

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## EXODUS 14-15

I love High School sports - basketball games and football games. Sometimes it's more fun to watch *the students in the stands* than it is *the players on the field*.

I want to launch into today's chapters with a strange introduction. At their homecoming game in 2012, the students of Minnesota's Stillwater High School orchestrated a stunt that got lots of social media attention. At last count it's been viewed 315,000 times.

The students threw baby powder into the air while they changed their shirts from black to red. That's when the homecoming king, Michael Fredrick, dressed up like a phony Moses, with a hockey stick for a staff, parted a Red Sea of red-shirted students; then walked his queen, Jackie Ellingson, down the stairs to the cheers of the crowd. *And*, the Stillwater High School Ponies won the game, 48-0... **Let's watch the clip...**

Well, if Stillwater High got that excited over bleacher antics, imagine what it was like to be part of the actual event... *the real Moses, a queen named Miriam, a Red Sea of water, a parting, a victory, a celebration, and a homecoming. The Hebrew people are headed home!*

After ten plagues break the hold of Pharaoh, Moses and the children of Israel march to the Red Sea, where they witness one of the most spectacular miracles of all time. *If there'd been a clip of it on Youtube it would have a zillion, trillion views.* Verse 1 begins, "Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea." Unfortunately, we no longer can identify any of these locations, which means the exact site of the crossing is unknown. **And yet, three sites are most often suggested...**

**First**, is the bitter lakes region just east of the Nile Delta. The Hebrew phrase "**Red Sea**" is "Yam Suph," It can be translated "sea of reeds" or "sea of seaweed." Some commentators suggest it refers to the very shallow, marshy area just east of Goshen. People who like to excuse away the Bible's miracles with naturalistic explanations suggest the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea in this area, perhaps on a sand bar, in a few inches of water... But if you accept that idea it forces you to believe an even greater miracle – *how did God drown Egypt's chariots in ankle-deep water?* "Yam Suph" can mean *Reed Sea*, but it has always referred to what map-makers identify as the Red Sea.

The **second** suggested site of the crossing is on the eastern shore of the Gulf of

Suez. But read verse 3, *“the wilderness had closed them in...”* The Hebrews were trapped. When Pharaoh’s army pursued them they didn’t run or try to escape. The Jewish historian, Josephus, says they were surrounded by high rock walls and steep cliffs that butted up to the sea. Yet, the desert topography on the eastern shore doesn’t fit that scenario... In addition, the wording in 15:10 of God parting *“mighty waters”* hardly fits the shallow Gulf of Suez which is just 20-30 meters deep, a mere 100 feet.

The **third** suggested crossing is at the Gulf of Aqaba on the eastern side of the Sinai Peninsula, bordering ancient Midian or Arabia. There the Red Sea is a half mile, or 2300 feet deep. It’s 12 miles across. Nuweiba Beach has been sited as a possible Hebrew campsite, *and is trapped on all sides!* The beach is nearly 11 square miles, plenty of room for 3 million Hebrews. A narrow entrance leads through the mountains to the beach. And divers there have found coral formations looking a lot like chariot wheels and axels. We can’t be sure, but Nuweiba Beach could be the crossing site.

Verse 3, *“For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.'* In other words, *“We’re trapped!”*

*Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD." And they did so.* A vindictive Pharaoh thinks he has them cornered, but God sets him up for an ambush. The Pharaoh is about to be *all washed up!*

*“Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled...”* Implied, is that they’d left Egypt. And since the Sinai was considered part of Egypt this is another reason to think they traveled over the Sinai Peninsula and crossed at the finger of the Red Sea known as the Gulf of Aqaba. *“And the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?”* Pharaoh thinks he’s made a mistake.

*“So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. Also, he took six-hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. Pharaoh activates special ops equipment, “600 choice chariots.”* The Jewish historian Josephus says Pharaoh also employed 50,000 horsemen and 200,000 foot soldiers - *all to retrieve former slaves.*

*“And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt (the LORD hardened Pharaoh - Yahweh is setting the Egyptian ruler up for one final humbling), and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness.”* The happy Hebrews haven’t yet learned of the Pharaoh’s change of heart.

*So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his*

horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon.” Pharaoh’s cavalry finds Israel trapped - *mountains on three sides, ocean on one.*

I’m sure Pharaoh and his bloodthirsty troops were licking their chops. They see the Hebrews like sitting ducks, with nowhere to go. In the movie, Yul Bryner makes the statement, “**This is the work of a butcher, not a Pharaoh.**” That’s what the real Pharaoh thought.

