

9706U

KAMLOOPS STUDY DAY - 2006

CHRIST IN THE WILDERNESS

Speaker: Bro. Jim Cowie

Study #1: Marah and Elim, Suffering and Glory

Reading: Exodus 15:22-27

Thanks, brother Gregg, and good evening brethren and sisters and young people.

I just want to say at the outset, that it's a great pleasure to be back in your midst again after an absence of only 2 years, but I want you to know that when we come through this way, it's always a great pleasure for us, to renew our friendship with you, which has been, of course, now going on for some 15 or 16 years.

The study we have in front of this weekend is one that I believe will be very important to us. Looking at that title you might think that the whole weekend is going to be spent on talking about types of Christ in the wilderness wanderings, and that's essentially what the subject is about, but in the course of that, b&s and young people, we are going to be dealing with many very basic and practical principles that concern our life in the truth; and we're going to be considering where we are in our journey towards the Land of Promise. It cannot now be far in front of us, and like Israel we have been and are being tested by our wilderness wandering. So we want to start our series together by looking at Marah and Elam because they are, in fact, a microcosm of the entire wilderness journey, and most importantly the end of that journey. So tonight, we'll be looking at these two places and seeing that they represent two stages of obtaining eternal life; there is firstly the **probation** and then finally, the **reward**, and that's what these two places set forth very plainly to us.

Now we met Israel here in this record of Exodus 15, in verse 22, of being brought out of Egypt. Now we know, of course, that in Exodus 15 they celebrate the victory over the host of Pharaoh and the song of Moses is sung, and Miriam the prophetess in verse 20 also adds her part to this great celebration of the destruction of the host of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. Israel has now effectively begun its wilderness wanderings towards the Promised Land. I just want to spend a couple of minutes talking about where they were and what kinds of conditions they were in, because this is important to lead us to Marah.

You'll notice it says in verse 22, 'So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea into the wilderness of Shur (and we'll come back to that in a moment, and see what kind of

wilderness that was!) 'And they went 3 days into the wilderness, and found no water'. Now why would God bring His people out of the bondage of Egypt, delivering them through the Passover lamb, from the destruction that beset the firstborn of Egypt, why would He then take them 3 days' journey into a barren wilderness with no water. What is He trying to tell them? Well, you see, they had just crossed the Red Sea and we know from the scriptures, for instance, 1 Corinthians 10 (to which we'll come later on) that the crossing of the Red Sea by Israel was their baptism unto Moses, Paul tells us. Now this is 3 days after their baptism. Of course, their crossing of the Red Sea is very much like our entrance into Christ by baptism, and therefore, the 3 days are very much allied, we believe, to the sacrifice of Christ. He was 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth before He was raised again. So there's an alignment between the experience of Israel and that which is related to the death of Christ. There's a very important principle in that, and that principle is that God was trying to teach His people that life in the truth, although it had released them from the bondage of Egypt, was not necessarily going to be without its sufferings and its bitterness. They needed to be taught that lesson.

Here we have the wilderness of Shur, now 'Shur' actually means 'a wall or fortification' (7793), in a moment I'm going to show you a picture which will illustrate why that place was called, 'the wilderness of the wall or fortification', the Egyptians, in fact, called it 'the wilderness walled out'. It was as though there was a wall between Egypt and this place. It is, in fact, called the wilderness of Etham (864) and that word can mean a couple of things, some believe it means 'the edge' that is, the edge of the wilderness, other lexicographers say it means something like 'with them their plowshare' which doesn't make a lot of sense to me, anyway, it's called that in Numbers 33 verse 8. What we do know about this place is that there was a barrier between Egypt and the wilderness beyond it, and Israel was to go into that wilderness beyond this wall or fortification. In fact, this was the most difficult terrain that Israel was to encounter in their wanderings; as you're going to see in a moment, it wasn't a very pleasant place to be, not like hopefully, God willing, going next week up to Wells Gray National Park, nothing like that, it was a dreadful place. There was a lesson being taught Israel, and the lesson was this, that early days in the truth are difficult! We have entered into Christ, what that means is that we have to put to death the old man, we need to leave Egypt behind, and if you are anything like me, I'm not that old that I can't think back to the time I was baptized. It was a difficult period of my life, I'd been brought up a Christadelphian but that didn't mean that all of the habits that one might develop were overcome in a day; it meant that for the first few years of my life in the truth, there had to be some sacrifices made, things carved out of my life, it wasn't an easy time! Early days in the truth are difficult and they're made more difficult by the fact, that we do not always appreciate our total dependence on the water of the Word of God. God was trying to impress this lesson on Israel; they'd just crossed over the waters of baptism to them, and they go 3 days which matches with the time that Christ was in the grave; they go three days and find no water, and this is the kind of territory they're in! Now have a look at that! (slide 3) this is the wilderness of Shur, here is the wall, the barrier between Egypt and the wilderness into which they were to go for their probation.

