

Exodus Chapter Fifteen

Overview and Outline of Exodus Chapter Fifteen

Exodus chapter fifteen contains a song commemorating the Lord delivering Israel at the Red Sea by destroying the Egyptian army that was pursuing them. The chapter is divided into two major sections: (1) Israel's song of deliverance (1-18). (2) Israel begins to grumble against the Lord and the Lord providing water for Israel at Marah (22-27).

The song is divided into three sections: (1) Praise of God (1b-3). (2) The reason for praising Him (4-13) (3) The reaction of the surrounding nations to the Lord delivering Israel at the Red Sea (14-16). (4) God is a sanctuary for Israel (17-18).

Exodus 15:19-21 is a prose summation and contains Miriam's reprise of the hymn.

The song emphasizes with the reader that God's acts of deliverance of His people inspire praise of Him from His people. It also emphasizes that God's mighty acts deliver His people from those who commit evil. The song also stresses that when God demonstrates His sovereignty by delivering His people from the forces of evil, He inspires in His people confidence in Himself.

This song is an appropriate climax to the story of God delivering Israel from the bondage of Egypt. It focuses upon the character and nature of God with emphasis upon His attributes of sovereignty and omnipotence.

Israel's exodus from Egypt was an event of supreme importance in Israel's history since it marked their liberation from Egyptian slavery by means of the omnipotence of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was the result of God acting on His promises to the patriarchs to give their descendants the land of Canaan. This song in chapter 15 expresses in powerful terms the nation of Israel's exodus from Egypt. This ancient hymn continues to be song in the synagogue worship of Judaism. The fact that it continues to be employed expresses the fact that the Exodus of Israel emphasizes God's sovereign control over the nations, over the forces of evil and nature.

The song expresses the great joy that took place in Israel when they were delivered by God from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea. This song was an expression of the worship of Yahweh in Israel. Their worship of the Lord was the direct result of His delivering them by His mighty power. It was the result of His redeeming the nation of Israel.

There are four English words, "reverence," "respect," "awe," and "wonder," which express the concept of worshipping God.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun "reverence": "A feeling or attitude of deep respect tinged with awe; veneration."

Therefore, paraphrasing this definition we would say that the Israelites' response to the Lord delivering them from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea by means of His divine omnipotence was to possess an attitude of deep respect and awe for the Lord.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun "respect": "esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person, a personal quality or trait, or something considered as a manifestation of a personal quality or trait."

The Israelites' response to the Lord delivering them from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea by means of His divine omnipotence was to esteem the excellence of His Person as manifested through His attributes of omnipotence and sovereignty.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun "awe": "an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration, fear, etc. produced by that which is grand, sublime, extremely powerful or the like."

The Israelites' response to the Lord delivering them from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea by means of His divine omnipotence was to possess an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration for the Lord.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun "wonder": "to be filled with admiration, amazement or awe; marvel."

The Israelites' response to the Lord delivering them from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea by means of His divine omnipotence was one of being filled with admiration, amazement and awe.

Warren Wiersbe writes, "True wonder reaches right into your heart and mind and shakes you up. It not only has depth, it has value; it enriches your life. Wonder is not cheap amusement that brings a smile to your face. It is an encounter with reality, with God, which brings awe to your heart. You're overwhelmed with an emotion that is a mixture of gratitude, adoration, reverence, fear-and love. You're not looking for explanations; you're lost in the wonder of God" (Real Worship, page 43, Baker Books).

Therefore, paraphrasing this comment by Wiersbe on wonder we would say that the Israelites' response to the Lord delivering them from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea by means of His divine omnipotence reached right into their hearts and shook them up and enriched their lives. It overwhelmed them with an emotion that was a mixture of gratitude, adoration, reverence, fear and love for the Lord. They weren't looking for explanations since they were lost in the wonder of God. Therefore, the Israelites worshipped the Lord in the sense that they were manifesting an attitude of deep reverence, respect and awe of the Lord for such a magnificent display of His power and promise of deliverance. Therefore, when the Israelites worshipped the Lord they were expressing thanks to Him.

Worship is adoring contemplation of God as He has been revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Person of Christ and in the Scriptures and is also the loving ascription

of praise to God for what He is, both in Himself and in His ways and is the bowing of the soul and spirit in deep humility and reverence before Him.

Warren Wiersbe defines worship, “Worship is the believer’s response of all that they are –mind, emotions, will and body-to what God is and says and does. This response has its mystical side in subjective experience and its practical side in objective obedience to God’s revealed will. Worship is a loving response that’s balanced by the fear of the Lord, and it is a deepening response as the believer comes to know God better”.¹

If we paraphrase Wiersbe’s definition, we could say the following: The Israelites worshipped the Lord in the sense that they were responding in their minds, emotions, and bodies to what the Lord is and did for them at the Red Sea.

The song of deliverance in chapter 15 expresses the emotional reaction of Moses and the Israelites to the Lord performing the most astounding miracle of parting the Red Sea so that they could be delivered from the pursuing Egyptian army and destroying this army. This great miracle of delivering 2.5 million Israelites is without parallel in Israel’s history.

The most powerful nation on the earth, Egypt was destroyed by the Lord without even one Israelite losing their life or having to engage the Egyptian army in combat. The nation of Israel had been taught a principle of the spiritual life, namely that God’s power is manifested in human impotence. When they are weak, then they are strong. Paul was taught this by the Lord and taught it to his congregations (2 Corinthians 12:10-11).

They have also learned first hand that what was impossible for man is not impossible with God. They appeared to be trapped. They were between the Egyptian army and the Red Sea. They appeared to be caught between a rock and a hard place. However, they learned that God can do the impossible. They also learned at the Red Sea that God is faithful to His promises. When He says He will deliver them by His power, He does so.

Exodus 15:1-3: Praise of God

Exodus 15:1 Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and said, “I will sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted; The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. 2 The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father’s God, and I will extol Him. 3 The Lord is a warrior; The Lord is His name.” (NASB95)

¹ Real Worship, 26

“**Lord**” is the proper noun *yhwh* (יהוה), which is the personal name of God emphasizing the “immanency” of God meaning that He involves Himself in and concerns Himself with and intervenes in the affairs of men whereas *Elohim*, “**God**” emphasizes the transcendent character of God. It is the personal covenant name of God emphasizing that the Lord involved Himself in and concerned Himself with and intervened in the lives of the Israelites and fulfilled His covenant promises He made to the patriarchs. It indicates that God was faithful to His covenant promises to the patriarchs and to their descendants, the Israelites.