Verse 10, “**And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them.**” Their lookouts spotted the charging army. “**So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.**” Two million Hebrews are gripped by fear and they all cry for help.

“**Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?' For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."** *How ungrateful!* In a matter of hours they go from marching boldly to wobbling in their faith. They’ve become unbelieving, skeptical, negative...

And every time I get to this part of the story in “*The Ten Commandments*” movie I want to grab that weasily little twerp, Edward G. Robinson, and slap him silly. “**Moses, Moses, take us back to Egypt.**” *God did amazing miracles and awesome wonders to bring them out of Egypt, why would He not do wonders again?*

And we all need to consider this for your own sake. *Think it through, has our God ever run out of miracles?*

Verse 13, “**And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."** Perhaps tonight, you’re in an impossible situation. You’re hemmed in on all sides and have nowhere to run. Listen carefully to Moses.

**We’re told to do three things...** First, “**Do not be afraid**” Despite your circumstances don’t cave in to fear or doubt. All faith goes through times of testing...

“**Stand still**” Frantic efforts only complicates your situation and gives the enemy a reason to boast. Chill out! Believe that the Lord will fight this battle for you...

And then, “**see the salvation of the Lord.**” Keep your eyes on Jesus. Trust in His hidden resources. He has ways and weapons you know nothing about.

“And the LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me?” Evidently, God had prepared Moses for this moment. And here He rebukes him for panicking. “*Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward.*” The posture of faith is forward not backward.

God fills Moses in on His plan in verse 16, “*But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.*” *And you wonder what Moses is thinking in response... Lift my rod, stretch my hand, divide the sea? Moses is calculating how will A + B produce C... A divided Sea no less.*

There’s no way Moses had any concept of **what** was about to happen... I’m sure Moses didn’t know **how** it was going to happen... All Moses knew was **Who** it was that said it would happen. And when you really know *Who*, you don’t need to know *how* or *what!*

All God explains to Moses is **why**. “*And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.*” All Moses knows is His God is about to be honored... *He’ll do what He’s told!*

Verse 19, “*And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them.*” Not only was Israel accompanied by a daytime cloud and night-time fire, but an every-present Angel of God traveled with them... God is going to use them all to give the Hebrews time to cross the Sea.

“*So (the Angel and the cloud) came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all that night.*” God created a buffer between the charging Egyptians and the crossing Hebrews.

Verse 21 gives us the play-by-play of what happens next, “*Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea...*” And what a pivotal moment of faith that was...

“*And the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided.*” The wind blew all night to help push back the waters of the Sea, and dry the ocean floor so the Hebrews could walk across without sinking in the sludge. By daybreak a dirt road had formed where the sea had been just hours before.

“*So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the*

waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.” The term “wall” is the same word used for the walls of Jericho. It speaks of a city’s walls. The Hebrews are descending between two very tall, solidified, fortified walls of water. *You wonder, did they see fish or marine life in the wall?*

Imagine, you standing on the shore and being told to move out into the seabed. You’re now walking downhill as far as you can see... it’s a long corridor. At Nuweiba Beach the Gulf of Aqaba is a little more than 12 miles wide. The ocean floor has about a 13% slope leading down into the seabed. That’s about the same slope as a wheelchair ramp. You’d be walking into a mysterious corridor of walled water, *for as far as you can see.*

My point is it took faith for the Hebrews to walk through walls of congealed water, a half mile high! The book of Hebrews, 11:29, tells us, “By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.”

I suppose the Hebrews thought Egypt was the rat and they were the cheese. But God had constructed a huge mouse trap, big enough to destroy the whole Egyptian army. For when the Angel of God and the cloud were removed the Egyptians took the bait...

Verse 23, “And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians. And He took off their chariot wheels (God loosened the lug nuts), so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians.”

Imagine this, the Egyptians are in hot pursuit, when suddenly their wheels wobble. They lose their steering. God sabotages the wheels of Pharaoh’s chariots. Egypt’s cavalry are now the people who are trapped.

“Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen.” And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it.” The Hebrews entered the seabed and crossed at night. At daybreak the Egyptians poured in and were all drowned - *according to Josephus 200,000 troops.*

“So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. But the children

of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and... left.”

Gladys Aylward (Ale-wood), was a missionary to China before World War 2. She ran an Inn where she told travelers and traders the truth about Jesus. Gladys also cared for the poor kids in her neighborhood. And when the Japanese invaded China she was forced to flee over the mountains with one-hundred orphans.

