

THE SECOND CRISIS OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS, BITTER WATER AT MARAH: BITTER EXPERIENCES MADE SWEET AND PURE EXODUS 15:22–27

Introduction

Complaining, grumbling and murmuring are terrible sins. Think of the hurt and pain we feel when people grumble against us, especially when the complaint threatens our...

- lives
- attachments
- friendships
- positions
- reputations
- employment
- characters
- promotions
- work
- investments
- relationships

Complaining, grumbling and murmuring hurt and cause pain. But more than this, complaining and grumbling show a great distrust in God:

=> It shows that we do not believe God is in control and that He is going to work things out.

=> It shows that we are distrusting God's power, questioning His goodness to take care of the situation.

This is the subject of this important passage of Scripture. It covers the first terrible sin of the Israelites, that of complaining. They grumbled and murmured against their leader, God's dear servant Moses. This is: *The Second Crisis of Israel in the Wilderness, Bitter Water at Marah: Bitter Experiences Made Sweet and Pure*, Exodus 15:22-27.

- I. The first crisis: thirst (vv. 22-23).
- II. The first terrible sin of Israel: complaining, grumbling, murmuring (v. 24).
- III. The cry of God's servant to the Lord and the Lord's provision for His people: He showed Moses a piece of wood that purified, sweetened, the water (v. 25).
- IV. The purpose of God: to test His people (v. 25).
- V. The result of the crisis: the Lord made a great law and promise (vv. 25-26).
- VI. The abundant provision of God: led them to Elim which had twelve springs and seventy palm trees (v. 27).

I. Exodus 15:22–23 The First Crisis of Israel in the Wilderness: Thirst

The first crisis faced by Israel in the wilderness wanderings was that of thirst.

1. Moses led the Israelites from the Red Sea, beginning their march to Mt. Sinai. To reach Sinai they had to cross the desert of Shur (see *Desert of Shur* Exo 15:22). It was the desert that created the problem: they travelled and found *no water*. Imagine two to three million people marching across a desert for three days and finding *no water*.
-

The water supply of some families had run low, and apparently the supply of others had run out. Being out in the desert with no water was as severe a crisis as could be faced. It was a matter of life and death — survival was at stake, the survival of several million people including children. What could be done?

2. Moses led them to a place where there was supposed to be water, to *Marah*. But shockingly, the water had become polluted: the water was *bitter*, unfit to drink (see *Marah*, Exo 15:23). From the reaction of the people, it was apparently so bitter that they were afraid to drink it, feeling it was unsafe.

Thought 1. Remember these facts.

- => The Israelites had just been *delivered by God* from Egyptian slavery. Their deliverance is a picture of the believer's redemption, of his deliverance from the enslavement of the world to sin and death.
- => The Israelites had just begun their wilderness journey, their journey to the promised land of Canaan. This is a picture of the believer beginning his Christian life and walk, his journey throughout life to the promised land of heaven.
- => Thus, the crisis of the bitter waters of Marah is a picture of the bitter trials that confront the believer as he walks throughout life, marching to the promised land of heaven.

Now, just think of the bitter trials that confront us throughout life, such bitter trials as...

- no water
- deformity
- failed plans
- disappointments
- no food
- death
- frustrations
- severe temptation
- no home
- loss of job
- accidents
- financial loss
- sorrows
- divorce
- despondency
- suffering

Bitter trials are the normal experience of human life. They confront us all, and they perplex and puzzle us. Believers often ask, "Why has God let this happen to me?" Trials and temptations are common to all people. When they strike us, the question is: How are we going to react? Are we going to trust God to help and strengthen us or grumble and complain and perhaps curse God?

Psa 42:5 *Why, my soul, are you downcast?*

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

1 Th 3:4 *In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.*

1 Pet 4:12-13 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

Thought 2. After traveling for three days in the hot, dry desert, the Israelites must have burst forth with joy at finding water. But what a terrible disappointment! Bitter, undrinkable water!

The bitter, undrinkable water is a picture of the bitter waters of the world, the bitter trials and experiences of this world. The person who drinks from the waters of this earth is doomed to disappointment. The waters of this earth will prove to be bitter:

=> alcohol => pleasure => position => drugs
=> fame => beauty => sex => recognition
=> possessions => wealth => power

The waters of the earth never satisfy the thirst of the human heart. Only Jesus Christ can satisfy the thirst of the heart. He is the living water.