Can you imagine trudging through this country with 2 million people and many of them children? 3 days without water; sometimes we might think Israel was a very faithless people and they complained over much; I don't know that we'd be any different if we were taken into a place like that! do you think so? 3 days without water and trudging through that land. You see, this place into which they were to come is called, '**a waste howling wilderness**', this is now down at ground level near the wilderness of Shur (slide 4), and we read in places like Deuteronomy 8 verse 15, 'Of God who lead thee, O Israel, through that great and terrible wilderness wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions (the serpent bites with his mouth, the scorpion with his tail, it's the representation of the kinds of people we're going to find in the wilderness of life on the way to the kingdom). We're going to have to deal with people some of whom will oppose you like the serpent and bite you with their mouth; others who will be very subtle and who will sting you with their tail. It is a place of drought, in the world in which we find ourselves today. I don't know, we haven't had much drought here in British Columbia in the last week that I've been here, but where I come from we're in drought. Australia is a parched land at any time, but we have had 10 years of drought and that drought doesn't seem like it's going to end; and that literal fact is symbolic of the state of the society in which I live, where the Word of God which is symbolized by water has been abandon by men. About 2 weeks ago in the Elpis Israel class that I lead on a Sunday morning, I made a comment and I said because it's very, very dry, 'don't expect rain very soon, b&s, because the government of Queensland has two bills before parliament - one of them is to get bibles out of hospitals (you know, the Gideon bibles) - get rid of them, and the other one is to get rid of religious instruction out of schools - 'don't expect rain!' They're taking away God's Word and He's likely to respond as He did to Israel; there was a drought of the Word of God as well as a drought of the land, because men had turned their backs on His Word. We're in that kind of wilderness! where there was no water, and Moses goes on to say, 'Who brought you forth water out of the flint', and we'll come to that in due time, God willing.

So this is the kind of place into which God brought His people Israel, and we, b&s and young people, we have been brought into the same kind of place, in a spiritual sense, dry and barren, a land of serpents and scorpions. How would we like to be there in Israel's place? You know there's a passage in Jeremiah which sums it up and it's going to lead us into the latter portion of Exodus 15. Jeremiah 2, if you wouldn't mind having a look at verses 6 and 7, 'Neither said they (and this is concerning Israel) where is Yahweh who brought us up out of the land of Egypt that lead us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought and a land that no man passed through and no man dwelt'. That's the kind of land it was! it was their wilderness journey, just like ours. Verse 7, 'And I brought you into a plentiful country to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof (but Israel, of course, didn't recognize that). So there's the contrast between the wilderness through which we must journey and the end or objective to which God is taking us, the reason why we must pass through that wilderness is, that He is taking us to a plentiful country to eat the fruit and the goodness thereof, namely of course, it's the kingdom of God and our inheritance in the Land of

promise.

So coming back to Exodus 15, we find ourselves now, with Israel, passing through this dreadful wilderness and coming in verse 23 to Marah. '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'. Now how would you feel dragging your little children through the wilderness, if you were a family in Israel, no water for 3 days and through country like that, and then when you saw water in the distance, and you ran towards it and plunged your head into it to take a drink, it was so bitter and salty that you could not drink it? How would you feel? Well, Israel felt 'bitter', and their bitterness became expressed in the name of the water which was bitter; they named it 'Marah' (4751) because that's the meaning of that word! And this is the place (slide 5), they think this is Marah, one of the pools that is there. Now have a look at that, it looks delectable, doesn't it? 3 days without water, you'd even drink that! but it's undrinkable! and the point that's being made here is, you've got to wait! God is going to turn that water into sweetness, but you've got to **wait!** and Israel has to learn that lesson. They are being taught that life in the truth, although it has released us from the bitterness of Egypt (as we shall see in a moment) and from the bondage of the house of death, life in the truth is sometimes bitter. It's a life of self denial, a life of sacrifice, a life of giving, a life which denies the interests of flesh. It is also a life which traversed in tragedy and sadness, there's a certain element of bitterness in it, but there is sweetness in the end! There was no sweetness at the end of their bondage in Egypt and Israel had to learn, that in due time, God would provide sweetness and He'd do it in a very special way, as we shall see tonight.

So let's have a look at this word 'Marah', it's from the root translated 'bitter' in the same verse, where it says there in verse 23, 'they called it 'Marah' (4751) because the waters were 'bitter'. The name occurs 5 times in the Old Testament and it's from the root, 'marah' and the first occurrence of that is in Genesis 27 verse 34 which is used of Esau's bitter cry when Jacob had stolen his blessing and he pleaded with Isaac for a blessing and he couldn't get one, except he was told he'd have to go outside the Land to a place that was dry and barren. So he cried **bitterly**, says the record. It's used 6 times in Numbers 5 in the law of jealousy, you know, the bitter water that a woman who was accused of adultery had to drink. It's used in 1 Samuel 15 verse 23 by Agag when he said to Samuel and Saul, 'surely the bitterness of death is passed; so it's often found, this word, used in the context of 'death'; a cognate word 'marar' is used in Exodus 1 verse 14 and it says, 'They made, (that is, the Egyptians made) the lives of Israel bitter and then we find another cognate word in Exodus 12 verse 8, for when they prepared the Passover lamb, on the night before they left they had to eat the Passover with bitter herbs; why would God instruct them to eat the Passover, the symbol of their deliverance, with bitter herbs? Well, He was reminding them first and foremost, of the bitterness of their bondage in Egypt and He was also reminding them of the fact, that they would be delivered from that bitterness, by the sufferings of a lamb. The lamb would have to pass through bitterness and suffering, in order to deliver Israel from their bitterness and suffering. So God was teaching Israel a simple lesson, and we're going

to be pursuing that lesson this evening.