In their book “[The Hidden Price of Greatness](#),” Besson and Hunsicker tell the story: “During Gladys's harrowing journey out of war-torn Yangcheng... she grappled with despair as never before. After passing a sleepless night, she faced the morning with no hope of reaching safety. A 13-year-old girl in the group reminded her of their much-loved story of Moses and the Israelites crossing the Red Sea. “*But I am not Moses,*” Gladys cried in desperation. “*Of course you aren't,*” the girl said, “*but Yahweh is still God!*”” Against impossible odds, Gladys and her kids arrived alive.”

And you'll make it too, if you remember that you serve “[a Red Sea-crossing God](#).” I know exactly where it was that the Israelites crossed out of Egypt into the wilderness - ***it was at the center of God's will***. So often when trouble strikes we assume we've drifted outside of God's will. *Why else would there be trouble?*

But God orchestrates a good kind of trouble. He creates situations that trap us - impossible situations where unless God does a miracle we're a goner. And it's in those moments when we're caught between the Red Sea on one side and Egypt's army on the other side that we learn our God is faithful. He can and will do the impossible. There's nothing our God can't do!

Verse 30 tells us the outcome, “**So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.**” After this Red Sea miracle Moses' approval rating was never higher!

One other point not apparent from the text, but we discover it later. Psalm 74:12-16 tells us, “**For God is my King from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters. You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness. You broke open the fountain and the flood; You dried up mighty rivers.**” Remember the first chapter of Genesis, we noted how the Bible is the story of a long-running battle between God and a sea serpent or dragon. Job 26 credits Satan with the chaos waters found in Genesis 1:2, “**darkness was on the face of the deep.**” We see this take shape again in Genesis 3, in the Garden, with the

appearance of the talking snake...

When Satan caught wind of God's intention to create mankind he tried to stop Him. Of course he failed, but what Satan couldn't stop he tried to spoil, thus the serpent tempted mankind to sin. And now the rest of the Bible is a battle. God is trying to redeem mankind and Satan is attempting to undermine His redemption.

And here at the Red Sea when God brings His chosen people, the Savior's family, out of Egypt, Satan is right there, the sea serpent in the waters, trying to drown God's progeny and any hope of our salvation. Yet, Yahweh breaks *"the heads of Leviathan in pieces."* It's a reminder of Genesis 3:15, that *"the seed of the woman,"* the Messiah, will bruise the *"serpent's head."* That happened on the cross and in the Red Sea.

People often ask, is there historical evidence of the Hebrew's exodus from Egypt? Well, pharaohs weren't too keen on documenting defeats. But when you read between the lines there is lots of evidence... First, the exodus pharaoh was probably **Amenhotep II**. He inherited Egypt at its pinnacle of power. But a definite decline follows. The first half of his reign is well documented, but not the second. It's as if he were cut off. In 1890 his mummy was discovered, and it was found infested with tumors, possibly from the plagues.

History also tells us that neither **Amenhotep II**, or his successor, **Thutmose IV**, were firstborn. If either of them had been they would've died in the tenth plague.

The next pharaoh, **Amenhotep III**, is associated with a pillar that speaks of nomads in the wilderness who believe in a God named Yahweh. It's the first mention of God's name in secular history. Which fits the biblical story, for it was to Moses that God revealed His name.

Amenhotep III's son, **Akhenaten**, was the pharaoh when the Hebrews conquer Canaan, and amazingly he shifts his religion to monotheism. He rejects Egypt's many gods, and worships only one. *Egypt's ultimate defeat...* Akhenaten also receives a collection of letters, **The Amarna Letters**. They're from Canaanite kings asking for help. A people called *the Habirus* (or Hebrews) are overrunning and conquering their cities. *All this and more nicely parallels the biblical record.*

Well, God's victory over Egypt's gods and Pharaoh's army was a colossal, even celestial victory, *the Hebrew homecoming is on!* But just like a High School football game, you can't have a big win without a victory song, a *fight song*. *How many of you remember your High School fight song?... Well, that may be going back a bit too far.... How about your college fight song? Let me see if you can recognize any of these fight songs...*

The first one will be sweet music to your ears... **Glory, Glory to Ole Georgia...** The

next three are like fingernails scraping a chalkboard, they hurt your ears... **Rocky Top, Ramblin' Wreck, Yea Alabama...**

This is football's most famous fight song, **Wake Up The Echoes...** And here's one I'm throwing in just so Mark Lawson won't grumble later. It sounds more like a polka tune, than a fight song, but... **Boomer Sooner.**

Yet all these victory songs pale in comparison to the song *composed* in Exodus 15. God's parting of the Red Sea, and His trouncing of Pharaoh's army and the Egyptian empire, inspired Moses and his sister, Miriam to create a victory anthem for God's people to sing.