John 4:13-14 *Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

John 7:37-38 *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."*

Mat 5:6 *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."*

Rev 7:16 *Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.*

Rev 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

Isa 55:1 *"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."*

EXODUS 15:22 DESERT OF SHUR

This desert stretched from the northeast section of Egypt over to the north-western part of the Sinai Desert. It reached down southward to the mountains of Sinai. Shur is also called "the desert of Etham" (Num 33:8). Apparently "Shur" was the Hebrew word for the desert and "Etham" the Egyptian word. (Frank E. Gaebelein, Editor. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 2, p. 398).

=> The word "Shur" means wall, referring to a *fortress wall*.

=> The Desert of Shur is a significant part of the Old Testament lands where the patriarchs travelled and lived.

- There were Sarah and Abraham.

Gen 16:7 *The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur.*

Gen 20:1 *Now Abraham [and his family] moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar.*

- There were the descendants of Ishmael.

Gen 25:18 *His descendants settled in the area from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border of Egypt, as you go toward Ashur. And they lived in hostility toward all the tribes related to them.*

- There were Moses and the Israelites.

Exo 15:22 *Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they travelled in the desert without finding water.*

- There was King Saul who fought the Amalekites.

1 Sam 15:7 *Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border of Egypt.*

- There were David and his men who fought the Geshurites, the Gezrites and the Amalekites whose roots were in Shur.

1 Sam 27:8 *Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites. (From ancient times these peoples had lived in the land extending to Shur and Egypt.)* □

EXODUS 15:23 MARAH

The word Marah means *bitter*. The water was obviously polluted by some mineral that made it impure and unfit for drinking.

=> Marah was probably the area known today as *Ain Hawarah*. This lies several miles inland from the sea, about forty-seven miles southeast of Suez and only about seven miles from the Red Sea. (*Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 4:70).

=> Marah was about a three day journey into the wilderness of Etham. The Israelites camped at Marah and demonstrated a spirit of terrible unbelief, a spirit of complaining and grumbling against the LORD and His appointed leader, Moses (Exo 15:23; Num 33:8). □

II. *Exodus 15:24 The First Terrible Sin of Israel: Complaining, Grumbling and Murmuring*

This is the first terrible sin of Israel, that of complaining, grumbling and murmuring. This was to be a sin constantly committed when the Israelites faced a crisis. Keep in mind what the Israelites had just experienced three days earlier: the great deliverance of God through the Red Sea. Moreover, throughout the previous year or two, they had witnessed the awesome power of God through the ten plagues of judgment cast upon the Egyptians. But here they were, three days later — just three days after their great Red Sea deliverance — complaining and grumbling against God’s servant. They should have remembered God...

- remembered His great power and love
- remembered His great care and provision

They should have trusted God to provide water. They should have bowed in prayer, calling upon God to show their leader, Moses, where water was. Imagine what a glorious picture of trust and victory that would have been: two to three million people — men, women and children — all bowing together in military file on the desert sands, all praying and calling out to God for help through the crisis.

But this was not to be. They were immature believers: unspiritual, unstable and carnal (fleshly). Their carnal hearts of unbelief took over, and the Israelites complained, grumbled and murmured against God’s leader. This was the first terrible sin of Israel, and it was to be a sin committed time and again by them. In fact, every time they faced a crisis, they were to complain and murmur. Note these examples:

=> They complained and grumbled because they had no food.

Exo 16:2 In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron.

=> They complained and grumbled because they had no water.

Exo 17:3 But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?”

=> They complained and grumbled because of the trials they were facing throughout their wilderness wanderings: they wished to return to Egypt.

Num 14:2-4 All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, “If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?” And they said to each other, “We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

=> They complained and grumbled because they became tired of their leaders, tired of Moses’ and Aaron’s leadership.

Num 16:11 *“It is against the LORD that you and all your followers have banded together. Who is Aaron that you should grumble against him?”*

=> They complained and grumbled because of God’s judgment, because God executed justice upon the Israelites who sinned.

Num 16:41 *The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. “You have killed the LORD’s people,” they said.*

As stated in the Introduction, complaining and grumbling are signs of distrust, of terrible unbelief in God. When we complain and grumble, we reveal a heart of unbelief and distrust. We reveal that we do not believe God’s power and goodness. We do not believe that God is in control, that He will work the situation out. A heart that trusts God will always pray, asking God to help. The trusting heart never complains nor grumbles against people and situations, especially not against fellow believers and certainly not against the dear servants of God. Note these facts about complaining and grumbling.