I want you to do something! I want you to cast your eyes at Exodus 15, where we are here in this context from verses 23 to 26; and if you wish to do this, it's not a bad idea, I want you to highlight some words here! I want you to notice that it says in verse 23, 'They came to Marah, couldn't drink the waters and called it Marah. Then in verse 26 we have some more words, in that 26th verse we read towards the end, 'I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians'. Now there's a connection in the context between the 'bitterness of Marah' and the 'diseases of the Egyptians'. The Spirit is linking those two things, when we talk about the bitterness of this place, there's this link with what was natural to Egypt, disease. God had taken them from Egypt and they were going to be cured of the diseases of Egypt. But there was a process by which that would be done! I want you to notice something else, in verse 25 it says, 'That he cried unto Yahweh (that's Moses who cried to Yahweh) and He showed him a tree which when he had cast it into the waters, the waters were made 'sweet'. Now that 'sweetness' there lines up in the context with the word 'healer' in the end of verse 26, 'I am Yahweh that healeth thee'. So we've got these ideas of **bitterness and sweetness**; bitterness is allied with the diseases of Egypt and sweetness is allied to divine healing, and we're going to be pursuing those ideas this evening.

So then, what should this mean to us? Well, it should mean a lot to us, because when you come (and I want you to do this now, if you would) come to 1 Corinthians 10 (and we'll be spending some more time on this, later on in our studies, God willing). When we come to 1 Corinthians 10, we have that place where the apostle Paul tells us of how applicable the things that were happening to Israel are to you and me. In 1 Corinthians 10, we won't read the first few verses because we'll be coming back to those later on, but he talks about them crossing the Red Sea, being baptized unto Moses and drinking of the same spiritual food and of the same spiritual drink. Then in verse 5 he says, 'With many of them God was not well pleased, but were overthrown in the wilderness', then Paul says, 'these things were our examples', and as you can see from the screen, that word 'examples' is the Greek word 'tupos' (5179) and it means 'a die as struck'; it's talking about stamping something into a substance so it becomes a 'pattern'. So this word can be rendered 'type' and Young's Literal actually renders it that way, 'types'; Israel we're told were types for us, 'to the intent that we should not lust after evil things'. But what do they do?

Now we'll go back to Exodus in a moment, but back in Exodus 15 verse 24 it says, 'they murmured against Moses, there was murmuring in the camp, the bitterness they experienced at Marah must have produced murmuring. That word back in Exodus 15 verse 24 means to 'stop somewhere for the night' (3885), so Israel was stopped in their journey to the kingdom because of 'murmuring'; it has the idea in the Niphal Imperfect = 'to be obstinate hence to grumble or complain, to murmur'. Now given their circumstances, we might not necessarily blame them, because I don't think we would be much different placed in that situation! But that is what they did, they murmured, and Paul picks up this particular fact, and he talks about it in relation to what was happening

or what could have happened in the Corinthian ecclesia and what might happen in ecclesial life thereafter. He says in verse 10 of 1 Corinthians 10, 'Neither murmur ye as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples or types'. Rotherham translates verse 11 this way, 'That these things by way of type, were happening unto them, and were written with the view to our admonition, unto whom the ends of the ages have reached along'. There's no doubt, in your mind or in mine, that the ends of the ages have reached along to us! I just want to ask one question, do we baulk in these last days, to which the ends of the ages have reached along, do we baulk at the bitterness that is part of life in Christ? Do we find the way too hard? the demands too great? or is it our attitude, b&s and young people, to the way into which we have been brought?

Well, the lesson which is going to come to us from Exodus 15, is that God has designed it that way, that we might obtain the kingdom. He wants to know how we're going to treat this matter of facing bitterness; He found that out at Marah and Israel murmured against Him, they complained and grumbled against the hardships and difficulties of the way. I don't need to tell you, I don't know anything about your life or circumstances really, I know a lot about mine own, and we have been subjected in the last few years, to some of the most incredible defections from the faith, by people you would never, never in your life imagine would turn their back on the truth. It's all become too hard! and they've given the game away that far short of the kingdom of God. So we're being tested, we're being tested by a range of circumstances from many different directions as to whether or not we can endure the bitterness of the life in Christ. That's the principles that we have before us here at Marah.