“**For He is highly exalted**” emphasizes that the Lord demonstrated Himself as superior to the gods of the Egyptians as a result of delivering Israel from Egyptian bondage by the ten plagues and destroying the Egyptian army at the Red Sea.

“**The Lord is my strength**” emphasizes a great spiritual truth that human strength is inadequate when faced with an impossible situation. It stresses that the Israelites overcame an impossible situation in Egypt with God’s power and not by their own human power and strength and ability.

The Lord is “**my song**” indicates that the demonstration of the Lord’s power at the Red Sea is the motivation for the song here in chapter 15. It emphasizes that the Lord and His mighty acts are the motivation for this song of joy.

“**He has become my salvation**” is an acknowledgement by Moses and the Israelites that the Lord had delivered them from Egypt. It expresses a personal relationship with Israel.

“**This is my God and I will praise Him**” expresses a personal relationship in the Lord.

“**My father’s God**” expresses the relationship between Israel’s faith in the Lord and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s faith in the Lord. This phrase emphasizes that they both share the same faith in the same God.

“**The Lord is a warrior**” is an acknowledgement by Israel that victory on the battlefield is the direct result of the Lord’s intervention on their behalf. It is an acknowledgment they would have chance whatsoever against the mightiest superpower in the world at the time, Egypt, if the Lord had not fought for them against Egypt.

Douglas Stuart writes, “In saying that “the LORD [Yahweh] is a warrior, the LORD [Yahweh] is his name,” the song asserts God’s willingness to fight for his people against their foes. Israel was being formed as a small people in a world used to wars of aggression by other small people, by coalitions of peoples large and small, and/or by great, imperialistic superpowers (the prime example of the latter being Egypt, as they all too well knew). Israel at Mount Sinai would be born by covenant into a world whose values would be almost entirely different from and usually opposed to their own. Therefore they would have to fight and fight often. Indeed, they would have to fight their first real battle as an army in a matter of

weeks, even before they reached Mount Sinai, against the Amalekites at Rephidim (17:8–16). On their own they could never hope to win against odds that were almost always stacked against them. Therefore it was important that they understood their God to be *a warrior*, one who would lead them into battle, who would fight for them during battles, and who would ensure their survival as his people. He was to define their battles for them, deciding when and where to go to war (cf. 17:16). They were to have no allies, no dependency on other foreign powers, no confidence in any earthly deliverer but only in the one true God, their God, Yahweh. In a fallen world hostile to his purposes, Yahweh must be a warrior.”²

Exodus 15:4-13: The Reason for Praising God

Exodus 15:4 “Pharaoh’s chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; And the choicest of his officers are drowned in the Red Sea. 5 The deeps cover them; They went down into the depths like a stone. 6 Your right hand, O Lord, is majestic in power, Your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy. 7 And in the greatness of Your excellence You overthrow those who rise up against You; You send forth Your burning anger, and it consumes them as chaff. 8 At the blast of Your nostrils the waters were piled up, the flowing waters stood up like a heap; The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea. 9 The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; My desire shall be gratified against them; I will draw out my sword, my hand will destroy them.’ 10 You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them; They sank like lead in the mighty waters. 11 Who is like You among the gods, O Lord? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders? 12 You stretched out Your right hand, the earth swallowed them. 13 In Your lovingkindness You have led the people whom You have redeemed; In Your strength You have guided them to Your holy habitation.” (NASB95)

Verses 4-5 reveal that the Lord destroyed the best the Egyptian army could offer. They were the best fighters. The Egyptian military was the best in the world in the days of Moses. They had the best soldiers and the best officers and here we have Moses telling the reader that the elite portion of this mighty military was destroyed by the Lord at the Red Sea, which would make this deliverance even more impressive.

The “**right hand**” in verse 6 speaks of God’s power as manifested at the Red Sea in drowning the elite portion of the Egyptian military.

² Stuart, D. K. (2007). *Vol. 2: Exodus* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (350). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Verse 7 teaches that God's destruction of those who oppose Him and the manifestation of His righteous indignation are inherent aspects of God's person and expressions of His holiness.

Verse 8 describes the miracle of the Lord parting the Red Sea where He employed a great wind to part the sea which produced a pathway for Israel to go to the other side that had a wall of water on each side.

The NET Bible has the following note "The word 'heap' describes the walls of water. The waters, which are naturally fluid, stood up as though they were a heap, a mound of earth. Likewise, the flowing waters deep in the ocean solidified – as though they were turned to ice (U. Cassuto, *Exodus*, 175)".³

"**The blast of His nostrils**" is a poetic metaphor to describe the wind used to produce this miracle as originating from the Lord.

In verse 9, we have insight into what the Egyptian army was thinking as they pursued the Israelites. They expected to plunder the Israelites. They expected victory. They were planning to crush the Israelites. It expresses their great arrogance since they failed to remember that the Lord delivered the Israelites with the ten plagues and could deliver the Israelites from them at the Red Sea.

Verse 10 tells the reader describes the Lord's decisive victory over the Egyptian army. It says that this elite force of the Egyptian military was soundly defeated by the Lord and would never cause Israel a problem again.

"**Who is like the Lord among the gods?**" is a rhetorical question that demands a negative response and expresses the uniqueness of the Lord and His infinite superiority over the fallen or non-elect angels ("**the gods**") who are under the authority of Satan.

"**Holiness**" in verse 11 refers to the absolute perfection of the Lord's character, expressing His purity of character or moral perfection and excellence, thus making God totally separate from sin and sinners.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines "holiness" as "the quality or state of being holy; sanctity" and they define "sanctity" as, "sacred or hallowed character."

One of the definitions that Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary gives for the adjective "holy" is, "entitled to worship or profound religious reverence because of divine character or origin or connection with God or divinity."

One of the definitions for the noun "character" that Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary provides that applies to the context of our passage is the following: "the aggregate of features and traits that form the apparent individual nature of some person or thing."