1. Complaining and grumbling are not against the servant of God but against the Lord Himself.

Exo16:8 *Moses also said, “You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD.”*

2. Complaining and grumbling are often due to a person not believing God’s Word nor listening to His voice.

Psa 106:24-25 *Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe his promise. They grumbled in their tents and did not obey the LORD.*

3. Complaining and grumbling are often due to the foolishness and sin of man himself.

Prov 19:3 *A man’s own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the LORD.*

Lam 3:39 *Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins?*

4. Complaining and grumbling are to have no part in the believer’s life.

Phil 2:14 *Do everything without complaining or arguing.*

5. Complaining and grumbling shall be severely judged by God.

1 Cor 10:10 *And do not grumble, as some of them did — and were killed by the destroying angel.*

Jude 1:14-16 *“See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” These men are grumblers and fault-finders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.*

Thought 1. People thirst for contentment, for an elusive peace of mind. To find contentment and peace, they thirst and thirst after all kinds of things. And the world offers all kinds of things to people, claiming that they will satisfy the thirst of the human heart. But the waters, the things offered by the world, are bitter; they leave a bitter taste in our mouths and do not quench our thirst. Despite this, every day, all over the world, men drink from the bitter wells of the earth, the bitter waters of...

- pleasure
- power
- fame
- money
- illicit sex
- property
- a shallow form of religion
- bright lights and stardom
- material possessions
- self-gratification
- position
- idolatry

Blinded by a craving that never satisfies, men drink their fill of these waters. They drink and drink, but in the end a bitter taste in the mouth is the only thing that lingers.

What is the answer to the bitter waters of experience as the believer journeys in the wilderness of the world? The answer comes from Jesus Christ Himself. Only He has the power to sweeten the bitter waters of life. How does Christ create this great antidote for a world sickened by drinking polluted waters? Jesus Christ has poured His life into this world and flooded the world with Living waters, waters that satisfy the thirst of the human heart, that give life to man. The Scriptures declare that He is the only alternative to drinking the bitter waters of this earth!

John 4:10 *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

Rev 22:1-2 *Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.*

Rev 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

Psa 23:1-3 *The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

Psa 36:8 *They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights.*

Isa 12:2-3 *Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*

Isa 49:10 *They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat down on them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water.*

Isa 55:1 *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”*

Thought 2. Man is thirsty, thirsty for satisfaction and fulfilment, completion and purpose, meaning and significance, acceptance and recognition, joy and happiness, love and friendship.

The world offers water to man, water that claims to quench man’s thirst. And when man looks at the world, he sees the appealing water, water that *looks like* it will quench his thirst. But when he drinks the water, it is bitter. The waters of the world fill men with...

- bitter fulfilment and satisfaction
- bitter completion and purpose
- bitter meaning and significance
- bitter acceptance and recognition
- bitter joy and happiness
- bitter love and friendship

The waters of the world — all of them without exception — leave man with bitter achievement and success, bitter gratification and pleasure. Only one person can sweeten the waters of life for man: the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the living water. The water that Jesus Christ gives can actually sweeten the experiences of life. This is exactly what Scripture says.

Mat 5:6 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

John 4:14 *“But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*

John 7:37-38 *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.”*

Rev 7:17 *“For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”*

III. Exodus 15:25 Moses Cried Out to the Lord and the Lord’s Provision

What did God’s servant do? Moses did exactly what he should have done: he got alone with God and cried out in prayer. And note what the LORD did: He met the need of His dear servant and of His people. Despite the people’s carnality and sin, despite their unbelief and grumbling, God met their need. God showed Moses a tree that would purify and make the water clean and sweet for drinking. Moses took some wood from the tree and threw it into the water, making the water become clear and pure.

Thought 1. The LORD met the need of the Israelites. He provided clear, pure water for them. Note two lessons.

(1) God delivered the Israelites from the severe crisis that had threatened their lives. But note why: because the servant of God got alone and cried out to God. The servant of God prayed and interceded: in desperation he pleaded for God to help deliver the people out of their life-threatening crisis. What a lesson for government leaders and for ministers.

Deut 4:29 But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all our heart and with all our soul.

Psa 34:6 This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.

Psa 61:2 From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Psa 91:15 He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him.

Isa 58:9 Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk.

Isa 65:24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

Luke 11:9 “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

James 5:17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.