So the over-arching principle, and we won't go back to Exodus straight away, I want to take you somewhere else. The over-arching principle is this, **suffering before glory**, that's the principle; it's taught at Marah and then Elim, the cross before the crown, it can only be that way; now we all say, 'yes, amen' to that, we know that's the case. It was the case of Christ that the suffering had to come before the crown; why should it be any different for us? That principle, of course, comes out of 1 Peter 1 verse 11, where Peter summarizes the fact that when Christ gave him the keys of the kingdom, the elements of those keys, the two keys were, the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. So he speaks about the prophets and others, 'searching what or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them, signified when he testified before hand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow', hence the cameo of Marah and then Elim. There was to be bitterness followed by sweetness; in Egypt they had bitterness in their slavery and their bondage. There were some sweet things in Egypt, they remembered the leeks and the garlics and the fish, and all the things that made life a little bit less unpleasant than it was in their slavery and servitude, but there was **no** sweetness in life in the end in Egypt. There was going to be sweetness at the end of their wilderness wanderings. Egypt could offer them nothing but bondage and suffering and then death. But in the wilderness they'd have to go through bitterness and hardness but at the end there would be sweetness and God was going to teach them that at Marah and Elim.

Just about the **keys to the kingdom** before we go back to Exodus. Just a brief word about this; we were dealing with this last night, but we didn't deal with this aspect of it. You come back to Matthew 16 at verse 19 we read, 'And I will give unto you, Peter, the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on the earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven'. Now that phrase 'the keys to the kingdom of heaven' is actually an allusion to Isaiah 22 verse 22, where Eliakim was to be given the key of the house of David or the keys of the kingdom. Then you have in Matthew 16 verse 18 in this phrase, 'I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my ecclesia, and the gates of hell or hades shall not prevail against it', that is actually drawn from Isaiah 38 verse 10, where Hezekiah sings his song of deliverance when he has been healed from the sickness that was going to bring him to death and God gave him an extension of 15 years of life; he sung a song of deliverance. In that song he speaks of the gates of sheol or the gates of the grave. So what's this about that the experience of Hezekiah tells us? Hezekiah had great bitterness and suffering (he was a type of Christ), there was bitterness, he was going to die! and then he was delivered and there was great rejoicing and Eliakim would take the keys of the house of David, there would be the glory and honour of the kingdom awaiting him. So the experience of Hezekiah was to be a pattern of the experience of Christ. First there had to be suffering and then there would be the glory. So the 2 keys given to Peter were those two things, the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow! and if you want to do an exercise and many of you will have done this; work through 1 Peter and you'll see that over and over again, you have those two things in alignment, one after the other in that order, the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow (if you want to take a note of these references and highlight them, and you'll find it dominates the first epistle of Peter; Peter used those keys twice, he used them to the Jews in Acts 2, and to the Gentiles in Acts 10. So the Jews had to come to grips with the principle which they and even the disciples of Christ didn't understand. They didn't understand that their Messiah had to be a crucified Messiah; He had to suffer before He could be elevated. This principle was not understood by them, and the Gentiles, of course, were wholly ignorant of that, so both Jew and Gentile had to be made aware of that principle. You want the glory then you have to be prepared to undergo the suffering! Christ's example is illustrative of that fact!

So, the keys to the kingdom, you find them here in the end of chapter 16 (let's have a quick look at some of these things). Have a look at verse 21 of Matthew 16, 'From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed'. So He'd suffer many things but then at the end of verse 21 it says, 'and be **raised again** the third day', obviously to be immortalized and glorified. In verse 25 we read, 'For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it', so the suffering is losing your life, that is, denying yourself now, giving up what this world has got to offer that you find life, there's the principle. Have a look at verse 24, 'Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let

him **deny himself**, and take up his cross', and that's allied with verse 27 where it says, 'For the Son of man shall come in the **glory** of His Father with His angels; and then He shall **reward** every man' (that is, with the glory of His Father). So there's the principle, suffering, that is, taking up the cross, and rewarded at the end of that process with glory. Then finally Peter, of course, in verse 23 talks to the Lord Jesus Christ and says, 'This is not going to happen to you, verse 22, 'Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee. But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Peter, thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men'. Then down in verse 28, He tells him a little bit later on, 'Verily, I say unto thee, there be some standing here (and Peter was one of them) who shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom'. So on the one hand Peter is rebuked by Christ, and then on the other hand a little bit later on, He is taken to be part of the greatest privileges given to the disciples in that time, to be there when Christ was manifested in glory; suffering, rebuke, glory, so there's the principle spelled out.

Now I haven't told you anything have I? Really, up to now I haven't told you anything. We all know and understand those principles, mind you, our nature doesn't like it very much, we tend to kick against it when the wheels fall off and things don't go the way we'd like them to go, we tend not to enjoy that! That's just the way we are! But we understand the principle and that principle is inflexible, no one is going to be in the kingdom unless they acknowledge it, unless it's practised in their lives. That's the point that is being made to Israel back in Exodus 15.

So we can come there now to Exodus 15, and take up the record. We've got the foundations we need, we've got the principles clearly spelled out to us, we know where we're going, and Exodus 15 is now going to unfold for us based on those principles. So we come back to verse 24, 'And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?' (they couldn't drink the water of Marah). 'And he cried unto Yahweh, and Yahweh showed him a tree'. Now I've always found this curious, Yahweh showed him a tree, that word 'showed' (3384) has the idea of 'pointing to something'; Moses set your eyes on that tree. Then it says, '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'.

