

## 12.09 Marah and Elim (Exodus 15:22–27; Numbers 33:8, 9; Deuteronomy 28:15, 27)

(This lesson could be combined with 12.08b Red Sea Song of Deliverance and/or 12.10 Manna.)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows.

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools

- “Life of Moses” Series 2 Flash-a-Cards from A Beka Book and/or pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- (optional) *Herein Is Love Commentary Series; Exodus, A Commentary for Children*, by Nancy Ganz, Shepherd Press, 2002.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *statute*: a law or principle

### Scripture: (NASB)

**Exodus 15:22** Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. **23** When they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore it was named Marah. **24** So the people grumbled at Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” **25** Then he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree; and he threw *it* into the waters, and the waters became sweet.

There He made for them a statute and regulation, and there He tested them. **26** And He said, “If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer.”

**27** Then they came to Elim where there *were* twelve springs of water and seventy date palms, and they camped there beside the waters.

**Numbers 33: 8** And they set out from before Hahiroth and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and they went a three days’ journey in the wilderness of Etham and camped at Marah. **9** And they set out from Marah and came to Elim; at Elim there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there.

**15** “But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you. . . . **27** “The LORD will smite you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors and with the scab and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed.

### Introduction/Review:

“It’s all over except for the shouting,” according to an old saying. What was all over—what was done? The stupendous deliverance of two and one-half million children of Israel from Egypt after ten signs of judgment, the crossing of the Red Sea on dry ground, and the drowning of the Egyptian enemies. Shouting certainly took place; the people of Israel composed and ✓lustily sang a song that praised God in highest terms. “They believed God” (Exodus 14:31). Well, duh, shouldn’t they believe God after He had performed all these miraculous signs for them?

### Story:

Now it was time to get on with the journey to the Promised Land. Moses led the people as he followed

God's pillar of cloud and of fire. Remember, God was leading them, even through difficult places.

### ***No water***

Israel went out into the wilderness of Shur [locate]—one day, two days, three days. Three days is a long time to travel without finding water, and the people were getting worried. Finally, they approached a place with water! ✓“Let's get a drink!” they might have exclaimed as they rushed toward the water.

“Oh, no! Yuck!! This is terrible water. It's bitter. We can't even drink it!” they shouted. “Moses, what shall we drink?”

Moses didn't know what to do; so he cried out to the LORD. The LORD showed him a tree, and Moses threw it into the water. Another miracle! The water became sweet and drinkable, and the people drank to their fill.

### ***No diseases***

At that point God gave a statute, the law, to the people that required some faithfulness on their part. God said, “If you will really listen to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight and pay attention and keep all His commandments, I will put none of the diseases on you that I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer.” So, what did God require of His people? [That they pay attention to and obey His commandments.] What did God promise if the people earnestly did what is right in God's sight? [To protect them against the diseases from which the Egyptians suffered.]

On the other hand, God said He would put *on* His people those same diseases if they disobeyed. We learn from Deuteronomy 28:27 what some of these diseases were: boils (KJV *botch*, which might be leprosy), tumors, the scab, and the itch.\* Not one sounds pleasant, does it?

After being at Marah, God's caravan continued to Elim [locate]. This is one of the most refreshing camps of the entire journey, for it had twelve springs of water and seventy date palms. What a provision! The children of Israel camped there beside the water and probably ate that sweet treat, dates.

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\*Included in the botch, was a sharp pricking in the skin like needles. “So Vansleb says, ‘The waters of the Nile cause an itch in the skin, which troubles such as drink of them when the river increases. This itch is very small, and appears first about the arms, next upon the stomach, and spreads all about the body, which causes a grievous pain . . . and it lasts about six weeks.’” The word *tumors* is *emerods* (hemorrhoids) in the KJV. The scab is moist and the itch is dry, “and both very distressing” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/deuteronomy-28-27.html>).

### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- We see Jesus:  
Jesus said, “Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14).  
Jesus healed all the diseases mentioned in Deuteronomy (Matthew 4:23, 24).  
On Palm Sunday, the people ushered Jesus into Jerusalem with palm branches.
- This was the second time the people griped since leaving Egypt. Oh, how easy it is to forget God's ability to do all things. He cares about our welfare.
- A bitter person can be made sweet by Jesus Christ.

### **Activities:**

- Play dough: any tree; palm tree; wells
- Snack:

See this site, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/315252042636514817/>, for a photo of palm trees made from kiwi (or apples) for leaves, sliced banana coins for the tree trunk, and orange sections for land.

Have students taste bitter water (with vinegar in it) and fresh water.

Allow students to taste a bit of a date. Give more to students who like the taste.