(2) God will take the bitter experiences of our lives and sweeten them. He will purify and clean up the bitter experiences of life. Just imagine all the trouble, problems, difficulties, trials and temptations of life — God will take the bitterness out of them all. He will enable us to bear them all. God will strengthen us to conquer and walk through them all — victoriously and triumphantly.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

Rom 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

1 Cor 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

2 Cor 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

2 Cor 12:9 *But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.*

1 Pet 4:12-13 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

Rev 21:4 *He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.*

Psa 34:19 *A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all.*

Psa 41:3 *The LORD will sustain him on his sickbed and restore him from his bed of illness.*

Isa 43:2 *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.*

Thought 2. J. Vernon McGee has an interesting comment on this point (we have set the Scripture off in outline form for simplicity):

What was it that made the bitter water of Marah sweet? We are told that a tree cast into the water made it sweet.

=> *Deuteronomy 21:23 says, “he that is hanged is accursed of God...”*

=> *Galatians 3:13...says, “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”*

*Jesus Christ died on a tree, and it is that cross that makes the experiences of life sweet. He tasted death for every man, and took the sting out of death. “O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” says 1 Corinthians 15:55. It is the cross of Christ that makes sweet the Marah experiences of life. (J. Vernon McGee. *Thru the Bible*, Vol. 1. p. 251).*

IV. Exodus 15:25 The Purpose of God: To Test His People

This is a very significant point. This point shows us why the Israelites were unable to find water out in the desert. God was behind the entire experience, behind the crisis. God had purposed that the Israelites would be unable to find water. Why? To *test* them. What does this mean, that God *tested* Israel? That God *tests* people?

=> God *tests* people in order to humble them and to reveal what is in their hearts.

Deut 8:2 *Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.*

Deut 8:16 *He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you.*

Psa 17:3 *Though you probe my heart and examine me at night, though you test me, you will find nothing; I have resolved that my mouth will not sin.*

Gen 22:1 *Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied.*

Gen 22:2 *Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love — Isaac — and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.”*

⇒ God tests people in order to strengthen them and to keep them from sinning.

Exo 20:20 *Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.”*

⇒ God tests people in order to see if they will obey Him.

Exo 16:4 *Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions.*

⇒ God tests people in order to refine them and to stir them to live righteous lives.

Zec 13:9 *This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The LORD is our God.’*

Mala 3:3 *He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness.*

⇒ God tests people in order to judge and reward them.

1 Cor 3:13 *His work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work.*

⇒ God tests people to see if they genuinely trust Him.

John 6:5-6 *When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?” He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.*

⇒ God tests people so that they will learn more and more patience and endurance.

James 1:2-3 *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.*

Rom 5:3-5 *Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

**V. *Exodus 15:25–26 The Result of the Crisis:
The Lord Made a Great Law and Promise***

The LORD now made a covenant, a great promise to His people. Simply stated, God told His people in one word what He expected: obedience. If they obeyed Him, He *would not chastise them*. But if they disobeyed Him, He would have to chastise them. In fact, He would have to chastise them by afflicting them with the very diseases of the Egyptians. Why the diseases of the Egyptians? No doubt because of the Scriptural principle of judgment. God had delivered the Israelites by inflicting judgment upon the Egyptians because of their unbelief and distrust of God. Therefore, if the Israelites sinned by disbelieving and distrusting God, they would suffer the same penalty as did the Egyptians. The great expositor Mathew Henry says this:

Let not the Israelites think, because God had...highly honoured them...that...he would connive at their sins and let them do as they would. No, God is no respecter of persons; a rebellious Israelite [would] fare no better than a rebellious Egyptian. (Mathew Henry. Mathew Henry's Commentary, Vol. 1, p. 339).

The Scriptural principle of judgment is just this:

=> Whatever we sow, we shall reap, and whatever we measure out to others shall be measured out to us.

Gal 6:7-8 *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

Mat 7:2 *“For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

The Scripture clearly spells out the covenant and the great promise God was making to the Israelites. Note, what we are calling a covenant was a statute, a decree, a law being laid down by God. Remember, a law or decree is set: it is permanent. If the law is obeyed, then the promise is certain. The promise will be fulfilled.

1. There was the covenant: the people were to obey the LORD...
 - to diligently listen to Him
 - to do what is right
 - to hear and keep His commandments (see Jer 7:22-23)
2. There was the LORD's promise. If His people obeyed Him...
 - He would not have to chastise them with the diseases brought upon the Egyptians (see Deut 28:60)
 - He would always be able to provide for them; that is, He would be able to heal them (See *God, Names and Titles*, Exo 15:26.)

