

Session 2

March 11, 2018

OUR HEALER

Exodus 14:29-31; 15:22-27

The book of Exodus describes the deliverance of God's people from their bondage in Egypt, and traces their long and eventful journey to the Promised Land, that place of milk and honey. In so doing, the story illustrates God's deliverance of us—His people—from the bondage of sin, and our spiritual journey into the abundant, victorious Christian life. But just as there were some bumps along the way for Israel, so too are there some bumps for us. This week's lesson shows us God's working in the lives of His people to get them where they need to be.

God's power displayed (14:29-31). Exodus is a story filled with miracles demonstrating God's sovereign power. From the mysterious plagues that brought King Pharaoh to his knees, to the provision of manna and quail in the desert, God was working in supernatural ways. But few miraculous events of the Old Testament match the marvel of God's people Israel crossing the Red Sea on dry ground. In that story we see *utter desperation* followed by *absolute deliverance*. Not only did the children of Israel escape, but their enemy was destroyed (their bodies washed up "dead on the seashore") and God's people didn't even have to get their feet wet! So impressive was this event that it is referred to time and again in the New Testament as a witness to God's power and provision (see 1 Cor. 10:1ff; Acts 7:36ff; Heb. 11:29). Notice as well the result: God's display of power brought reverence toward God and respect to His servant Moses (14:31).

God's people doubt (15:22-25). But their reverence toward God and respect toward Moses are short lived. Just three days later, the people found themselves stranded in the wilderness with no water. The spring they found was a putrid mix they couldn't physically drink. The *grumbling* of verse 24 is most often translated as *murmuring*, that wonderfully descriptive term of "barely heard but easily understood" complaining. Since Moses was deemed responsible for this fiasco, the complaints were leveled at him. In response, Moses wisely "cried out to the Lord," who showed Moses a tree that—like the cross of Christ—when properly applied, turned the bitter into sweet. And thus the pattern is set: God's miraculous provision, followed by the people's complaints, followed by Moses' intercession, followed by God's faithful deliverance. Sadly, this cycle would become the norm for the next 40 years of wilderness wandering.

God's promise demonstrated (15:25-27). Unlike the people He saved, God's faithfulness is unwavering. The Lord used this opportunity to straighten some things out. The words *statute* and *ordinance* are legal terms. Typically, a statute is broader and more formal while an ordinance is more local and less formal. I take this to imply that the covenant offered has both timeless principles as well as immediate applications. The promise presented two conditions. First, the Lord required the *right attitude*. The people were to be "careful" and "pay attention" to His commands. This implies a certain contemplation and understanding. Second, the Lord required the *right actions*: they were to "obey" and "do what is right" in *His* eyes, not their own. Such faithfulness to the Lord would be rewarded by protection from the harmful maladies afflicting the Egyptians. While this may refer specifically to the physical diseases the people had witnessed during their enslavement in Egypt, it no doubt reminded them of the recent awful plagues the Lord brought against Egypt that led them to this place. The declaration "for I am Yahweh who heals you" (v. 26) reminded them of His affection toward them as well as His power over them. Notably, the Lord gave them a taste of the affections available to them: peaceful rest in an oasis of cool shade, fresh fruit, and pure water.