- Have students count to twelve by 1s, 2s, 3s, 4s, and 6s.
- Have students count to seventy by tens by holding up ten fingers and flashing them seven times as they count.
- Sing “The Water Was Bitter” found below.
- Give a short science lesson about the date palm, emphasizing the creative genius of God. The following website has good information: <https://www.eduplace.com/kids/hmxs/g3/lifecycles/cricket/sect2cc.shtml>.
- Review questions: (Game: On a chalkboard or white marker board draw two columns. The title at the head of one column is *Bitter*, and the other column’s title is *Sweet*. The student who answers a question incorrectly will draw a cup or glass in the *Bitter* column. A correct answer allows a student to draw a cup or glass in the *Fresh* column.)
  1. How many days did the children of Israel travel from the Red Sea before they found water? [Three.]
  2. What was wrong with the water? [It was bitter.]
  3. What is the name of this place? The name means “bitter.” [Marah.]
  4. What did the people cry out to Moses? [“What shall we drink?”]
  5. How did God say to sweeten the bitter water? [Throw a tree into it.]
  6. What did God say he would not do if His people obeyed Him? [Not bring any of the Egyptians’ diseases on them.]
  7. To what area did the children of Israel come next? [Elim.]
  8. What was special about Elim? What was there? [Twelve springs of water and seventy date palm trees.]

#### **Memory Verse[s]: (ESV)**

- John 4:14—[Jesus said,] “Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

#### **Handwork:**

- Make a palm tree craft from toilet paper rolls, a plastic jar lid, green construction paper. See instructions at <https://www.allkidsnetwork.com/crafts/summer/palm-tree-craft.asp>.