³ Biblical Studies Press. (2006; 2006). *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Ex 15:8). Biblical Studies Press.

If we paraphrase these definitions, we would say that the God's holiness refers to "the aggregate (i.e. sum total) of perfect features and traits that form the divine nature of God." Thus, God's holiness is related to all of His divine attributes or in other words, it is simply the harmony of all His perfections or attributes.

The holiness of God is the aggregate of perfect divine attributes that form the nature of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Thus, God's holiness is related to all of His divine attributes.

Therefore, the term "holiness" refers to the absolute perfection of the character of God, expressing His purity of character or moral perfection and excellence, thus making God totally separate from sin and sinners. He is totally separate from sin and sinners unless a way can be found to constitute them holy and that way has been provided based upon the merits of the impeccable Person and Finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross.

The presence of evil, sin and injustice is totally absent in the character of God, thus God does not tolerate evil or sin because it is contrary to His character, i.e. His inherent moral qualities, ethical standards and principles.

Holiness is used often to describe the Person of God.

Leviticus 22:2 "Tell Aaron and his sons to be careful with the holy gifts of the sons of Israel, which they dedicate to Me, so as not to profane My holy name; I am the LORD. (NASB95)

1 Chronicles 16:10 "Glory in His holy name; Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad." (NASB95)

Psalm 30:4 Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, and give thanks to His holy name. (NASB95)

Psalm 97:12 Be glad in the LORD, you righteous ones, and give thanks to His holy name. (NASB95)

The title "**His Holy Name**" refers to the perfect character of the Person of God. This absolute perfection of God's character is celebrated throughout the Scriptures.

Isaiah 6:3 And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." (NASB95)

Revelation 4:8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME." (NASB95)

The Lord Jesus Christ revealed the holiness or character of God during His 1st Advent.

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. (NASB95)

Therefore, holiness pertains to the sum total of God's invisible attributes, which compose the absolute perfection of His character. So Moses in Exodus 3:5 is being introduced to God's holy person.

In Exodus 15:12, "**You stretched out Your right hand**" refers to the exertion of God's power at the Red Sea.

Commenting on why this verse says that the earth swallowed up the Egyptian army when they were drowned, Stuart writes, "Since the Egyptians drowned rather than being actually swallowed by the earth, one might wonder why this wording is present in the song. The answer is that 'earth' (*'ereš*) sometimes has the meaning 'underworld' or 'hell, as it almost surely does here. Thus the meaning is, 'They didn't just fail to catch us or fail to conquer us—they lost their lives in the process!' Although it was Moses who stretched out his hand with the staff of God in it to initiate the miracle at the sea (14:21), the song can properly attribute the whole thing to Yahweh ('You stretched out your right hand'). Thus the song confirms that what Moses did he did as Yahweh's 'stand-in.'"⁴

Exodus 15:13 tells the reader that in His "**lovingkindness**" the Lord led the Israelites. "**Lovingkindness**" is the noun *hě-sěd*, which refers to God's "unconditional love" describing that He is loyal or faithful to His covenants with men and characterizes how God acts towards His covenant people Israel.

Hě-sěd is an attribute of God and thus originates with Him (1 John 4:7-8). God would continue to love even though there were no sinners because His attribute of love is a part of His divine essence.

God's love is an attribute but there are two kinds of attributes: (1) Absolute or intrinsic: those attributes that God possesses of Himself such as life and love. (2) Relative: those attributes related to His creation and especially men and angels.

For example, by nature God is truth but when God relates that truth to man, God's truth becomes faithfulness. Love is one of God's intrinsic or absolute attributes but when His love is directed towards sinners, it becomes grace and mercy and compassion.

Ephesians 2:4-7 teaches that is "God is rich in mercy" and in "grace" and these riches make it possible for sinners to be saved. We are not saved by God's love but by His grace and mercy, which are expressions of His love. He treats us in a manner that we don't deserve and this is made possible because of the spiritual death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on the cross. God manifested at the cross, His hatred of sin and His love for sinners. Therefore, one of the attributes or characteristics of God's love is that it is "merciful" meaning that God is compassionate towards His enemies and pardons them (Eph. 2:1-7). Mercy characterizes God's love.

⁴ Stuart, D. K. (2007). *Vol. 2: Exodus* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (355). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Ephesians 2:1-7 teaches that God exercised His attribute of love by being in rich in mercy in raising us up and seating us with Christ at His right hand while we were His enemies and enslaved to the sin nature and the devil.

The greatest act of love by the God-Man was His voluntary substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross. The love of God is a gift to mankind since the Lord Jesus Christ is the Father's gift to mankind and He is the love of God incarnate. The Lord Jesus Christ is the love of God incarnate since He is the God-Man (John 1:18).

All men are the objects of God's impersonal love and all believers are the objects of His personal love. Impersonal meaning that God's love does not need an attractive object. God's love is able to love the obnoxious and those who are His enemies even to the point of self-sacrifice.

Personal love means that believers are attractive to God since they have His holiness, the new Christ nature indwelling them. All church age believers are the objects of God's love and the beneficiaries of this love. We are objects of God eternal love, which He manifested to us when He sent His Son into the world to die for ours sins so that we might live with Him for eternity. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is the object of the immutable eternal unconditional self-sacrificial love of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Greek adjective *agapetos*, "beloved" expresses this fact. All church age believers are the beneficiaries of God's impersonal unconditional self-sacrificial love before salvation (John 3:16). They become the objects of God's personal love after salvation.

The imputation of divine righteousness at the moment of salvation qualifies the believer to become the objects of God's personal love. God loves the unbeliever from His own integrity because the unbeliever does not possess the perfect righteousness, which would make them worthy of God's personal love.

The believer possesses the perfect divine righteousness, which qualifies them to be objects of God's personal love. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is the object of divine love because he possesses imputed divine righteousness, which makes the believer as holy as God.

Imputed righteousness and eternal life enable the believer to enjoy and experience fellowship with God after salvation.

Before salvation, the believer was the object of God's "impersonal" love meaning that he was obnoxious and unattractive to God since he was enslaved to the cosmic system of Satan and his old Adamic sin nature and under real spiritual death. At salvation, the believer became the object of God's "personal" love meaning that the believer is attractive to God since God imputed His righteousness to the believer at the moment he exercised faith alone in Christ alone and is now a child of God and a partaker of the divine nature (1 John 3:1).

