

I. What do the waters of Marah teach us?

- A. That God intentionally sometimes brings us into times of suffering.
- B. That his purpose is to test us.
- C. That the path through suffering and testing is obedience.

II. What do the springs and trees of Elim teach us?

- A. That God will bring us times of refreshment and abundance. (John 7:38)
- B. That God will one day bring each of us to a place of unending healing and rest.
- C. That God will one day turn the world itself from a place of bitterness to a place of healing.

III. What does God's command to Moses and word to his people teach us?

- A. If they heard and obeyed the word of God, the Healer, they would be protected from the curses that had come on God's and their enemies, the Egyptians.
- B. They would prosper if they obeyed and suffer if they disobeyed.

IV. Do we Christians prosper if we obey and suffer if we disobey? Yes.

- A. All blessings have been won for us by Jesus Christ; our obedience is an *occasion* for blessing.
- B. Suffering for disobedience is disciplinary, intended to rebuke for sin.
- C. It is the Holy Spirit's work that enables us to do anything at all that pleases God.
- D. The cross of Jesus Christ, not prosperity nor suffering is God's *final* or *clearest* word to us.
- E. God's fatherly discipline of his children is founded on our adoption through Christ.
- F. Sufferings that from "outside" appear unfair manifest God's love from "inside".
- G. God constructed the world according to wisdom, and it still works that way.

V. Healing bitter waters: the cross of Jesus Christ

- A. The focus is on *God's* action, *God's* identity as "the LORD your healer".
- B. The central problem or question of the Bible is: how can God show any goodness to rebels?
- C. God must somehow take that curse on himself, in order to remove it from his people. (Isaiah 53:5; 2 Corinthians 2:51; Matthew 26:39; 27:34)
- D. His cross was the tree that truly removed the curse, and healed the world.
- E. His cross means that we can receive refreshment in a dry and waterless place. (Psalm 63:1)
- F. His cross means that obedience to God is no longer bitter and frightening.
- G. The cross means that the curse is removed, the healing is accomplished, God is our healer.
- H. And not just of us as individuals: healing for the whole world. (Ezekiel 47:1-9)