

## INTRODUCTION:

### BITTER WATER MADE SWEET

**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.** Often after a great victory of faith, the Lord permits a trial to come to test us.

- When Abraham arrived in the Promised Land, he discovered a famine (Gen.12:10).
- After the glorious occasion of His baptism, our Lord was tempted by Satan in the wilderness (Matt.3:13-4:11).
- Elijah won a great victory on Mount Carmel, but after that faced a trial of faith (1 Kgs.18-19).

Here we see Moses after the Red Sea, and now in the wilderness of Shur. "**Shur**" means wall fortification. A single day in the wilderness without water would be tolerable, two days would be difficult, but three days would be impossible especially for children and animals. **Test time**—God was testing His people, not because He didn't know their hearts, but because they didn't know their own hearts which is always to show that our hearts are sometimes not in the right place when tested. Our hearts tend to be selfish, instead of responding to God's Will! When we give over our hearts to Almighty God, we are humbly trusting Him!

**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.** Ooooooh bitter water! They were truly disappointed when they came upon this. They named it "**Marah**" which means "**bitter**"; the same as when Naomi said "*call me Mara: for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.*"

**15:24 And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?**— What you think? They just came through water and can't find water to drink? How funny! The people of Israel were experts at murmuring. The attitude that we take toward our difficulties determines which direction life will go, for what life does to us depends on what life finds in us. It wasn't the time to murmur but instead it was the time of just trusting God's leader. They did not yet trust that the Lord's presence was with them and their leader. He had thus far lead, protected and provided for them. Complaining doesn't solve problems, it hinders 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: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,**—Moses took the right approach, the way of faith, going to the Lord and crying unto Him. Moses follows God's orders— a tree the Lord shows him is cast into the waters without wondering if this will work. The Lord causes the bitter waters to become sweet. He showed Moses what to do. God was not only interested in getting the children of Israel out of Egypt, but He also wanted to get Egypt out of the

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children of Israel - both physically and spiritually. He made a "**statute**" (*rule*) and an "**ordinance**" (*regulation*) to test their commitment. The statue calls Israel to give heed to all that He has commanded, which further requires implicitly that the people follow Moses as the one through whom they will listen to the voice of the Lord.

**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.** In this statute and ordinance they were to diligently listen to the voice of the Lord their God; do what's right in His sight by giving ear to His commandments; keeping all the Lord's statutes. As a result of their commitment to the Lord, none of the diseases brought upon Egypt, would be placed upon the Israelites. "*He is the LORD that healeth thee*"—"*Jehovah Rapha!*"—"*the Lord who heals.*" God promised Israel abundant physical blessings if they would obey Him; but physical afflictions if they disobeyed.

**15:27 And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.** Elim was an oasis in the desert where there were 12 wells of water, and 70 palm trees in which the Lord led the Israelites to, to receive the rest needed.

- "**Marah**" was their first encampment after crossing the Red Sea. "**Elim**" would be their second encampment. "**Marah**" meant murmuring; bitter, while "**Elim**" meant refreshment. God's blessings for His people which overrode any past circumstance.
- The number "**12**" signifies perfection of government or rule (Divine and Apostolic government); it signifies the 12 Tribes of Israel in the Old Testament and the 12 Apostles in the New Testament.
- "**Wells of water**" signifies refreshment in the Old Testament while in the New Testament the water that Jesus offered to the Samaritan woman would be a "*well of water springing up into Everlasting Life*" meaning by accepting Jesus, Jesus is able to give the water of life, the Spirit of God.
- The number "**70**" signified the years of Israelite captivity by Babylon in the Old Testament and in the New Testament the 70 others (men) sent out by Jesus representing His Spirit anointed ministry.
- A "**palm tree**" signifies victory. Wherever palm trees are in the desert, they create shade and water is somewhere nearby where it's able to flourish and grow. "*Deborah, a prophetess...judged Israel under the palm tree of Deborah...*" "*The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree...*" The palm branches from the palm tree were used to symbolize praise as Jesus entered Jerusalem.

**16:1 And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.** The children of Israel have left Egypt with 600,000 men on foot besides the women and children on their journey to the Promised Land. Their first camp was Marah (the water is bitter) then to Elim (refreshment—12 wells of water and 70 palm trees) their second camp. Now, they leave Elim and come into "*The Wilderness of Sin*" which is between Elim and Sinai. The 15th day of the second month was one month after the Israelites had left Egypt. A wilderness by itself is something we don't want to get stuck in for it is a symbol of the world without God or a place prepared of God for His own. "*The Wilderness of Sin*" was a vast and hostile environment of sand and stone. Its barren surroundings provided the perfect place for God to test and shape the character of His people. They've come from refreshing to dryness.



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## LESSON: I. THE PEOPLE'S COMPLAINT EXODUS 16:2-3

**16:2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:**— It wasn't just a group, but it says the whole congregation of the children of Israel had murmured and complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. They had water problems in Marah. And now they have another problem. This is going to be a process for them because they have been used to complaining. They have been used to murmuring about being in Egypt so long. So, it's just second nature for them to blame someone else, but they don't know that they are blaming God, for He has been the One who has led them through miraculous feats in this journey, not Moses and Aaron. So, God has to deliver them from old habits.