This '**tree**' let's have a look at it! It's the word in the Hebrew 'ets' (6086). In the Old Testament you will find that word used 329 times, so it's a fairly common word, and it means 'timber, wood, plank, stock, stick, gallows'. Translated 'tree' in Esther 2 verse 23 and then 8 more times in the book of Esther as 'gallows'. Now that's a clue! when you work through the occurrences of this word 'ets' in the Old Testament, you come across places like Esther where in one instance the first occurrence of the Hebrew word is rendered 'tree', and then the next 8 occurrences in the book of Esther, it is rendered 'gallows'. Now most of us will be aware that the book of Esther sets forth the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one of the things that happens in that book is that Haman, the enemy of the Jews, is taken and hanged on a gallows which he intended to use for Mordecai the Jew. That gallows becomes typical of the crucifixion, the putting to death

of the flesh. So the word is used there very much aligned with the idea of crucifixion.

It is translated as the word '**wood**', of the shittim wood that is used for the ark and its furniture. It is used of 'righteousness' and 'of the righteous'. In Psalm 1 verse 3; it says of the righteous man in that first psalm. 'he is like a tree beside the waters, he draws his sustenance' and you can go through those places and see that's the way the word is used about the righteous.(slide 12).

But I want you to notice the particular use of this word in Jeremiah 11 and Jeremiah 17, because we're going to find that we have a clue given to us there as to who and what the tree represents in it being cut down and cast into these bitter waters that they might be made 'sweet'. So let's come to Jeremiah 11 first of all, Jeremiah 11 verse 19, but let's just get our context straight first: Jeremiah 11 as you'll see even from the heading of the chapter in the bible, someone's put in there 'a conspiracy against Jeremiah', and that is the context of this 11th chapter. We find Jeremiah opposed by other prophets who didn't like the tenor of what he was telling them, and so they set about to undermine him. Look at verse 21, 'Therefore, thus saith Yahweh, of the men of Anathoth who seek thy life, saying, Prophecy not in the name of Yahweh, that thou die not by our hand'. It's telling us that he had deadly enemies who were seeking to put him to death, they wanted to end Jeremiah's life. We know that Jeremiah, the suffering prophet, was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, so here we've got our context, Jeremiah persecuted, suffering, some seeking to put him out of existence. So then that's our context, now look at verse 18, 'And Yahweh hath given me knowledge of it, and I know it; then thou showedst me their doings. But, says Jeremiah, I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter (I've got all these enemies who want to slay me) 'And I knew not that they had devised devices against me saying, (this is what his enemies said) 'let us destroy the **tree** with the fruit thereof; let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered'. Now have a look at Rotherham's translation of that verse, look at it, 'But I was as a gentle lamb that is to be lead to the slaughter'. Now if you can't see Christ in that, you're not going to see it anywhere, are you? Jeremiah, a type of Christ, said, 'I was a gentle lamb who is to be lead to the slaughter, and I knew not that against me they had devised devices saying, let us destroy the tree with its fruit. Yea, let us cut him out of the land of the living, and his name shall be remembered no more'. So here we've got Jeremiah setting forth what was to happen to our Lord Jesus Christ, who had bitter enemies, who would seek to destroy Him; and the language that is used of a tree being cut down.

Let's step a bit further into Jeremiah, chapter 17. Now, I don't know, and I can't say absolutely whether the Spirit intended that this link be made, but it seems to me as though it did, I'll show you what I mean. Jeremiah 17 verses 5 and 6, 'Thus saith Yahweh, cursed be the man who trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from Yahweh. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places of the wilderness, in a salt land (notice that) and not inhabited'. Now that lines up, verses 5 and 6 of Jeremiah 17 lines up with Exodus 15 verses 22 and 23; they came to Marah and they found

bitterness, they trusted that when they ran headlong towards what looked like a water supply after 3 days without water, that they would provide for themselves, and it turned to bitterness. 'Trust not in man', and verses 5 and 6 of Jeremiah 17 speaks about dryness, barrenness and bitterness.

Let's read verses 7 and 8 and we read there, 'Blessed is the man that trusteth in Yahweh and whose hope Yahweh is; for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, that spreadeth out her roots by the river and shall not see when he cometh, but whose leaf shall be green and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.' So here we've got a tree that's likened to a man who trusts in Yahweh; it produces enduring sweetness. In Exodus 15 verse 25, Moses was showed a tree which when it was cut down, when bitterness was brought to that tree by being cut down in its sufferings, sweetness was given to Israel.

Let's go on in Jeremiah 17 to verses 9 and 10, it says this, and we know this passage pretty well; 'the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately (sick #605), who can know it. I Yahweh search the heart, I try the reins even to give every man according to his ways; and according to the fruit of his doings'. It's talking about the sickness that is in man's heart, and it's incurably sick and it's known to Yahweh; and in Exodus 15 verse 26, Israel was prone to the diseases of Egypt, and Yahweh wanted to cure them from those diseases of Egypt. He was going to give them the answer. You have a look at verses 13 and 14 of Jeremiah 17, 'O Yahweh the hope of Israel, all that forsake Thee shall be ashamed and they that depart from Thee shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken Yahweh, (notice this) 'the fountain of living waters'. Then look at these words, verse 14, 'Heal me, O Yahweh, and I shall be healed; save me and I shall be saved; for thou art my praise.' Here we have Yahweh being described as a **fountain of living waters**, who provides healing for His people, and back in Exodus 15 verse 26, Yahweh Rophekah could heal Israel if they did just one thing. Do you know what that was? they had to **hear Him** and abide His word, and that becomes very plain when we look at Exodus 15. (Slide 14)

