

How Sweet It Is!

Long Beach Alliance Church • October 16th, 2011 • Pastor Chris Lankford

And He said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer."

~Exodus 15:26 (NASB)

1) An Example Of Salvation For The Generations

A) The New Testament tells us that the story of the Exodus is an example for God's people which happened so that it can provide us with instruction about our own experience of salvation (1st Corinthians 10:11-12).

B) The Exodus of Israel shows the pattern of salvation which is in Jesus Christ! Philip Graham Ryken, President of Wheaton College writes:

Once we were enslaved in the Egypt of our sin, but then Jesus came to set us free. He is our Passover Lamb who shed his blood on the cross as the sacrifice for our sins. He has also brought us through the Red Sea. In his burial, Jesus passed through the deep waters of death, but by his resurrection he landed safe on the other side. All of this is signified in Christian baptism. The exodus from Egypt was a forecast of an even greater exodus: deliverance from sin through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The experience of Israel -- living in slavery, trusting in the lamb, crossing from death to life, singing the song of salvation, embarking on a long pilgrimage, living by God's law, and finally reaching the Promised Land -- is also the experience of God's new Israel, His church!

2) Bitter Water – Suffering Hearts

- A) After leaving the site of Red Sea miracle, Moses leads Israel into the surrounding area of Shur (see map), the desert area which was East of Egypt. After three days with no fresh water, they come to Marah (Exodus 15:22-23), but the waters were bitter (brackish/poisoned).
- B) For the first of several times as Israel approaches Mt. Sinai, they “grumble” against Moses (15:24). At first glance, the grumbling is because there is no fresh water, but digging deeper, we see a much more difficult problem, the bitter and poisoned hearts of the people!

3) God Your Healer (Jehovah Rafa) Leads To Palm Springs

- A) In response to the grumbling, Moses cries out to the Lord for water. God immediately provides a solution which is provided through a tree which makes the water “sweet” or “purified” (15:25). The text then reveals that the “bitter waters” were a test, with a deeper meaning!
- B) God purposely allowed Israel to go without water, He purposely made them thirsty! He intentionally showed them their constant need. Rather than choosing to depend on themselves, God was teaching them to choose to depend on Him. If God’s people are faithful to Him, God will heal them of all the “bitterness” in their lives (15:26). God can be trusted, even with life’s bitter difficulties!
- C) To make this abundantly clear to Israel, God leads His people South to Elim (see map), to springs of water and palm trees galore (15:27). This provision is abundant, and once again points toward a future day of even greater abundance for all of God’s people who respond with love and obedience to Him!