The divine-love of the Trinity expressed itself through three categories of divine grace provision: (1) Antecedent grace: Election, Predestination, and Escrow Blessings (2) Living grace: Provisions to live the spiritual life. (3) Eschatological grace: Resurrection body, rewards, and Escrow Blessings.

The divine-love of God the Father expressed itself through His work in eternity past on behalf of every church age believer: (1) Election (2) Predestination (3) Escrow Blessings (i.e. eternal inheritance).

The divine-love of God the Son expressed itself through His work in time at the cross: (1) Redemption (2) Propitiation (3) Reconciliation.

The divine-love of God the Holy Spirit expressed itself through His work from regeneration to resurrection: (1) Efficacious grace (2) Regeneration (3) Baptism of the Spirit (4) Indwelling of the Spirit (5) Filling of the Spirit (6) Sealing of the Spirit (7) Spiritual gifts (8) Mentorship of the Spirit (9) Fruit bearing.

The divine-love of the Trinity expressed itself toward the Christian through the provision of sixty irrevocable gifts for them at the moment of salvation. The divine-love of God the Father expressed itself through His plan for the incarnation of the Son, which was designed to provide salvation for all mankind. The divine-love of God the Son expressed itself through His willingness to volunteer His services to execute the incarnation plan of God the Father. The divine-love of the humanity of Christ in hypostatic union expressed itself through His voluntary spiritual death on the cross as a substitute for all mankind. The divine-love of the Holy Spirit expressed itself through His work of making the gospel understandable at the point of salvation and also performing His seven salvation ministries when an individual believes in the Lord Jesus for salvation.

Love is an attribute that helps to compose the essence of the Triune God. Essence means “inner nature, true substance, a person’s qualities or attributes,” and implies being or existence. Some of these qualities of a person are visible and some are invisible. God’s essence is made up of attributes, which are essential characteristics of the Trinity and without these qualities, God would not be who He is-God. We can only understand God’s essence through His attributes.

The Scriptures teach that God is three co-equal, co-infinite and co-eternal Persons with the same identical essence or attributes (Gen. 1:26; Isa. 6:3, 8; 48:16; John 10:30 cf. Ps. 110:1; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2). God is one in essence, three in Person. All the invisible attributes of God are always present in Him, but not all are revealed to man at the same time. We understand the personality of God from the Scriptures, which reveal the manifestations of His attributes.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the love of God incarnate since He is the God-Man who has explained the character and nature of God, and thus has explained the love of God perfectly since love is an attribute of God (cf. Jn. 1:18).

The love of God was manifested perfectly to the entire human race through the Father's sacrifice of His Son at the cross of Calvary and the Son's willingness to be that sacrifice. God manifested His attribute of love by raising the Christian up when the Christian was under real spiritual death and seating the Christian with Christ at His right hand (Eph. 2:1-10).

The divine-love of God the Father expressed itself through His work in eternity past on behalf of every church age believer: (1) Election (2) Predestination (3) Eternal inheritance) (Eph. 1:1-14).

The divine-love of God the Son expressed itself through His work in time at the Cross: (1) Redemption: The Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross-purchased the entire human race out from the slave market of sin with His substitutionary spiritual death (Mark 10:45; 1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). (2) Propitiation: The Lord Jesus Christ satisfied the righteousness of God with His substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross-as the payment for our sins (Lev. 1; 16; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). (3) Reconciliation: God's peace treaty with the entire human race as a result of the substitutionary spiritual death of Christ the Cross which removed the Barrier which separated mankind from God (2 Cor. 5:18-21; Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 1:20-21).

Mediatorship of Christ: Our Lord as the God-Man is the Peacemaker or Mediator between God and man (Eph. 2:14-16; 1 Tim. 2:5).

At the present time, the Lord Jesus Christ is expressing His divine-love towards the believer through His Advocacy for the believer at the right hand of the Father where He defends the believer against the accusations of Satan (1 John 2:1).

The divine-love of God the Holy Spirit expresses itself through His seven salvation ministries on behalf of the believer: (1) Efficacious Grace: Makes faith in Jesus Christ effective for salvation (2 Cor. 6:1-2; Eph. 2:8-9). (2) Regeneration: Creates a human spirit for the purpose of the imputation of eternal life (John 3:1-16; Titus 3:5). (3) Baptism of the Spirit: Places every believer in union with Jesus Christ (John 7:37-39; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:5; 1 Pet. 3:21). (4) Indwelling: Creates a temple for the indwelling of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:16). (5) Filling: Influences the soul of the believer in executing the plan of God for the church age (Eph. 5:18). (6) Sealing: Puts His stamp on the believer to guarantee his salvation (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). (7) Distribution of Spiritual Gifts: Gives every believer a spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:4-11; 1 Pet. 4:10).

God the Holy Spirit's post-salvation ministries on behalf of the believer: (1) Empowers the believer to execute the plan of God (Jo. 14:16, 26; Ga. 5:16, 25; Eph. 5:18; Phlp. 2:13). (2) Reproduces Christ-like character (fruit of the Spirit) in the believer (Ga. 4:19; 5:5, 16-23). (3) Teaches the believer the doctrines of Christ (Jo. 14:26; 1 Co. 2:10-16; 1 Jo. 2:20, 27).

The fact that we are beneficiaries of God's divine-love before salvation and objects of His personal love after salvation is designed to not only bless us but also to encourage us when we go through adversity in life and also serves to challenge us to advance to maturity and execute the plan of God.