I want you to come back now to Exodus 15; because when we go back to have a look at this context it's actually about the sacrifice of Christ. In Exodus 15 verse 25, when Yahweh showed him a tree, which was probably a palm tree, by the way, there weren't too many other types of trees in the wilderness. If it was a palm tree, then Psalm 92 verse 12 comes into play, because it says there, 'The righteous are like the palm tree'; it grows upright, its fruit is in the head and it is ever green, it's a tree that symbolizes the righteous. So if it was a palm tree, we don't know that for sure, it was cut down and it was cast into the waters. Now this word 'cast' in verse 25, is 'shalak' (7993) and it means 'to throw, cast, hurl or fling', the first 4 occurrences of that word in the Old Testament are in Genesis and they all relate to death, every single one of them! In Exodus it is first used of 'casting' Hebrew boys into the Nile, that relates to death; then there are 5 occurrences of the serpent rod, Moses cast the serpent rod; the serpent rod related, didn't it? to the crucifixion of Christ which you'll see in our studies. It is used of Jonah being 'cast into the sea', therefore, we know that Jonah is a story which is a type

of Christ's death. It is used of 'casting sins into the sea' in Micah 7 verse 19, and the last occurrence of this Hebrew word in the Old Testament is used of the 30 pieces of silver that would be used to betray Christ, which were 'cast before the priests'. So when you look at this word 'cast' in Exodus 15 verse 25, it is clearly related to death! So here's **a tree that's cut down, it suffers, it dies, it is cast into bitter water, and that water is made sweet!** Now surely that must speak of our Lord Jesus Christ and the bitterness that we experience is a bitterness that can and will be healed in due time, and the sweetness will come; if we endure the bitterness, God will provide the answer in due time.

This word 'sweet', by the way, occurs 5 times in the Old Testament and means, 'to be or become sweet' (4985) or 'pleasing'. It is used of 'sweet counsel'; then we read in verse 25 these words, and I want you to notice what it says at the end of verse 25, it says, there at Marah, 'He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there **He proved them**'. Now a 'statute' means 'something that's prescribed and set down'; and 'ordinance' means a 'judgment' 'something that is declared and set down, and there He proved them', and the word 'proved' means 'to test them or try them, or put to the test' (5254). The first use is in Genesis 22 when Abraham is tested by God and told to take Isaac up to Mount Moriah; so when you're looking at verse 25, it is telling us this, that what God had done by bringing Israel through these difficulties, to allow them to experience bitterness, and then to demonstrate to them that He had the answer to the 'bitterness of life'. I'll tell you something, I've been in the truth for nearly 40 years and I have learned some things, not as many as I should but I have learned some things. What I've learnt is this, that when I resist the will of God in my life, when I want to go my own way, I suffer bitterness! If I sin, my conscience is thankfully still alive, because it gives me absolute murder, when I've sinned, I kick myself around something awful. It's not a very nice time, but when I conform to the will of God after the example of Christ, though there is suffering in that, there is self-denial. Things don't always work out the way you want them to work out, when I'm doing that there is sweetness, because you know you're in harmony with God, despite the fact that life is going to have experiences of bitterness of one kind or another. And Yahweh was teaching His people a very simple lesson, b&s, and young people, that He has the answer to bitterness; if you are in Egypt, you are in bondage, you'll suffer, and there's no sweetness at the end of that!

You've got to get out of Egypt, and when you do get out of Egypt and you cross through the waters of baptism and you come into the truth, you're going to be in the wilderness of life; it's dry and barren in the world, and there's going to be suffering and hardship and bitterness, that's part of the experience **BUT** there is sweetness now in grasping hold of the work of Christ. It gives meaning and purpose to life and at the end of that process, there's going to be a sweetness that we've never experienced before, a wonderful sweetness! That's what He was telling them, He was laying down a principle for all time, a statute, an ordinance, and He was proving or testing His people. 'Do you understand this? do you understand that I brought you out of Egypt, this is the only way, there has to be suffering before there can be glory! you can't have the crown until you have carried the cross; do you understand that Israel?' But they didn't! they had no

idea! But there's the challenge for you and me, do we understand that?

