

The God Who Heals



By Mary Kane

Please take a moment to bow your head and your heart before our God and Savior. Ask Him to forgive you of your sin and to open the eyes of your heart to His Holy Word.

Please read Exodus 15:22-27



Let's refresh our memories with a little background information concerning what had transpired concerning the people of Israel prior to our text in Exodus 15. The Hebrews had been held captive in Egypt for about 400 years; they were forced to serve as slaves, making bricks for the pharaohs' building projects. After many years of harsh oppression, the Hebrews cried out to the Lord for deliverance. God sent a deliverer, Moses, to lead His people out of Egypt. Through a series of miraculous events (read about them in Exodus 7-12), God caused Pharaoh to release His people so they could freely worship Him. After the children of Israel left Egypt, Pharaoh regretted his decision and sent his army after the slaves. The army caught up with the people of God at the Red Sea. By His mighty power, God parted the Red Sea and His people crossed over to safety. We pick up in verse 22, immediately following the parting of the Red Sea.

Where did Moses lead the people directly after the parting of the Red Sea?

He led them into the Wilderness of Shur. Since I live in the Midwest, when I think of *wilderness*, I picture an area that is thick with trees and

vines. In Canaan, however, the *wilderness*, was very rocky and desert-like.

The NKJV states that Moses *brought* the people out of the Red Sea and into the wilderness. In this same passage, the ASV uses the word *led* and Young's translation uses the word *caused*. The original word used for *brought* in this passage is *naca'* which means "to journey, to set forth, to cause to set out (emphasis mine). From these definitions and translations we can surmise that Moses did not randomly lead the people of God into the wilderness.

Who was directing Moses on this journey?

What problem did they encounter?

Remember, three days is the amount of time that the human body can endure without water.

What miracle did the people of Israel just witness (Exodus 14:21)?

The people of Israel had just witnessed the parting of the Red Sea. Clearly, the God of the Hebrews was God over the water. If God could part the Red Sea, surely He could provide His people with fresh water to drink. Therefore, why would God purposefully lead His people into an area where they would not be able to find water?

What do you think?

When God allows His people to suffer, there is a plan and a purpose for that suffering; God wants to reveal Himself to His people in a new way, causing them to trust Him with an area of their lives previously not

surrendered to His authority. These “unsundered” areas can keep us from following Jesus. Also, God constantly works to mold His people into the image of Christ; often, suffering is the tool He uses to shape and form us.

Just when things looked bad enough for the nation of Israel, they turned worse.

When the Hebrew people finally found water what was wrong with it?



The water was bitter. Now, I must ask why would God allow His people, in their great need, to find bitter water? After prayer and meditation concerning this question I came to the following conclusion: I believe God allowed His people to thirst to show them that they didn't really need water, they needed God. God was trying to draw His people into a deeper relationship with Him by teaching them to depend on Him for everything. But, instead of seeking God, they sought water. Like the Hebrew people, as we learn to depend on Him for all our needs, we will be free to follow Him anywhere....despite hopeless circumstances or impossible conditions, because we will know He is able to provide.

What did David do when he was thirsty (Psalm 63:1)?

According to verse 24, what did the people do?

Ephesians 4:6 tells us to “be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made

known to God.” Instead of complaining, the people needed to be praying. How often I have needed to be a “doer” of this verse not a “hearer” only! Imagine how the power of God would be loosed in our lives if we invested our energies in praying instead of complaining! (As an added bonus, people will find our company more pleasant if we stop complaining and start praying!)

What do you continually complain about?

How is God calling you to trust Him with the issue that you listed above?

Over next few weeks, the next time you are tempted to complain about the issue you just listed, please pray about it instead. Ask God to help you trust Him with your complaints, so you won't become defiled by a root of bitterness.

What did Moses do with the complaints of the people?

Moses interceded for the people and took their complaint to God.

What amazing thing did God do to fix the bitterness of the water?



Some resources I checked likened this “tree” to the cross of Christ; the cross that takes away the bitterness of our lives due to our sin. Another resource pointed out that there was nothing special about this tree in and of itself; it had healing powers because God decided to use it as a tool of healing. Another resource stated that this tree is believed to be the *Elvah of the Arabs* which resembles our hawthorn tree.

The other day as I was walking with my husband and we came across a hawthorn tree. As always, I was amazed by the vicious looking thorns that cover this type of tree; some of the thorns were 6-8 inches long and they were covered with smaller thorns. As I gazed at the tree, I was reminded of the crown of thorns that Jesus wore on His head at His crucifixion.

If the tree that God showed Moses was anything like the hawthorn I saw when walking with my husband, it would have been difficult to pick up and throw into the water without injury. Thankfully, Moses trusted God and obeyed His instructions.

What could have happened if Moses chose not to trust God about the tree?

Perhaps all of the Hebrew people would have perished in the desert. Like Moses, when we choose to trust God or not trust God, the lives of many people will be impacted.

In the latter half of verse 25, we find out why God led His people to the waters of Marah: He brought them there to *test* them and to show them what was in their hearts...trust or doubt. God was not testing them so

He would know what was in their hearts—He already knew. He was testing them so *they* would know what was in their hearts.

Please read verse 26 again and answer the following question:

What four things did God expect His people to do?

He called them to: heed the voice of God, do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes.

What did God promise in return for their obedience?

Why would He do this?

Because He is Jehovah Rapha; the Lord Who Heals!

The word for *heals* in this verse is the Hebrew word *rapha* which means: to heal, restoration, favor, forgiveness, make healthful, physician, to heal the hurts of a nation, to heal individual distresses, to heal water, to cause to be healed." This word also means to be healed from disease, sin or injuries and it "imitates the sound of a person rapidly sewing."ⁱ The hearts of the people needed some stitching up; they needed God to heal them from the sicknesses, injuries and sinful habits they acquired in Egypt.

God took the useless bitter waters of Marah... waters that caused death... and transformed them into waters that restored, healed and gave life to

all who would drink them. "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;" (Isaiah 55:1) and as God had healed the water of Marah, He would heal the hearts of the His people. He is also waiting to heal your heart from all its hurts.

Through this experience, God was teaching His people to trust Him with their...

- **Lives:** God protected His people, who were unarmed and inexperienced in warfare, from a very well-armed, well-trained, experienced army. In the New Testament, we are instructed to put on the full armor of God that we may be able to "stand against the wiles of the Devil." God has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!
- **Daily provisions:** In the middle of the desert, God provided His people, about two million of them, with water. God makes the same provision for New Testament believers. As we seek God in the wilderness of this world, He promises, "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?'...For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."
- **Physical healing:** God revealed Himself to His people as Jehovah Rapha, "The God Who Heals you." Despite what the world tells us, it is not medicine, antibiotics, procedures or specialists that heal our bodies; although all of these things may be used as tools by which our healing is accomplished— it is God who heals us. In fact, every time that we experience healing, whether from a head cold, broken arm or a paper cut, the healing came from God.

In which of the 3 areas listed above do you need God to act for you now?

Please take a moment to ask God to bring healing, restoration, favor or forgiveness to the area you just listed:

In closing, please write Malachi 4:2 in the space provided:

Please rest in Jehovah Rapha, God who heals you.

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