This is the first official song, or psalm, in the Bible. Moses was *a great deliverer, and a great composer.*

In Chapter 15 we have the lyrics to Moses' song, sadly he's no longer with us to play the tune. Moses is dead. I guess you could say he's now *decomposing...*

Verse 1, "Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying..." *hit it children...* "I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!" God never just eeks out a victory, or wins at the buzzer. All God's victories are by slaughter rule! He skunks His opponent. God leads the league in blowouts. Thus, when we sing His praise it should always be, "*He has triumphed gloriously!*"

"The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; my father's God, and I will exalt Him. The LORD is a man of war; the LORD (Yahweh) is His name."

Notice, God is no pacifist! He's not squeamish in the heat of battle or faints at the sight of blood. **There is such a thing as a just war.** Evil men have to be stopped. Some wars need to be fought. War can be God's way to put down evil, and reinforce what's good.

"Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them; they sank to the bottom like a stone. Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces." Since 90% of the population is right-handed – the right hand is usually a person's strong hand. Moses is communicating that God took a forceful, aggressive, right-handed approach against His enemy. He acted boldly, bluntly, mightily.

Realize, the Bible teaches "God is spirit." It's doubtful He has human-like features such as hands and feet, eyes and ears. Yet throughout Scripture, God ascribes to



Himself human traits. How else can we - finite, fleshly human beings - begin to relate to an infinite, spiritual God unless He uses terms we understand.

When God speaks of Himself in human terms, we call it by the fancy term, an *anthropomorphism*.

Verse 7, “And in the greatness of Your excellence You have overthrown those who rose against You; You sent forth Your wrath; it consumed them like stubble. And with the blast of Your nostrils the waters were gathered together; the floods stood upright like a heap; the depths congealed in the heart of the sea.”

Notice, water stands upright! It piles up like “*a heap*.” Evidently, the liquid gained substance. We’re told “*the depths congealed*” - that is, *thickened or solidified*. It’s the word used for curdled milk... Imagine, the seawater turns to jello! *And what’s responsible for this miracle?*

*One blast of God’s nostrils!* God parted the Sea with a sneeze! What we measure as hurricane-force winds turned out to be God taking a breath through His nose.

“The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my desire shall be satisfied on them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.’ You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters.” A wind from God parted the sea for the Hebrews. That same strong wind blew again and drowned the charging Egyptians in “*the mighty waters*.” A strong east wind did God’s bidding.

And again, I love the thought, “*the mighty waters*.” Think of a wall of water 2000 feet high. That’s 300 feet taller than the World Trade Center in New York City.

The parting of the Red Sea was intended to be a *mighty miracle!* God chose the earth’s *mightiest ruler*, of the *mightiest empire*, at the peak of its *mightiest period*, and lured him into “*mighty waters*,” to drown him in a *mighty disaster*, to win a *mighty victory*, to prove He is a *mighty God*. Everything about this story, the opponent, the plagues, the waters was “*mighty*.”

Verse 11, “Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” Again, the ten plagues were a showdown with the gods of Egypt. God challenged each of their gods to a duel. In the end, when the smoke had cleared, Yahweh proved victorious. He is in a category all His own. No other god compares to Him!

“You stretched out Your right hand; the earth swallowed them. You in Your mercy have led forth the people whom You have redeemed; You have guided them in Your strength to Your holy habitation.” God never just brings us out, His goal is ultimately to

bring us into something better... into fellowship with Him. God's desire for us is to dwell in His *"holy habitation."*

Verse 14, "The people will hear and be afraid; sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia. Then the chiefs of Edom will be dismayed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling will take hold of them; all the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away." God's victory over Egypt will strike fear in the hearts of surrounding nations. First the *Philistines*; then the *Edomites*, and *Moabites*, and finally the *Canaanites*. They'll all hear of Israel's victory and get *uptight* - they'll be *full of fright*.

"Fear and dread will fall on them; by the greatness of Your arm they will be as still as a stone, till Your people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over Whom You have purchased." Though the ancient world had no internet or television, it didn't take long for news to travel. Caravans and traders would take accounts and descriptions of what was going on into far-off lands.

The nations that might've been tempted to oppose Israel would know better after hearing of how the God of Israel had vanquished the mighty Egyptians.

"You will bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance (in other words, in the land of Canaan), in the place, O LORD, which You have made for Your own dwelling, the sanctuary, O LORD, which Your hands have established."

Verse 18 is emphatic, "The LORD shall reign forever and ever." And he offers proof of his ability to do so...