So what's the key? Let's just move on to verse 26. So He establishes this statute and ordinance and this is what He says, verse 26, 'If you will diligently hearken to the voice of Yahweh thy God' (that's an interesting preamble, isn't it?) and 'will do that which is right in His sight and 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.' Israel, you can be released from the bitterness of Egypt; you can have sweetness in your life, even now, Israel, but you've got to do something, you've got to diligently hearken unto Me'. Now in the Hebrew you'll notice from the screen here, that these two words, **diligently hearken** in the English are in fact, the same Hebrew word 'shama, shama' (8085) it means 'to hear, to listen to obey', and there's a similar construction in Isaiah 55 verse 2 (which we won't go to). It's an intense form of Hebrew when you get a duplication of a word like that, it's telling us that this is the critical principle, **diligently hearken**. So He says, 'if you will hearken to My voice and do what is right in My **sight**': now that word 'sight' I want you to notice what it is, it is 'ayin' (5869) or 'eye', but it also means 'a spring or fountain' and that same verse is used in verse 27 of the 'wells of water' that were at Elim, to which they shortly were to come. It is translated 'fountains' in Number 33 verse 9 of the wells at Elim. So it's strange, isn't it? that this word 'ayin' means an eye while at the same time it can mean a 'fountain'. When you look into someone's eye, you can often tell the person's intelligence even perhaps to a certain extent their characteristics, and the eye is a fountain, isn't it? It's the fountain, as it were, of intelligence because it's through the eye that we understand, we perceive. It's very interesting to note that when Yahweh comes to give a vision of glory that He should provide them with 12 'ayins', 12 fountains; and the basis upon which we will come to draw water from those 12 fountains is to **diligently hearken unto Him** to have spiritual intelligence, to draw from the fountain of Yahweh, who, of course, is the source of all life.

Now at the end of verse 26 He says, 'For I am Yahweh that healeth thee'. You'll notice at the head of this slide here, we have this title, the word in the Hebrew is actually Rophekah, Yahweh Rophekah, Yahweh your Healer; and that word 'healeth' means 'to heal, to make healthful' (7495). It's used in Deuteronomy 28 verse 27 of the diseases of Egypt which only God can cure; it is used in these places, Isaiah 57 verses 18-19, Jeremiah 17 verse 14 and 30 verse 17 and 33 verse 6 of redemption, that He's a healer, He redeems people; it's also used of Christ's sacrifice in Isaiah 53 verse 5 where it says, 'By His stripes we are healed', so here was Yahweh offering to heal Israel and He's done the same for you and me, and He's done that by cutting down a tree of righteousness and casting Him into the waters of bitterness, that through His bitterness we might have sweetness, that's how He's done it!

For the principle of hearing bringing healing, I just want to put up a quotation from Isaiah 6 verse 9 and 10, you read this, so this is what Isaiah said, 'Go and tell this people, 'hear ye indeed but understand not ; and see ye indeed, but perceive not!' This was Israel's problem, they thought they saw but they didn't, they thought they heard but

they weren't listening; 'make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and convert, and be healed'. So do you see the nexus here between **hearing and healing**, that the Spirit is emphasizing it? If you want healing, the kind of healing God offers, you have to hear! **Hearken diligently** says verse 26 of Exodus 15, 'and Yahweh will heal thee; He will put none of the diseases of Egypt upon thee'.

Well, that's the story of Marah, that's the suffering before the glory. Now we come to the glory! we come to verse 27, we arrive at Elim and what a place this is! It's says there in the record, 'They came to Elim where were 12 wells of water and threescore and ten wells of water and they encamped there by the waters'. Now b&s and young people, there is a chapter in Numbers, namely Numbers 33, which spells out the 42 stations of Israel's wanderings through the wilderness; so over the course of 40 years, they stayed at 42 different places. In that list of 42 stations, Marah is #6, the number of man, and Elim is #7, and points to the millennium and the kingdom of God. The Spirit's very specific about that! So here we are at the 7th station, we've passed through the 6th, we've learnt the lesson of Marah, and we now come to the place of the mighty ones. This is a **vision of the kingdom of God**, this is where God wanted to take Israel; this was the sweetness, the ultimate sweetness that He was offering them. If only they would hear. Elim actually means 'palms' (362) but it comes from the same root as '(El) power; the root word 'ayil' means 'strength (352), a chief, and that's why the word is used of rams, from his strength; it's also used of a post as a strong support; an oak or some other strong tree. So the basic idea of this word 'elim' or 'elam' is **strength or power**, and we have it used throughout the scripture. In fact, 'ayil' the root of this word 'Elim' is translated 'mighty men' in Exodus 15 verse 15, 'the mighty men of Moab (ayil); it's translated 'mighty' in 2 Kings 24 verse 15 and Ezekiel 17 verse 13, and as 'oaks' in Isaiah 1 verse 29; 'trees of righteousness' in Isaiah 61 verse 3; 'mighty one' in Ezekiel 31 verse 11; 'trees' in Ezekiel 31 verse 14; and 'posts'. It's used many times of the posts in the temple of Ezekiel's prophecy; and 156 times it's used of 'rams' as head of the flock, the strength of the flock. So you get a bit of an idea of what this word means, this is the place where '**mighty ones**' will be revealed, it's a reference to the kingdom of God, the 7th station out of Egypt! That's where we're going, b&s, but only on the basis of suffering before glory.