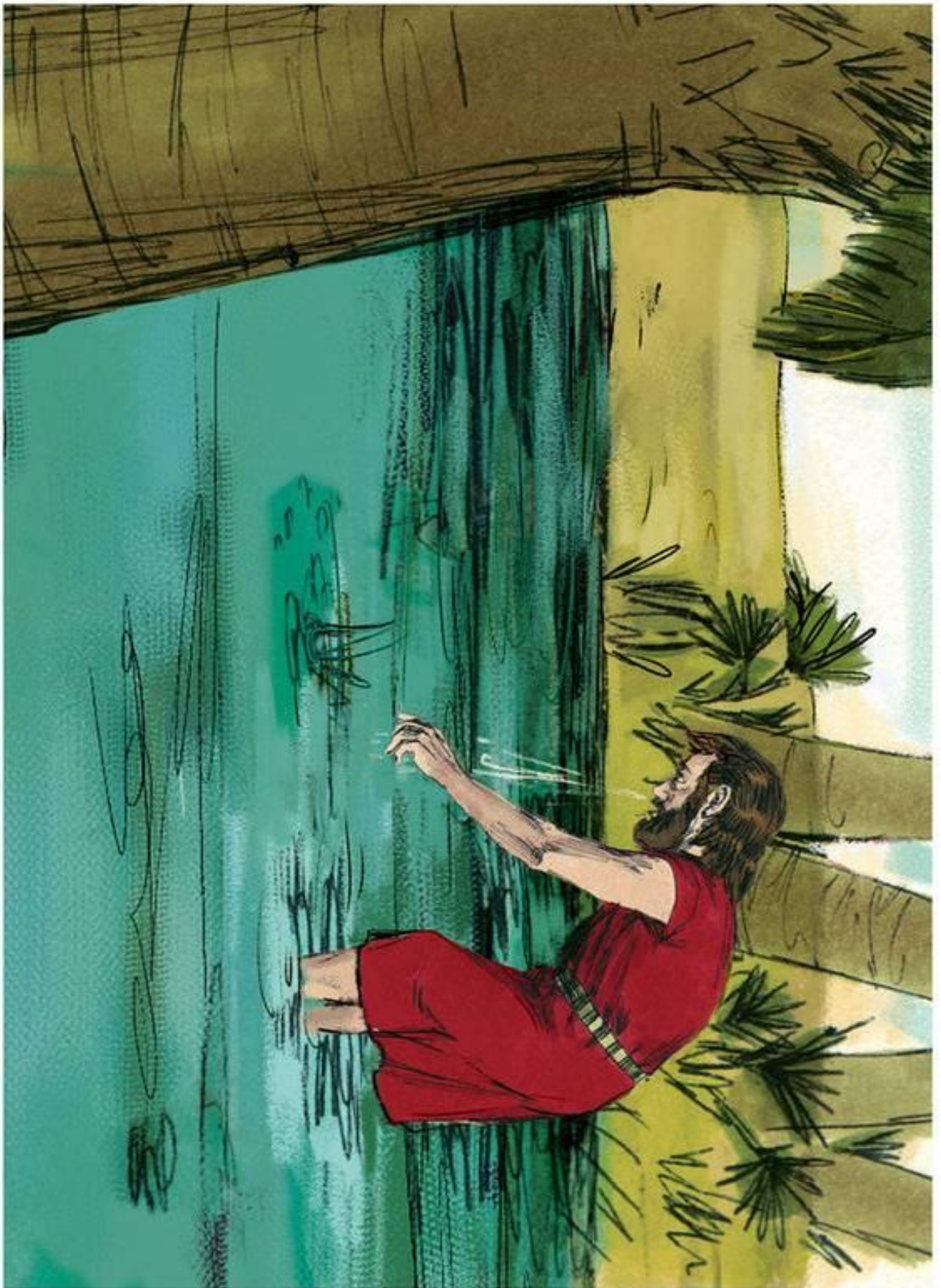
**statute**

# The Exodus From Egypt

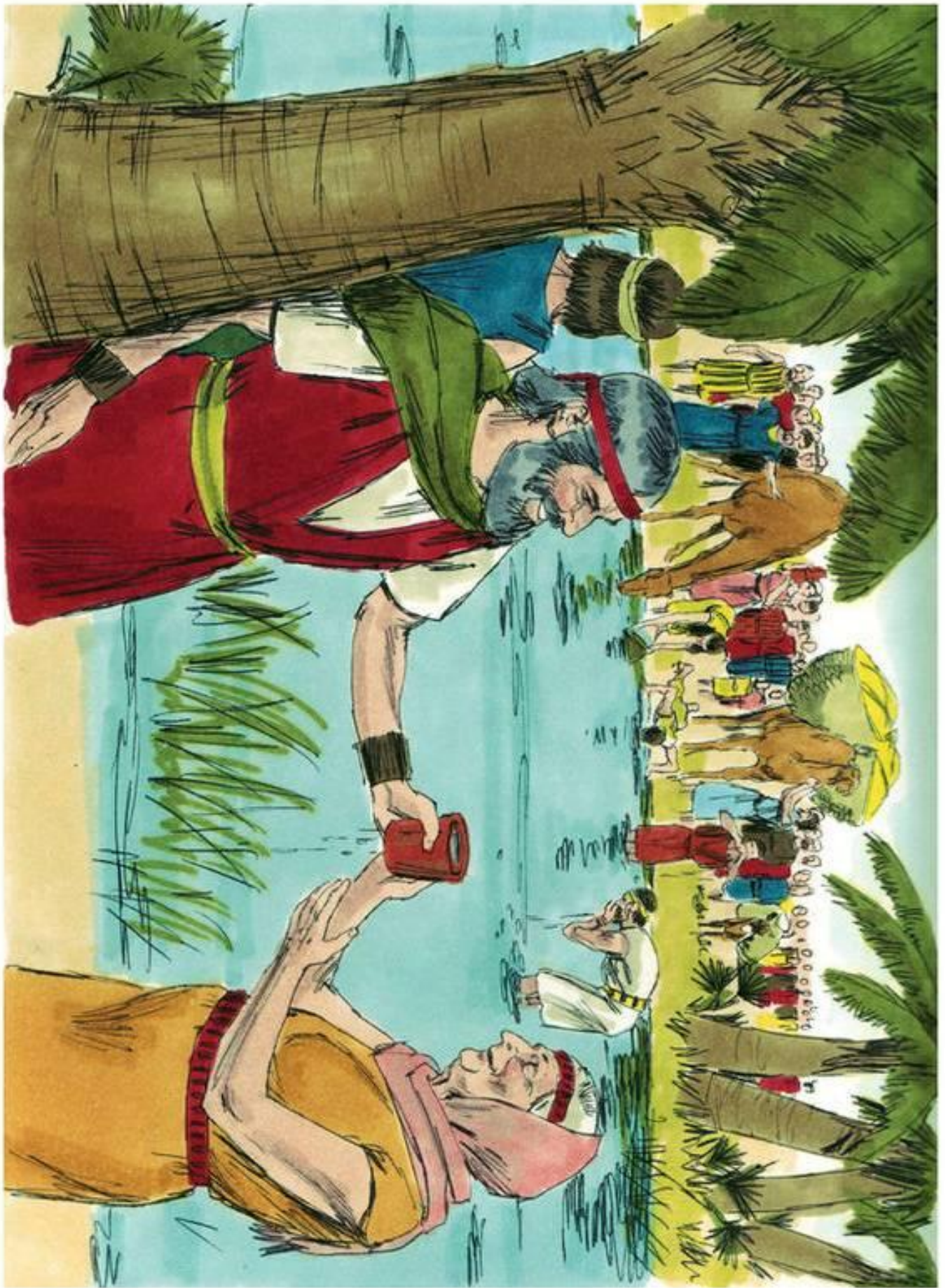
Nuweiba Beach Crossing -- Sinai at Jabal al-Lawz



















12.09

# The Water Was Bitter

M. Alexander

The musical score is written on two staves in G major (one sharp) and common time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the song, with lyrics underneath. The second staff begins with a measure rest marked with a '4', indicating a four-measure rest, before continuing the melody for the second line of the song. The lyrics are aligned with the notes on the staves.

The wa-ter was bit-ter; the peo-ple com-plained. God showed Mo-ses a tree;

He put it in the wa - ter. The wa - ter was made fresh!