"For the horses of Pharaoh went with his chariots (all 6000 *"choice chariots"*) and his horsemen (all 50,000 cavalry) into the sea, and the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them. But the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea."

After Moses writes this song, his sister Miriam (*you can think of her as the homecoming queen*) she picks up her tambourine, and choreographs a dance. She organizes the women to sing her brother's song...

Entertainer, Dick Van Dyke, once said, "Moses probably danced a little, right? You don't part the Red Sea without having some moves." I don't know if Moses danced or not, but his sis could bust some moves. Miriam was the sister who came to Pharaoh's daughter after she found the baby Moses in the bulrushes. Moses' sister Miriam was the one who arranged for their mom, Jochebed, to nurse him.

And here she leads the Hebrews in celebration. "Then Miriam the prophetess (here's the first mention in Scripture of a prophetess), the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel (or tambourine) in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances." The girls whirl and twirl, and make music.

And Miriam answered them: "Sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!" *And if God has triumphed in your struggles be sure to sing a song to His glory!*

Verse 22, "So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water." Understand, finding enough water in the desert for 2-3 million people is no small task. Three days in the desert without water and people start to die. This was a desperate situation. On the heels of a great victory they're suddenly severely challenged.

"Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah they were bitter..." The word, "*Marah*" means bitter. This was a stream that was apparently polluted. Maybe it contained a heavy mineral content... But what a disappointment! They finally find some water, and it's like the Yellow River...

"Therefore the name of it was called Marah." And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Chapter 15 is a strange chapter. It starts out with a celebration of God's mighty power, yet it ends with the Hebrew people whining about no water.

*God just parted an ocean. Don't you think He can provide a little drinking water? Why start grumbling?*

It's been said, "Some people like to rise and shine. The Hebrews liked to rise and whine." We're just a short time out of Egypt and these people are already murmuring against God. Sadly, their grumbling will be an all-to-common occurrence for the next forty years!

Psalm 106:7 speaks of the Hebrews who exited Egypt, "Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders; they did not remember the multitude of Your mercies, but rebelled by the sea - the Red Sea."

Verse 25, "So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet." It was this tree that brought healing and purity... And there's another tree that does the same for us... *it's the cross of Jesus.*

The waters of this life are poisoned by sin. Even good things in life no longer bring joy without Jesus.

But Jesus makes bitter water sweet. The cross heals even the sour experiences of life by reminding us that *God loves us, that He feels what we feel, that He even uses our sufferings to accomplish His plans and purposes.* Jesus even parts seas and works miracles.

“There He made a statute and an ordinance for them. And there He tested them, and said, “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians.” It’s possible that the tree Moses tossed into the polluted waters purified the spring and brought healing to God’s people... Amoebas and dysentery were a common problem among Egypt’s peasants, and probably a constant dilemma for the Hebrew slaves.

This may’ve been a completely supernatural remedy, or it could be that the sap, or something about the tree, pulled the minerals in the pool to the bottom, leaving good and pure water on the surface. The water though may’ve still had enough minerals in it to act as a laxative and flush the digestive tracts of the Hebrews. This whole episode was God’s way of bringing healing.

We need to remember 15:26 later when we discuss God’s laws concerning diet and hygiene. He says, “I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians.” The regulations and laws God will give Israel will protect them from all sorts of communicable disease and food contamination.

I’ve got an old book by a medical doctor, S.I. McMillen, that’s entitled, “*None of These Diseases.*” In his book, Dr. McMillen does an excellent job of explaining how the Mosaic Laws were all health-smart.

It’s amazing that God’s Law for the Hebrews employed standards and safeguards Gentile nations didn’t figure out for thousands of years. Dr. McMillen writes, “The biblical method for control of infectious skin diseases is unequalled in the history of ancient man... historians credit the Bible for the dawning of a new era in the effective control of disease...”

In verse 26 God follows the *healing* of the waters with the *revealing* of a new name, “For I am the LORD who heals you.” The Hebrew name is *Jehovah-Rapha*.

“Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.” God flushes out their system; then brings them to a place where they can replenish themselves. The oasis of Elim apparently could support a large group with ample food and water.

Let me close with a preview of what’s ahead, “It took one night to get the Hebrews out of Egypt. But it will take forty years to get Egypt out of the Hebrews.”

Remember, God could’ve taken the children of Israel up the coast through Gaza and into the Promised Land, but immediately they would’ve faced opposition, *the*

*Philistines*. He knew they weren't ready for battle.

He had a purpose for taking them *a long way around*. In our lives we often look for the shortest route, or the easiest route, but God knows the route where the lessons are, that we desperately need to learn...

*The lessons continue next time, Exodus 16-18...*