**16:3 And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.** The children of Israel would have rather died in the land of Egypt at the hand of God, rather than be delivered to die of hunger out in the wilderness. They think Moses and Aaron has brought the whole assembly out to the desert to kill them by starving them. At least they were able to sit by the "*flesh pots*" (*cooking pot for preparing a meal*) in Egypt and eat bread till they were full (but at what price?). Didn't they know that Moses and Aaron were going through the same thing when their food ran out? They didn't blame the people or God. But God knew they would murmur again.

## II. THE LORD'S RESPONSE EXODUS 16:4-8

**16:4 Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.** The Lord readily tells Moses that He has the solution! He will rain bread from heaven for Moses. Then the people can go out and gather a certain amount every day. Well, this is test time! God says that He's about to prove them—test them to see how they will act—whether they will walk in God's law or not—if they will follow directions. Well, obedience is the key! A certain portion or quota of the "*bread from heaven*" was to be gathered every day; meaning partake every day, come every day, not hoard every day. They have to believe that the bread they gather daily is sufficient for that day.

**16:5 And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.** God is still speaking to Moses. It is only on the 6<sup>th</sup> day that they were to bring in twice as much as they gathered daily (to honor the Sabbath).

**16:6 And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt:**—Now, Moses and Aaron calls a meeting to tell the children of Israel what God has said: At evening time they will know that it was the Lord that has brought them out of land of Egypt. The experience of them seeing what will happen will cause them to know—This is the Lord's doing!

**16:7 And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord; for that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?**— And when morning comes, they will see the glory of the Lord. He tells them that the Lord heard their murmurings against Him.



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So, Moses and Aaron were not the ones to murmur against. They ask the question, "What are we?" It's saying, we are nothing, for it is the Lord who's leading! Or your murmuring against us if futile; useless!

**16:8 And Moses said, This shall be, when the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.** Moses tells the people that this is what they are to acknowledge! "What the Lord give you in the evening (flesh to eat), and what He gives you in the morning (bread), you will be full!" They are getting a full course meal because the Lord has heard their murmuring against Him. Moses lets them know again that they (Moses and Aaron) are not the ones they were murmuring against, but it's against the Lord!

## III. THE LORD'S PROVISION EXODUS 16:9-15

**16:9 And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the Lord: for he hath heard your murmurings.** Now, Moses tells Aaron what to say to the congregation. Wow, this message is coming through triple times: "Come children of Israel near before the Lord, for he has heard your murmurings."

**16:10 And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.** So, when Aaron does speak the words Moses told him to speak to the whole congregation of Israel, they turned their faces toward the wilderness, and there the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.

**16:11 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,—** I don't think they were prepared for this, for the Lord began to speak to Moses... I don't know if it was audible to the people or in Moses where he could only hear.

**16:12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God.** God is letting Moses know that He heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, and now Moses is to speak to them: Then they will know; will learn; will acknowledge that He is (I am) the Lord their God! There is no one else who at evening time shall cause them to eat the flesh, and in the morning will cause them to be filled with bread. Why does God have to keep telling us the same things that we are supposed to know? Because He knows us better than we know ourselves. We will go back to old mentality if we choose not to change.

**16:13 And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.** God does not lie, it came just as the Lord pronounced to Moses: in the evening, the quails came and covered the camp; in the morning the outpouring of the dew lay round about the camp.

**16:14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.** So, when the fallen dew evaporated from the face; surface of the wilderness, there was a small round thing (a thin flake) laying, as small as the "hoar frost" on the ground. "Hoar frost" is the white frost that forms on grass or leaves in the morning when the dew freezes.



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**16:15** And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, **It is manna: for they did not know what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.** Well, the children of Israel saw it. They declared it to be "*manna*" meaning "*what is it*", for they didn't know what it was. And Moses said it was the bread the Lord had given them to eat.

## SUMMARY:

**2**The whole congregation of the children of Israel murmurs and complains against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. **3**They would have rather died in the land of Egypt at the hand of God, rather than be delivered to die of hunger out in the wilderness. They think Moses and Aaron has brought the whole assembly out to the desert to kill them by starving them. At least the food prepared in Egypt made them full (**16:2-3**).

**4**The Lord readily tells Moses that He has the solution! He will rain bread from heaven for Moses. Then the people can go out and gather a certain amount every day that God may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. **5**God is still speaking to Moses. It is only on the 6<sup>th</sup> day that they were to bring in twice as much as they gathered daily (to honor the Sabbath). **6**Now, Moses and Aaron calls a meeting to tell the children of Israel what God has said: At evening time they will know that it was the Lord that has brought them out of land of Egypt. **7**And when morning comes, they will see the glory of the Lord. He tells them that the Lord heard their murmurings against Him, for it is the Lord who's leading but you're murmuring against us! **8**Moses tells the people that this is what's going to happen: in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full. We are not the ones to murmur against, but it's against the Lord! (**16:4-8**).

**9**Now, Moses tells Aaron what to say to the congregation: "*Come children of Israel near before the Lord, for he has heard your murmurings.*" **10**Aaron does speak to the whole congregation of Israel, they turned their faces toward the wilderness, and there the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. **11**"*And the Lord speaks to Moses, saying* **12** *I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, in the evening you will eat flesh, and in the morning you will be filled with bread; and you will know that I am the Lord your God.*" **13**God does not lie, it came just as He pronounced! **14**So, when the fallen dew evaporated from the face; surface of the wilderness, there was a small round thing (a thin flake) lying, as small as the "hoar frost" on the ground. **15**And the children of Israel saw it and declared it to be "*manna*" meaning "*what is it*", for they didn't know what it was. And Moses said it was the bread the Lord had given them to eat (**16:9-15**).