The love of God has many characteristics: (1) Loyal (John 21:7, 15-16, 20; Rom. 8:35, 39; Eph. 5:28). (2) Self-sacrificial (John 3:16; 15:13; Gal. 2:20). (3) Eternal (John 17:26). (4) Kind (1 Cor. 13:4). (5) Not self-centered (bragging, jealous) (1 Cor. 13:4). (6) Immutable (Rm. 8:39). (7) Unconditional (Rm. 8:35, 39). (8) Faithful (Rm. 8:35, 39). (9) Compassionate (1 John 3:16-17). (10) Merciful (1 John 3:16-17). (11) Righteous and Just (Rm. 13:8-10). (12) Thoughtful and Considerate (Rm. 13:8-10). (13) Truthful or Honest (1 Cor. 13:6). (14) Long-suffering (1 Cor. 13:4). (15) Enduring (1 Cor. 13:7). (16) Confident in the Future (1 Cor. 13:7). (17) Forgiving (Eph. 4:32-5:2). (18) Tolerant (Eph. 4:2). (19) Giving (John 3:16; Gal. 2:20). (20) Encourages Others (1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11). (21) Prays for Others (Jam. 5:16). (22) Considers Others More Important Than Self (Phlp. 2:3). (23) Considerate Others (Phlp. 4:10-18). (24) Shares Another's Burden in Adversity (Gal. 6:2). (25) Delights in Being Obedient to God (John 14:23-24). (26) Reciprocates (Phlp. 1:3-7). (27) Sincere (1 Pet. 1:22).

God's love is sacrificial (1 John 3:16). God's love is impersonal meaning that God does not need an attractive object to love since He simply loves from His own nature (Romans 5:8). His love is immutable meaning that is never changes (Micah 7:18-20). God's love is eternal meaning it has not beginning and no end and is ever present (John 17:24). His love is unconditional and faithful (Romans 8:38-39).

God's love is "forgiving" (Eph. 4:32-5:2). God's love is "tolerant" of others (Eph. 4:2). His love intercedes for others in prayer (Jam. 5:16). God's love is "merciful" meaning that God is compassionate towards His enemies and pardons them (Eph. 2:1-7). His love is "forgiving" meaning that if we live according to God's love we will pardon those who have sinned against us just as God in Christ granted us a free pardon and gave us the remission of our sins based upon the merits of the Person and Work of Christ on the Cross (Eph. 4:32-5:2).

God's love is "tolerant" meaning that if we live according to God's love we will be able to put up with or endure with those whose opinions differ from one's own (Eph. 4:2). His love is also "impersonal" meaning that God can love from His own divine nature sinners who are obnoxious and unattractive to Him. It is "giving" meaning that God in His love provided the entire human race eternal life as a gift, voluntarily and without expecting any compensation in return (John 3:16; Gal. 2:20).

God's love is "immutable" meaning that His love for us can never change (Rm. 8:39). It is "unconditional" meaning that no matter what sin the believer commits

after salvation or how unfaithful the believer is after salvation, God will never ever disown the believer (Rm. 8:35, 39).

God's love is "faithful" meaning that He is true or eternally bound to His promise to save us through faith alone in Christ alone and keep us saved (Rm. 8:35, 39). It is "loyal" meaning that He is faithful to His promise to give us eternal salvation and is unswerving in His allegiance to us (John 21:7, 15-16, 20; Rom. 8:35, 39; Eph. 5:28).

God's love is "compassionate" meaning that God intensely desires and will act to alleviate the pain and suffering of another or remove its cause (1 John 3:16-17). It is "righteous" meaning that He is fair (Rm. 13:8-10). God's love is "just" meaning that His love is based upon truth, justice and fairness (Rm. 13:8-10). It "encourages" others meaning that the one who operates in the love of God will inspire with confidence others and stimulate others by assistance and approval (1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11).

God's love "reciprocates" meaning that believers operating in God's love will have a mutual exchange of care and concern for one another and will compliment one another gracefully and will return love for one another (Phlp. 1:3-7). It is "sincere" meaning that if we live according to God's love we will be free from hypocrisy, deceit and will be genuine and real (1 Pet. 1:21-22).

God's love is "magnanimous" meaning that the believer who lives according to God's love will be generous in forgiving insults and injuries without being vindictive and becoming involved in petty resentfulness.

Magnanimity is related to forgiveness (Col. 3:13-14). God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are inherently magnanimous. It is one of their attributes. The Lord Jesus Christ during His 1st Advent revealed this magnanimous character of the Trinity. The greatest manifestation of God's magnanimity was at the Cross when every sin in human history, past, present and future was imputed to Christ on the Cross and He was judged as our substitute. Our Lord's magnanimous behavior was demonstrated during His First Advent by the manner in which He demonstrated the quality of being generous in forgiving insults and injury without being pettily resentful or vindictive (Luke 23:34).

He was noble in character, loving justice but not insisting upon the letter of the law in order to preserve the spirit of the law. The Lord was generous in forgiving insults and injuries without being vindictive and becoming involved in petty resentfulness. He was generous, tolerant, patient, moderate, courageous, and noble. He did not insist upon his own rights to the fullest but rectifies and redresses the injustices of justice.

In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, the apostle Paul provides us with some of the characteristics of God's love.

1 Corinthians 13:1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant. (NASB95)

“**Is patient**” is the verb *makrothumeo*. If the believer lives according to God’s love, he will be “patient” in the sense that he will endure provocation, annoyance, misfortune, pain without complaint, loss of temper, and will possess the ability and willingness to suppress restlessness and annoyance in waiting for God.

“**Is kind**” is the verb *chresteuomai*. If the believer lives according to God’s love, he will be “kind” in the sense that he will exercise a sympathetic attitude towards others and will possess a willingness to do good to others and be helpful and considerate towards others.

“**Is not jealous**” is composed of the emphatic negative particle *ouk* and the verb *zeloo*. The believer who lives according to God’s love will not be “jealous” of others in the sense that he will not become resentful, intolerant and suspicious of another’s success, possessions or relationships.

“**Is not arrogant**” is composed of the emphatic negative particle *ouk* (ou)jk) and the verb *phusioo*. The believer who lives according to God’s love will not be “arrogant” or “proud” meaning that he will not have an exaggerated belief in his own importance and will not think or act as if he is superior to others.

1 Corinthians 13:5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered. (NASB95)

“**Does not act unbecomingly**” is the emphatic negative particle *ouk*, “not” and the verb *aschemoneo*, which means “to behave indecently, dishonorably, disgracefully.”

The believer who operates in the love of God will do nothing, which would cause shame or disgrace and will be tactful and courteous.

“**It does not seek its own**” means that the God’s love is “unselfish” and thus is not concerned with one’s own interests, and concerns and is not without concern for others.

