

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

THE WATER MADE SWEET

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.

Exodus 15:25

The sustenance of the children of Israel who came out of Egypt in the exodus was a staggering task to be sure. No one is certain of the exact number which Moses led out from under Egyptian bondage but we are told in Exodus 12:37 that the number of men, not including women and children, was approximately six hundred thousand. Some have disputed whether or not the word which is translated from the Hebrew for this number actually means "six hundred thousand" as we understand the number. Regardless of exactly how many Hebrews actually came out of Egypt, it was an extremely large number since they had been in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years (see Ex,12:40) and the "the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty." (see Exo 1:7-20)

They were glad to leave Egypt's bondage and found themselves enriched with Egyptian wealth as the LORD caused the Egyptians to give them their gold and silver jewelry. (see Ex. 3:22; 11:2; 12:35) Their joy at this deliverance and wealth was short lived, however, when they saw the Egyptian army headed for them as they had their backs against the Red Sea.

They forgot the joy of their deliverance and they murmured and lamented their plight, thinking they had escaped only to be destroyed. Yet in the proper time the LORD demonstrated HIS power in their deliverance (see Ex,14:13) by opening the Sea and causing them to go through it on dry ground. Then HE brought about the destruction of the Egyptians by that same power, as HE caused the sea to fall on them. (see Mat.21:42-44)

Knowing human nature as we do, it is not surprising that the people started to complain and murmur when they began to be thirsty and were unable to find water. (v.22) It is remarkable (though not surprising) that this murmuring followed right upon the heels of their great celebration at their deliverance at the Red Sea. :Such is the way of man's religious flesh. He is full of praise one moment when everything is going well and then fretting the next because his attempts to solve his problems are seldom met with success. Rather than gaining trust in seeing the deliverance wrought by the hand of GOD, and waiting on the LORD's provision. (see Ps.34:10; Ps.27:14; Isa.40:13) he seeks to solve his own problems by a reliance upon the flesh. In this case they could "find no water" and they murmured.

The LORD had already formed a well or stream for them to drink from, long before they were thirsty or had ever arrived at it. "*But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*" (Mat 6:7-8) No doubt they were congratulating themselves on their ability to discover this stream, only to find that they could not enjoy that water because it was to them "bitter" (i.e.; Marah). This is the same basic word which Naomi called herself as she engaged in a bit of self-pity. (see Ruth 1:20)

In the flesh we view the trials and troubles of this world as “bitter”, yet that man who is taught by the SPIRIT is made to see that even these “bitter waters” are designed for our benefit. *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Rom 8:28)* We see this demonstrated for us in the life of Joseph. How “bitter” was his separation from his family that resulted in the children of Israel being in Egypt in the first place. But as he said to his fearful brothers, *“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.” (Gen 50:20)* So is even this bitter water which was tasted by the Hebrews meant for the benefit of the LORD’s children in every generation, that we might see how those waters are made “sweet”.

These waters were made to be bitter by the hand of the ONE who provided the MEANS whereby they might be made sweet. There is nothing that could possibly transpire in this world which is not designed and ordained by the hand of an all wise and sovereign GOD. It did not just “happen” that these waters were bitter but they were designed to be bitter. One reason is so that the LORD’s children might be shown that there is nothing in this natural world that can benefit them in the Kingdom of GOD.

The water looked appealing as they sought to drink it, but in and of itself it could not slake their thirst. Neither can a man in his own wisdom or by whatever religious means he might design or adhere to, add one cubit to his stature. *“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” (Psa 127:1)*

Just as this “bitter water” fulfilled the ordained purpose of GOD, so too is the wrath and wickedness of men and angels ordained to fulfill that same purpose. *“The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.” (Pro 16:4)* The glory of the REDEEMER is seen against the backdrop of the darkness of this world and its inhabitants.

It was by the means of a “tree” that these waters were made sweet. The scriptures tell us that the LORD JESUS CHRIST is *“a tender plant, and -- a root out of a dry ground:” (Isa 53:2)* HE is that ONE who was *“cast into the waters” (v.25)*. HE did not merely decree that the “waters” would be made sweet (HE certainly could have) but HE took upon HIMSELF the likeness of sinful flesh and cast HIMSELF into these waters that HE might be tried and tested in all points and yet remain without sin. HE was under no obligation to do so, but in order to manifest HIS grace HE demonstrated that HE would be both JUST and the JUSTIFIER.

This determination to be the JUSTIFIER according to the same law which HE subjected HIS elect unto, caused HIM to be lifted up upon a “tree”, most willingly, to satisfy HIS own law. *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” (Gal 3:13)* Thus HE became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in HIM.

1 In evil long I took delight, Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight, And stopped my wild career.
2 I saw One hanging on a tree, In agonies and blood,
Who fixed his languid eyes on me, As near his cross I stood.
3 Sure never till my latest breath Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with his death, Though not a word he spoke.
4 My conscience felt and owned the guilt, And plunged me in despair;
I saw my sins his blood had spilt, And helped to nail him there.
5 A second look he gave, which said, “I freely all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid;| die that thou may’st live.” by *John Newton*

This is indeed the sweetest water that can ever be drunk by a thirsting and perishing sinner. HE has made these waters sweet. In HIM is found all of our “statutes” and “ordinances”. He has fulfilled every jot and tittle of the law in the behalf of HIS beloved. *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom 8:1-2)*