Billy

READ: EXODUS 15: 22-27

- **T**oday I hope and pray that we will come to see that the journeys that are recounted in this story represent more than literal miles.
- **The prophet Jeremiah learned this lesson and he announced.** "I know O Lord that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23) True of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and Moses.
- Following their release from the bondage of Egypt, the children of Israel were cast upon the Lord for future guidance.
- **"Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea..." The Hebrew word for 'led' means 'caused to journey**
- In *Psa.77:20*, we read that God led His people by the hand of Moses. God caused them to journey, not by a direct route to the promised land, but by a detour.
- We will see that the cause for this journey was to test their trust in God.
- After three days in the wilderness, they were extremely thirsty. But when they came to Marah, the water there was too bitter to drink.
- The Hebrew word Marah means bitter and describes many kinds of trouble in the scriptures. **family turmoil** (*Gen.27:34*), personal suffering, (*Job 10:1*), disillusionment (*Ezek.27:30-31*) and fear of death (*1 Sam.15:32*)
- Naomi asked for her name to be changed to Marah because of the bitterness of sorrow in her life experience. (*Ruth 1:20*)
- **"Each heart knows its own bitterness.."** (*Prov.14:10*). Sometimes it is borne without complaint but not in this incident.
- **"So the people grumbled at Moses..."** (*Exodus 15:24*)
- **"were there no graves in Egypt? (Exodus 14:11), "why have you brought us up from Egypt to kill us and our children..." (Exodus 17:3)** This is less than one week after an amazing **deliverance from Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea**
- **"They soon forgot His works..they did not wait for His counsel..."** (*Psa.106:13*)
- While the people grumbled, Moses cried out to the Lord. (v.25). This was a cry of distress in a time of crisis. (*Psalms 34:17*).

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Week 10

- God answered the cry of Moses and showed him a tree. This wasn't some natural herbal remedy stored away in the mind of Moses.. it was a revelation from God.
- As Moses was directed to the burning bush so he was directed to this specific tree.
- There are indications in the word of God that the leaves of the trees possess healing powers. (Ezek.47:12 and Rev.22:2)
- The bitter waters became sweet. This mirade of provision held a deeper significance.
- God was showing them how he turned the bitterness of their captivity into the sweetness of freedom. He turned their mousing into dancing.
- God was faithful to His covenant with Abraham and He would not go back on His word.
- In days to come Israel would receive a fuller revelation of God's covenant at Sinai, but for now there was one statute to learn. – v.26
- AV 'diligently hearken' to listen with the intention of understanding so that one can do what is right in the sight of the Lord.
- This was the test. "whether or not they would walk in My instruction.." (Deut.8:2)
- The blessings of obedience include physical health and well-being. It is undisputed that God is Healer as this is His covenant name.
- Whilst this promise was given specifically to the children of Israel in relation to the diseases of Egypt, there is a divine principle presiding.
- This is not a guarantee that those who obey God will never get sick. Psalm 41:1-3 and 103:3. But we can be sure of one thing...God has power to heal and He can heal at will.....only say the word and I will be healed.
- God is also reminding His people that the bitterness of Egypt included disease as well as bondage.
- Eventually the people arrive at Elim (large trees) a sharp contrast to the bitterness of Marah. We would love to live always at Elim where there are waters of abundance but we have to encounter Marah to fully appreciate Elim.
- The Lord is our Shepherd and He leads us beside still waters but He determines the way that we take.
- This is the road our Saviour journeyed. He drank the bitter cup of God's judgment upon our sin. The bitter is turned into sweet for us and we can drink freely of the living waters always. ■