God’s love considers others more important than oneself (Phlp. 2:3).

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. (NASB95)

“Is not provoked” means that God’s love is not “touchy” in the sense that it does not get exasperated with others or easily offended by others and is not provoked to anger and the loss of temper by the actions of others.

“Does not take into account a wrong suffered” meaning that if we live according to God’s love we will not keep a record of wrongs that others have committed against us in the past and therefore it denotes the concept of not holding grudges and not possessing an unforgiving spirit.

1 Corinthians 13:6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. (NASB95)

“Does not rejoice in unrighteousness,” means that if we live according to God’s love we will not rejoice in those things (whether moral or immoral) in the cosmic system of Satan, which reject God’s Word.

“Rejoices with the truth,” means that the believer who lives according to the love of God will rejoice in the Word of God being taught regardless of who the communicator is.

1 Corinthians 13:7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (NASB95)

“Bears” is the verb *stego*, which originally meant “to cover over,” and then, “to contain as a vessel.”

From this latter meaning two metaphorical uses of the word are derived, either of which may be here adopted: (a) that love hides or is silent about the faults of others; (b) that love bears without resentment injuries inflicted by others. Therefore, there are two major dimensions to love’s consistent capacity to “hold up” rather than “fold up.”

First, love bears up silently; that is, love covers sin with a cloak of silence.

1 Peter 4:8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. (NASB95)

Love always bears up, no matter how great the persecution, suffering, or adversity. Job’s wife “tempted” him to sin by urging him to “curse God and die,” thus bringing his suffering to a conclusion. Love never caves in or collapses under duress and always holds up.

“Believes all things,” means that if we live according to the love of God we will trust in God’s care for us no matter how terrible the adversity we are going through or the circumstances surrounding us.

“Hopes all things” means that if we live according to the love of God we will have “confidence” in God because of our eternal relationship with Him, no matter how terrible the adversity we are facing or the circumstances surrounding us.

“Endures all things,” means that God’s love will persevere and endure adversity without complaining.

1 Corinthians 13:8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. (NASB95)

“Love never fails,” means that God’s love is eternal and will endure forever. God’s love is “eternal” meaning it has not beginning and no end and is ever present (John 17:26).

1 Corinthians 13:9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. 13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love. (NASB95)

If we compare 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 with the “fruit of the Spirit” recorded in Galatians 5:22-23, we will see that all of the characteristics of God’s love show up in that fruit.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (NASB95)

Each element in the fruit of the Spirit is but a different facet of divine love. Joy is love’s song. Peace is love’s repose. Patience is love’s endurance. Kindness is love’s sympathy. Goodness is love’s self-forgetfulness. Gentleness is love’s forbearance. Faithfulness is love’s trustworthiness. Self-control is love’s discipline.

Several of these characteristics of God’s love are directly related to the believer’s eternal security. God’s love is also “impersonal” meaning that when the believer becomes obnoxious and unattractive to God after salvation by living in his old Adamic sin nature and the cosmic system of Satan, God is still able to love the believer from His own integrity and will never disown the believer.

God’s love is also “unconditional” meaning that no matter what sin the believer commits after salvation or how unfaithful the believer is after salvation, God will never ever disown the believer.

God will discipline His children for sin if they do not confess sin but God will never disown His children.

Hebrews 12:6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES. (NASB95)

Therefore, the “impersonal” and “unconditional” characteristics of God’s love are directly related to the eternal security of the believer.

We have eternal security, as believers because God's love is impersonal and unconditional meaning that no matter what sin the believer commits after salvation God will never ever disown the believer.

The Lord Jesus Christ taught this principle to His disciples in His parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-32). The fact that God's love is unconditional insures the fact that the believer can never lose his salvation because of any act of sin since God judged His Son for every sin in human history at the cross-past, present and future because of His great love for all men (Rm. 5:6-11).

If the believer could lose his salvation for a sin that Christ was already judged for as our Substitute, then God would be unjust and would not be acting in accordance with His own perfect virtue and integrity. Therefore, He would not be acting in love and since God is love, He would be denying Himself or who and what He is.

For God to deny Himself by disowning the believer for any sin he commits after salvation would be impossible since God's love is "immutable" meaning that it never changes towards us.

Because God is immutable, His love is immutable.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (NASB95)

Because His Son was judged as our Substitute at the cross, the Father was free to render the believer justified when he exercised faith in His Son for salvation and He would be unfair if He rescinded that decision that He made at the moment of salvation.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, because we have been justified by means of faith as a source, we, as an eternal spiritual truth, always have peace in the presence of God through our Lord who is Jesus, who is the Christ. 2 Through whom also, we have as a permanent possession access to this gracious benefit in which we forever stand and in addition we make it a habit to rejoice upon the confident expectation of sharing God's glory. (Author's translation)

The believer has eternal security because he is in union with Christ.

Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now, as an eternal spiritual truth, never any condemnation, none whatsoever for the benefit of those in union with Christ who is Jesus. (Author's translation)

If the believer could lose his salvation for any sin he committed after salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ would in effect be lying since He said the following:

John 3:18 He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (NASB95)

Because God is love is based upon truth, He will never lie to us.

Hebrews 6:17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath **18** so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. (NASB95)

God would be denying Himself and the Lord Jesus Christ would be a liar if the believer could lose his salvation through any act of sin he committed after salvation (Jn. 17:12; 2 Tim. 2:11-13).

As we noted God's love is "faithful."

Psalm 31:23 O love the LORD, all you His godly ones! The LORD preserves the faithful and fully recompenses the proud doer. **24** Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the LORD. (NASB95)

2 Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. (NASB95)

1 Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. (NASB95)

God's love is faithful, unconditional, impersonal, immutable and truthful towards the believer after salvation no matter how unfaithful the believer becomes after salvation because love is who God is.

1 John 4:16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (NASB95)

Therefore, there is nothing after salvation the believer could do that would separate him from the love of God (Rom. 8:28-39).

To say that you can lose your salvation is to say that God does not love you and if that is the case, then God is not love. Therefore, the believer's salvation is as strong as the love of God. There is nothing after conversion the believer could do that would separate him from the love of God (Rm. 8:28-39). To say that you can lose your salvation is to say that God does not love you and if that is the case, then God is not love. Therefore, the believer's salvation is as strong as the love of God.

