

The Wednesday Word, July 17, 2019: "They Came to Marah" Exodus 15:23

Moses and the multitude of Israel, tired, weary and thirsty from their three-day journey came to an oasis but, the waters were bitter and undrinkable. Eager hopes had been raised merely to be dashed and disappointed.

As we read this story, we see that the faithless Children of Israel murmured against Moses demanding of him, "What shall we drink?" (ver. 24.) They thought they were perishing with thirst. How asinine! The Lord had just opened the Red Sea for them to walk through, yet a few days later, here they were doubting that He could even provide them with a drink of water.

Notice how they were agitated and perplexed by their situation. Moses, on the other hand, began to pray (verse 25). He cried unto the Lord, and God answered. But, notice how the answer to his prayer came in a most unusual way. Among the surrounding trees, the Lord showed Moses a particular one which, under instruction, he cut down and threw into the waters. As a result, the waters were made sweet, and Israel was once more delivered.

What a great story of God's provision. By the way, did you notice how the story has several gospel allusions?

First: The tree represents the Lord Jesus. There are several Scriptures which present Him under the picture or type of a "tree." The most prominent one is, of course, found in the first Psalm. There it was prophesied that "He (Christ) would be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth His fruit in His season, His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever He does shall prosper" (v. 3).

Second: The tree in Exodus 15 had to be cut down. However, it was the children of Israel themselves who deserved to be cut down. They deserved to perish because of their rebellion. But, the tree was cut down instead of them. And so it is that faith sees Jesus, as cut down instead of us. Christ bore our sins in His own body on the Tree" (1 Peter 2:24).

Third: The tree was cast into the waters of Marah. In the gospel, we see Jesus cast into the waters of wrath and death. He sank into the depths of Judgment when the iniquities of His people assembled and met on Him. Now, because of the cross, the bitterness of wrath has been replaced with the sweetness of blessing. When the cross is applied, the bitter waters of life are turned sweet through the power of Christ Jesus.

Fourth: It was in response to the cries of an interceding mediator that deliverance came. Moses stood between an offended God and Israel. This again points us to the Lord Jesus. He stands between our sin and our rescue. No one among the people contributed to their deliverance. Indeed, their only contribution was their sin and unbelief.

There is one Mediator between God and man. There is one Peace-maker. We have been reconciled to God by Christ alone (2 Corinthians 5:18). And this is as it should be. What works of ours can compare to those of the Lord Christ? Our best works are defiled by imperfections. As the English preacher, John Berridge, lamented, "Even my repentance needs

repenting of.” All our works combined could not make an atonement, but instead, they needed one made for them.

If we are ultimately saved by Christ plus our works, then works become one of our mediators. But the Scripture boldly asserts that there is but one mediator between God and man .. not two (1Timothy 2:5).

If our works mediate for us, then they are partly responsible for our peace. But the scriptures know nothing of this. Peace has already been made by the shed blood of Calvary plus nothing. (Colossians 1:20).

And that’s the Gospel Truth!