

BEING LED BY GOD.

EXODUS 15:22—27; 16:1—4.

(Part One)

1. Egypt was behind them and Canaan was before them. They were in the wilderness on their way from one to the other. Egypt represented the World and their Past. Canaan represented the Promise of God and their Future. It was also the Place of Battles and Blessings.

2. The Wilderness is a type of our journey from the time we Receive Christ as Savior until we are with Him in Glory. God intended that the journey for Israel be short. However, there were lessons that must be learned.

3. It was learning those lessons that took some forty years. It was all the result of their unbelief. God desires a swift transition from Conversion to Consecration and from Salvation to Sanctification.

4. Jesus gave His Life For us, but now He gives His Life To Us. The transition can be lengthened as a result of ignorance, disobedience, stubbornness and unbelief.

5. They were led by God as the Pillar of a Cloud went before them. The way they went was not the shortest way. In fact, it was the longest way. However, they were not ready for the giants of Canaan. They were still in the infancy of their faith. They had much growing to do.

6. The experiences in the wilderness were to nature them in the faith. However, it could only happen if they would respond in Obedience and Submission. Let's look at the Places they were Led By God In: The Wilderness.

A. There Was THE PLACE OF BITTERNESS.

1. (Ex. 15:23—26) They came to Marah and found water there that was so bitter that it was undrinkable. They were out of Egypt and a free people. However, they were thirsty and unable to drink the water they had found.

2. It was a Place of Bitterness. They began to murmur against Moses. God often allows bitter experiences to confront us in life. However, He wants us to trust Him, in spite of what is happening in our lives.

3. He has every thing we need, but we can't always see it or understand how He will do it. Remember, it was God who brought Israel to this Place of Bitterness.

4. They were there as a result of the Guiding Hand Of God through the Cloudy Pillar. So, the Place of Appointment became the Place of Disappointment. Instead of Trusting God, however, "...the people murmured against Moses..." (Ex. 15:24)

5. This was the first of eight such expressions of their rebellion, discontent and unbelief after leaving Egypt. (Ex 15:24; 16:2; 17:2,3; Num 11:1; 14:2; 16:41; 21:5; Josh 9:18) However, the solution to the problem of the bitter water was simple.

6. God told Moses to cast a tree into the water. When he did, the water was instantly and miraculously made sweet. (Ex 15:25) The tree is a symbol of the cross.

7. The Apostle Peter, in his testimony before the Sanhedrin, said in Acts 5:30, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." Peter always referred to the Cross as a Tree. He never used the term 'Cross' in referring to the Death of Christ.

8. So, the actions of Moses here was a type of Calvary. All of our bitter experiences will be made sweet when we accept them in the light of the Sufferings of Christ.

9. The Cross is God's Provision for every trial. So, we see that the Lord Led His People To The Place Of Bitterness.

B. There Was THE PLACE OF BOUNTY.

1. (Ex. 15:27) Thank God all of our experiences in our Christian walk are not bitter. However, God knows how to meet us even in those times of trial.

2. In any life, whether one is a Christian or not, there are both positive and negative experiences. So, the people came to Elim. This was the Place where there was Plenty of Water.

3. Also, there were 70 Palm Trees which would suggest Plenty of Food as well as a shade for the people from the sun. Many times people take this experience for granted.

4. Remember, they had murmured at Marah against Moses during the Bad Times. However, they never gave Thanks to God at Elim during the Good Times. They had every thing they needed at Elim.

5. If we going to Complain during the Bad Times, don't you think we should give Thanks during the Good Times. Furthermore, I think most people would agree that we have more Good Times than Bad Times.

6. Unfortunately, many people, including Christians, only complain and never give thanks. However, we should and can give thanks even when things are not going well. 1 Thes. 5:18 says, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

7. Remember, it is the one who is thankful for what he has who is always receiving more. Being Thankful to God for His Blessings will bring more Blessings from Him. That's true as well with regard to our dealings with people.

8. You may be in, a negative situation and feel there is no way out. Do you want out? Jesus said in Mark 11:24, ". . .What things soever ye desire, When Ye Pray, Believe that ye Receive them, and ye shall Have them."

9. So, there is a way out. You can pray and believe God to change that situation. Every one wants to live on the mountain all of the time. However, to live and grow, there must be movement.

10. So, how do we get from one mountain to another? We must go through the valley.

Tin Hill sings a song that says, 'I'm not in a valley; I'm just changing mountains.

11. When we are walking by Faith in God, our perspective is different from the walk of the world. Faith is not seeing with the natural eye. Instead, it is Believing without seeing.

12 Remember, the proverb 'Seeing is Believing' is not always true in a society with the advanced technology we have today. However, 'If you Believe God, you will See ' Faith in God is the most powerful force on earth.

13. The Children of Israel had experienced the Place of Bitterness, but as they continued to be led of the Lord, they came to the face of Bounty. So, we see that the Lord Led His People To The Place Of Bounty.