Exodus 15:13 also mentions that Israel was redeemed by the Lord. This means that Israel is now God's property and no longer the property of Pharaoh and Egypt. In fact, she was always God's property. Thus, it is an acknowledgement that the Israelites are slaves to the Lord since He now owns them.

Exodus 15:14-16: The Reaction of the Surrounding Nations to the Lord Delivering Israel at the Red Sea

Exodus 15:14 “The peoples have heard, they tremble; Anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia. 15 Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed; The leaders of Moab, trembling grips them; All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. 16 Terror and dread fall upon them; By the greatness of Your arm they are motionless as stone; Until Your people pass over, O Lord, until the people pass over whom You have purchased.” (NASB95)

These verses describe the impact upon the nations as a result of the Lord delivering Israel from Egypt with the ten plagues and destroying the flower of the Egyptian army at the Red Sea by the exertion of His divine omnipotence.

“**Philistia**” is a reference to the land of the Philistines who descended from the Casluhites from Egypt and according to Jeremiah 47:4 and Amos 9:7 that like Israel they were enslaved in Crete, from which God delivered them like Israel.

The Table of Nations connects the Philistines with other descendants of Ham, such as the Canaanites. The Philistines however, were not a single ethnic group, but rather a conglomeration of several different peoples from different origins and time periods. Therefore, the Philistines who originated from the Casluhites were different from the ones who descended from Caphtor.

Hollman Illustrated Bible commenting on Edom writes “Area southeast and southwest of the Dead Sea, on opposite sides of the Arabah, was known as Edom in biblical times and was the home of the Edomites. The name ‘Edom’ derives from a Semitic root that means ‘red’ or ‘ruddy’ and characterizes the red sandstone terrain of much of the area in question. Moreover, the Edomite area was largely ‘wilderness’—semidesert, not very conducive to agriculture—and many of the inhabitants were semi-nomads. Thus, the boundaries of Edom would have been rather ill defined. Yet not all of Edom was wilderness; the vicinity of present-day Tafileh and Buseireh, east of the Arabah, is fairly well watered, cultivable land, and would have boasted numerous villages during OT times. This would have been the center of Edomite population. Buseireh is situated on the ruins of ancient Bozrah, the capital of Edom. Note that the modern name, ‘Buseireh,’ preserves memory of the ancient one, ‘Bozrah.’”⁵

Eerdman’s Bible Dictionary writes “Moab was located on a high plateau on the southeastern coast of the Dead Sea, approximately 915 m. (3000 ft.) above sea level. Moab’s northern, western, and southern borders were defined by the terrain. The western border descended to the Dead Sea and the Jordan Rift valley. What arable land existed in Moab was found along the Amon river (modern Wādī el-Môjib, generally the northern border, although when political fortunes permitted it might extend as far north as Heshbon) and along a north-south strip in the western part of the plateau. The southern border was the brook Zered (modern Wādī el-

⁵ Brand, C., Draper, C., England, A., Bond, S., Clendenen, E. R., Butler, T. C., & Latta, B. (2003). *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (459). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

Hesā), whose steep banks made it a defensible border. The land becomes increasingly dry to the east—where the Moabites maintained large sheep herds (cf. 2 Kgs. 3:4)—eventually becoming desert.”⁶



⁶ Myers, A. C. (1987). *The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (726). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.

“**Philistia**” is mentioned first since the Philistines would have been the first people to have heard of the Red (Reed) Sea crossing. “**Edom**” was located south and east of the Dead Sea, and “**Moab**” was immediately north of Edom.

Stuart writes “Edom, Moab, and Canaan are mentioned in the same order that they were eventually encountered in the actual process of entering the promised land (Num 20–21; Josh 1–10). Neither Edom nor Moab were actually part of the promised land, but access to the land required passage through those countries and their acquiescence for further Israelite activity. They were both emergent nations from all accounts, much like Israel at the time, that is, more in the nature of people groups trying to settle into an area than in the nature of established nations of long standing. Note the hint in the terms ‘chiefs of Edom’ and ‘leaders of Moab’ that these groups were not yet fully unified nations with kings. Likewise, ‘people of Canaan,’ paralleling ‘people of Philistia’ in v. 14, suggests at least a neutral position in the song relative to the political status of these areas. The terminology is poetic and does not prove the case, but it certainly comports with the inference sometimes drawn from the available archaeological data that Edom and Moab, as well as Canaan and what eventually became Philistia, were thinly populated and undergoing a continuing process of settlement rather than fully settled and politically established as nations at the time of the exodus. These words were intended to hearten their first hearers. They also proved true in time. The Moabites were the most easily cowed (Num 22:2–3). The Edomites required more convincing, some of which was provided involuntarily by Balaam (Num 24:17–18) but most of which developed gradually over the years of Israel’s wilderness wanderings (Deut 2:4) and still was not complete even in the days of Saul (1 Sam 14:47). Edomite and Philistine subjugation had to wait until the days of David (2 Sam 8:1, 11–12), whereas Canaanite panic set in early (Josh 2:8–11).”⁷

Exodus 15:16 describes the psychological effect upon the Philistines, Edomites and Moabites as a result of the Lord destroying Egypt with the ten plagues and the flower of the Egyptian army at the Red Sea, which is absolute terror.

Exodus 15:17-18: God is a Sanctuary for Israel

Exodus 15:17 “You will bring them and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, the place, O Lord, which You have made for Your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established. 18 The Lord shall reign forever and ever.” (NASB95)

Verse 17 expresses the Israelites’ assurance that the Lord would bring them into the land of Canaan, which the Lord promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as well

⁷ Stuart, D. K. (2007). *Vol. 2: Exodus* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (358–359). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

as the Israelites who were their descendants. Verse 18 makes clear that the Lord will reign over Israel forever, which is the eternal reign of the Lord over this nation as well as over every nation and all of creation. This verse acknowledges the sovereignty of the Lord.

Exodus 15:19-21: Prose Summation and Miriam's Reprise of the Hymn.