What was at Elim? Well, the record tells us there were 12 wells of water and 3 score and 10 palm trees, or 70 palm trees. As I pointed out, this is the same word, 'sight' used in verse 26 of the eye, 12 fountains or eyes and 70 palm trees. Those 12 fountains represent Israel as we're going to see in a moment; now this word 'palm' that is used in verse 27 refers to the palm tree, it was used in the feast of tabernacles to which we'll refer again in a moment, it is also as I pointed out earlier, a symbol for a righteous man, Psalm 92 verse 12. So here is the upright palm, there are 70 palm trees around 12 wells of water; Isaiah 12 verse 3 which comes at the end of the Immanuel prophecies speaks about the redemption of Israel after the second exodus when Elijah has brought all Israel back into the Land and they are there as one nation upon the mountains of Israel; it tells us that that redeemed people will sing a song. The song they will sing has

words in it like this, 'therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation', it points to the kingdom age when Israel will become the centre of the earth. It will become the blueprint for all other peoples, and all people will go up to Jerusalem and they will see Israel there as an example or representation of what God expects of all nations. In the midst of them will be, of course, the saints in glory! So here we have a representation of the kingdom age, Elim, is setting before us that wonderful time of healing and sweetness.

We know, of course, these simple facts, but let's just run through them again! The 12 wells of water and the 70 palm trees = represent the Jew and Gentile; 12 is the number of Israel, the 12 sons of Jacob and the 70 refers to the Gentiles. We know that as we shall see in a moment when we talk about Genesis 10; this principle runs throughout the scriptures, doesn't it? we have it here in Exodus 15, 12 wells, 70 palm trees. In Luke 9 verse 1, Christ sent out 12 disciples to preach and then in the next chapter Luke tells us He sends out 70 disciples, 2 by 2 to preach. First to the Jew - 12, then to the Gentiles - 70. In Revelation 7 verses 4 to 8, we see perfect Israel (the redeemed) the 144,000, but then we are told in verse 9 that these are the redeemed out of all nations; so they're represented as being Israel but they've been drawn from all nations, first the Jew then the Gentile, that's the principle. The centre of our hope, of course, is **the hope of Israel!** We have been among the nations called from amongst the Gentiles. We know that in Genesis 10, 70 nations came from Shem, Ham and Japheth; verses 2 to 5 - **14** nations came from Japheth, in verses 6 to 20 - **30** nations from Ham; verses 21 to 32 there were **26** from Shem, for a total of **70**. If you count the names only once and omit Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth and the names of cities that are mentioned in Genesis 10 you will be able to prove that to yourself and many of us will have done that. So there's no doubt that 70 in the scriptures is the number of the Gentiles, so when we see this vision here in the place of the mighty ones, we are seeing a picture of the kingdom of God. There's Israel and from Israel, the nations are drawing their sustenance, from the wells of salvation; and when Israel topped the sandhill that lead them from Marah to Elim, and they saw this beautiful scene in a barren wilderness, they saw this oasis of 12 wells and all these palm trees, they saw (if only they had the eye of faith) they saw where God would lead them. He would take them from suffering, He would deliver them through the sweetness that came from the sacrifice of a righteous man that made bitter waters sweet, and He would bring them to the place of glory! That's the position that we find ourselves in, and we're a hair's breadth away from it!

Just one final thing! We mentioned the feast of tabernacles a little earlier. In the kingdom age the nations will come up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of tabernacles we are told in Zechariah 14 verse 16. When Israel kept the feast of tabernacles in ancient times, it was held over 7 days from the 15th to the 21st of the 7th month, they offered amongst other things, lambs and goats as well, but they offered primarily bullocks, the most precious, the most expensive of the offerings made that week. On day #1 we are told in Numbers 29 verse 13, that they offered **13** bullocks; on day #2 they offered **12**; day #3 **11**; day #4 **10**; day #5 **9**; day #6 **8** and day #7 they offered **7** bullocks. The reason for that is pretty

simple, it is this, God was telling Israel, as He will tell the nations in the kingdom age, that He is going to **reverse** the rebellion of Nimrod, which scattered the nations (that's how the divisions came about) Nimrod rebelled against Yahweh, Yahweh scattered the peoples by dividing their tongue, they were divided up into 70 nations; God is telling Israel and the world, He's going to reverse the work of Nimrod whose number is 13 (he's the 13th generation from Adam) and his name means 'we will rebel' (5248) and eventually he's going to bring them all into the bonds of the covenant #7, in the 7th millennium, that's what He's telling them and when you total them all up you get **70**.

But there was one day left to go in their religious year, it was the 8th day, the final holy convocation for Israel, it's called the 'great day of the feast' in John 7 verse 37, and on that day they offered only **one** bullock; Yahweh was telling Israel and the nations, that when He's finished at the end of the millennium, He'll have all of those 70 nations back into one. It's a long ranged prophecy for what He's setting about to achieve in the earth! B&S, we cannot now be far from Elim, all the signs indicate that's the case; we have, many of us, been in the truth for a long time, and we have learnt the lesson, that life in the truth does have its elements of bitterness, but it has been made sweet by the sacrifice of the Son of righteousness, who was cut down and cast into bitter waters and through His bitterness they were made sweet. We haven't got long to go, we are passing through the 6th station, the 7th is just over the hill! the place of the mighty ones is about to become our possession. Let us hold fast to these things, let us ensure that we hearken diligently to the voice of Yahweh and do the things that are right in His sight, and one day, He's going to provide us with the ultimate healing and the ultimate sweetness.