C. There Was THE PLACE OF BARRENNESS.

1. (Ex 16:1—3) In Marah, the people had been thirsty. But now, they were hungry. So, what did they do? They murmured bitterly against Moses and Aaron. They blamed them for their being in the wilderness.

2. In fact, at this point, for the first time, they expressed the desire to be back in Egypt. They were saying they wished they had never left. Can you imagine that? They forgot about the taskmasters and the tombs in that Place of Bondage.

3. Somehow, their memories had twisted the facts of the past. Remember, this was a month, to the day, from their Emancipation from Egypt. It was the fifteenth day of the second month. (Ex 16:1) They left Egypt after celebrating the First Passover. That was on the fifteenth day of the first month. (Ex. 12)

4. It's hard to imagine the shortness of their memories! After all they had seen at the Red Sea only a month ago! Then, the nine plagues that devastated the land of Egypt in the last few months. It would seem that these memories would last for a lifetime. But how soon they forgot.

5. It is still true with Christians today. They failed to trust the One who brought the plagues on the Egyptians and divided the Red Sea which led to their escape. Furthermore, while God delivered them, He destroyed the Pharaoh and his army.

6. It's hard to imagine that they would murmur against the Lord when they had witnessed His Awesome Power only such a short time before, but they did. They were ungrateful and without any appreciation for all that God had done for them. They still had a slave mentality and were bound by unbelief.

7. God had a lesson for His People in the Wilderness. It was that what this world has to offer cannot feed those who are bound for Canaan. Egypt, which is a type of sin and the world, can feed the flesh. However, it cannot feed the spiritual man, which lives by Faith.

8. The Source of Faith is the Word of God. Rom 10:17 says that ". . . Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." This is the reason for our testing as believers. It will drive us to the Word of God, the Source of our Faith.

9. It is only as we live and walk by Faith that our spirit man is fed and grows toward maturity. Walking by Faith involves Trusting God and Him alone.

10. The senses and the intellect are superceded by Obedience to the Word of God. To develop a Trust in God rather than the arm of flesh is only done in a barren place. Remember, if you can see it or can get it yourself, you don't need faith to have it.

11. Faith in God is Trusting Him and His Word to do what He has Promised. It is believing God when there is no natural reason to do so. You just believe! You can't Explain it! It's Faith and Trust in God. So, we see that the Lord Led His People To The Place Of Barrenness. But then, The Place Of Barrenness was not the end for them.

D. There Was THE PLACE OF BREAD.

1. (Ex 16:4) Notice, God gave His People in the wilderness Bread from Heaven. They called it Manna. Notice, how often the word "Murmur occurs in the first 12 verses of this chapter. (8 times, Ex 16:2, 7, 8, 9, 12)

2. Moses chided the people about their murmuring.. . He spoke of "...your murmurings which ye murmur. . ." (Ex 16:8b) He reminded them that "...your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord." (Ex 16:8c)

3. However, in Mercy and Grace, God sent manna. He fed them with this food from heaven f r the rest of their time in the wildernes3, some 40 years. Imagine, Bread from Heaven!

4. It speaks of Jesus Christ. He s both the Incarnate Word and the Inspired word. We Feast on Christ as we Feed upon the word of God. God sustains our spiritual life in the wilderness of this world.

5. However, we must gather this food for ours lives daily just as Israel in the wilderness; had to do. It must be gathered Daily, not weekly, monthly or yearly. Just as we need physical food daily to sustain life physically, so we need spiritual food daily to sustain life spiritually

6. In the Prayer that Jesus taught His Disciples to pray, He said, "Give us this day our daily bread." (Matt 6:11) That applies to both our physical food and our spiritual food. It an only be received on a daily basis. (our Spiritual Food is the Word of God.

7. Jesus said "...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God. (Mat: 4:4) That's why we need to read the Holy Bible every day. As we do, Faith is imparted. Then, we can pray in Faith and receive answers to our prayers.

8. In spite of their barrenness and hunger with no visible means of provision, God fed His People. So, we see that the Lord Led His People To The Place Of Bread.

9. THEY WERE BEING LED BY GOD.

But that didn't mean there were no challenges. In fact, every day they were faced with challenges. However, they were being led of God and His leading is never wrong. We may not always understand His Ways and His Direction. However, it is always right.

10. a. They were Led by God to the Place of Bitterness where the water was so bitter

that they could not drink it.

b. They were Led by God to the Place of Bounty where they had every thing they needed.

c. They were Led by God to the Place of Barrenness where there was nothing but desolation and discouragement.

d. They were Led by God to the Place of Bread where they received food for some 40 years.

11. They were Led by God to all of these places. There was Bitterness, Bounty, Barrenness and Bread. We like the Bounty and the Bread. However, if there is Bitterness and Barrenness, we tend to question as to whether it is God who is leading us.

12. Remember, God's Way is always the best way no matter what may happen. He will use everything that happens in our lives for His Glory and for our good. He will prove Himself to be Faithful even in the hard places.

THEY WERE BEING LED BY GOD. Let's let Him lead us every day and follow His Leading.