Thought 1. God does chastise us, all of us who truly believe in Him. He chastises us because He loves us. True chastisement is always for a child's good, and a loving father always chastises and disciplines his child when his child goes astray. Thus it is with God. God chastises us to correct, to keep us...

- from going deeper and deeper into sin
- from being enslaved more and more by sin
- from damaging our bodies
- from bringing guilt and pain into our lives
- from destroying ourselves
- from stumbling or crashing headlong into some accident
- from killing ourselves
- from dooming ourselves to an eternity of separation from God

Deut 8:5 *Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.*

Psa 94:12 *Blessed is the man you discipline, O LORD, the man you teach from your law.*

Prov 3:11-12 *My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.*

John 15:2 *"He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."*

Heb 12:5-7 *And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?"*

Rev 3:19 *Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.*

EXODUS 15:26 GOD; NAMES AND TITLES

*He said, "If you listen carefully to the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you." **Exodus 15:26***

The Hebrew *Yahweh Rophe* means "the LORD who heals." The LORD had just made the bitter water of Marah pure, clear and sweet — fit to drink. The LORD had *healed* the water. God is declaring that He is the Healer, the LORD who heals people, who heals both their bodies and spirits. He will take care of His people, look after them as they journey through the *wilderness wanderings* of life, through all the trials and problems of life.

Gen 20:17 Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelek, his wife and his female slaves so they could have children again.

1 Sam 6:3 They answered, “If you return the ark of the god of Israel, do not send it back to him without a gift; by all means send a guilt offering to him. Then you will be healed, and you will know why his hand has not been lifted from you.”

2 Chr 7:14 If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2 Chr 30:20 And the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.

Psa 103:3 Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.

Psa 147:3 He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.

Isa 53:5 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Jer 3:22 “Return, faithless people; I will cure you of backsliding.” “Yes, we will come to you, for you are the LORD our God.”

Jer 30:17 ‘But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,’ declares the LORD, ‘because you are called an outcast, Zion for whom no one cares.’

Hosea 06:1 “Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds.” □

VI. Exodus 15:27 The Abundant Provision of God: The Oasis of Elim

The LORD’s great goodness is vividly seen in what then happened. God abundantly provided for His people. He led them to Elim, an oasis in the barren desert. Elim was a flourishing area: there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees there. (See *Elim*, Exo 15:27.) The point to see is God’s abundant provision for His dear people. Although it is not mentioned, the people had obviously repented of their terrible sin of complaining, grumbling and murmuring; and God had forgiven them, pouring out the abundance of His blessing upon them. His provision was just overflowing upon His dear people.

Thought 1. God meets our needs, abundantly meets them.

(1) God fills us with joy and satisfaction: He leads us to draw water out of the wells of salvation.

Isa 12:3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

Psa 16:11 You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Isa 35:10 *And the ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*

John 15:11 *“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”*

John 16:24 *“Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.”*

Rom 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

(2) God always makes us lie down in green pastures and leads us beside the still waters, even when facing the terrible trials of this life. God’s provision is always sufficient to take care of us, no matter what confronts us.

Exo 23:25 *Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you.*

Deut 30:9 *Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your ancestors.*

Psa 36:8 *They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights.*

Psa 68:19 *Praise be to the LORD, to God our Saviour, who daily bears our burdens.*

Isa 30:23 *He will also send you rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the food that comes from the land will be rich and plentiful. In that day your cattle will graze in broad meadows.*

Mala 3:10 *“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”*

Mat 6:33 *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

John 10:10 *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

2 Cor 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

Eph 3:20 *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*

Phil 4:19 *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. ■*

EXODUS 15:27 ELIM

The location of Elim was in the fruitful, well-watered valley that is known today as Wadi Gharandel.

- => Elim lies between the desert of Shur and the desert of Sin.
- => The region is said to have a rainy season that sends torrents of water flowing down the valley. (Frank E. Gaebelin, Editor. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 2. p. 399).
- => The area was always lush and green: it had twelve different springs of water that would have flowed out and formed pools and creeks.
- => There were seventy palm trees, and no doubt because of its fruitful soil, many other different kinds of fruit trees.
- => Israel arrived at Elim on the fifteenth day of the second month after leaving Egypt.

Exo 16:1 The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. □