Exodus 15:19 For the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, and the Lord brought back the waters of the sea on them, but the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea. 20 Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dancing. 21 Miriam answered them, "Sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted; The horse and his rider He has hurled into the sea." (NASB95)

Verse 19 makes clear that the entire Egyptian army was not destroyed in the Red Sea but only their chariot warriors and cavalry for it does not mention foot soldiers or infantry. This verse summarizes what happened to this elite force of the Egyptians at the Red Sea. It repeats the reason for this song of praise that the Israelites sang as a result of the Lord delivering them at the Red Sea.

Verse 20 mentions Moses and Aaron's sister, Miriam who is the first woman in the Bible to be called a "prophetess." Micah 6:4 implies that she along with her two brothers provided a leadership role in Israel's journey in the wilderness.

There are several other women bear this same title such as Deborah (Judges 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Isaiah's wife (Isaiah 8:3), Anna (Luke 2:36), Noadiah in Nehemiah 6:14 and Jezebel in Revelation 2:20.

Here in verses 20 and 21 Miriam is described as leading the women of Israel in praising the Lord with singing and dancing, which expresses their worship of the Lord. There are several Old Testament passages which mention women singing and playing tambourines at occasions of victory over enemies (Judges 11:34; 1 Samuel 18:6; cf. Jeremiah 31:4; Psalm 68:25). However, men did this as well (1 Samuel 10:5; 2 Samuel 6:5). Bringing historical events in history through music was common in the ancient world (Judges 5:1, 11; Numbers 21:17; 1 Samuel 21:11; 2 Samuel 1:17–27; 3:33; 22:1).

Exodus 15:22-27: The Lord Provides Water for Israel

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. (NASB95)

Verse 22 tells the reader that after leaving the lakes region the Israelites entered the wilderness or desert of Shur, which was located in the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula. The Lord is leading them into this wilderness in order to test their faith in Him and they fail.

The name “**Shur**” means “wall” and was a city on the borders of Egypt and Palestine and a comparison of Genesis 20:1, 25:18, 1 Samuel 15:7 and 27:8 indicates that it clearly lies near the northern border of Egypt in the Sinai peninsula in the modern Suez region.

In Roman times, the city was named “Pelusium” but was known by the Hebrews as “Sin.” The whole desert extending from the southern borders of Palestine to the edges of the Egyptian northern border was called the “**wilderness of Shur**” (Ex. 15:22). Therefore, it appears that Hagar who was an Egyptian was attempting to make her way back to Egypt.

Hollman Illustrated Bible Dictionary has the following comment regarding the wilderness of Shur, they write “Place-name meaning ‘wall.’ Region on Egypt’s northeastern border, perhaps named after wall that Egyptians built to protect their border, where Moses made first stop after crossing the Red Sea (Exod. 15:22). Earlier, Sarah’s handmaid, Hagar, had come toward Shur after her expulsion from the clan of Abraham (Gen. 16:7). Abraham lived near Shur (Gen. 20:1). Saul smote the Amalekites in that area (1 Sam. 15:7). David and his men made forays as far as Shur while eluding King Saul (1 Sam. 27:8). Shur may be modern Tell el-Fara.”⁸

Kitchen has the following comment on the wilderness of Shur, he writes “A wilderness-region in the NW part of the Sinai isthmus, S of the Mediterranean coastline and the ‘way of the land of the Philistines’, between the present line of the Suez Canal on its W and the ‘River of *EGYPT’ (Wadi el-‘Arish) on its E. Abraham and Sarah’s handmaid Hagar fled to a well past Kadesh on the way to Shur (Gn. 16:7). For a time Abraham ‘dwelt between Kadesh and Shur’ and then sojourned at Gerar (Gn. 20:1); Ishmael’s descendants ranged over an area that

⁸ Brand, C., Draper, C., England, A., Bond, S., Clendenen, E. R., Butler, T. C., & Latta, B. (2003). *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (1497–1498). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

reached as far as ‘Shur, which is opposite [*i.e.* E of] Egypt’ (Gn. 25:18). After passing through the sea (*RED SEA), Israel entered the wilderness of Shur before going S into Sinai (Ex. 15:22). Shur lay on the direct route to Egypt from S Palestine (1 Sa. 15:7 and, most explicitly, 27:8).”⁹



Negev writes “The desert crossed by the Israelites on their way up from the Red Sea. Shura in Aramaic, and thus also in Hebrew (cf. Gen. 49:22; 2 Sam. 22:30; Ps. 18:30). It is possible that the desert took its name from the mountainous barrier that encloses the central plateau of Sinai, which looks like a wall when approached from the west. It is however also possible that the name Shur is connected with the line of Egyptian fortresses which defended Egypt from the onslaughts of nomadic tribes from Sinai by way of the Bitter Lakes. Pharaoh Ammenemes I, founder of the 12th Dynasty, mentions the ‘Walls of the Ruler’ destined to arrest the infiltration of the Asians to Egypt and to crush the sand-dwellers (the nomads of Sinai). Hagar the Egyptian found refuge by a fountain on the way to Shur (Gen. 16:7), and the sons of Ishmael dwelt between there and Havilah (Gen. 25:18).

⁹ Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed.) (1099). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

Exodus 15:22 indicates that Shur was close to the Red Sea. Some scholars look for its location east of the Red Sea and the Bitter Lakes while others who believe that the Israelites took a more northerly route, seek it closer to the Mediterranean.”¹⁰

Verse 23 reveals that when the Israelites arrived at Marah they could not drink the water there because it was bitter.

Negev states that Marah was “One of the stations on the route of the Exodus, in the desert of Shur, where the Israelites found bitter water (Exod. 15:23, Num. 33:8–9; Authorized Version: ‘wilderness of Etham’). It is generally identified by those who maintain that the Exodus took a southerly course with the oasis of Ain Hauwarah, a pool of bitter water on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez. Those who believe that the Hebrews took a northern course locate it in the region east of the Sirbonian Lake (Sabhat Bardawil). Still others identify it with Kadesh-Barnea.”¹¹

Hollman’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary says that Marah was a “place in the Wilderness of Shur, so named because of the bitter water found there by the wandering Israelites (Exod. 15:23). The site is typical of pools in the Sinai Peninsula, having undrinkable water. The people complained against Moses because of their discomfort. God answered the leader’s prayer by telling him to cast a tree into the water so that it became sweet and drinkable. Marah cannot be located definitely.”¹²

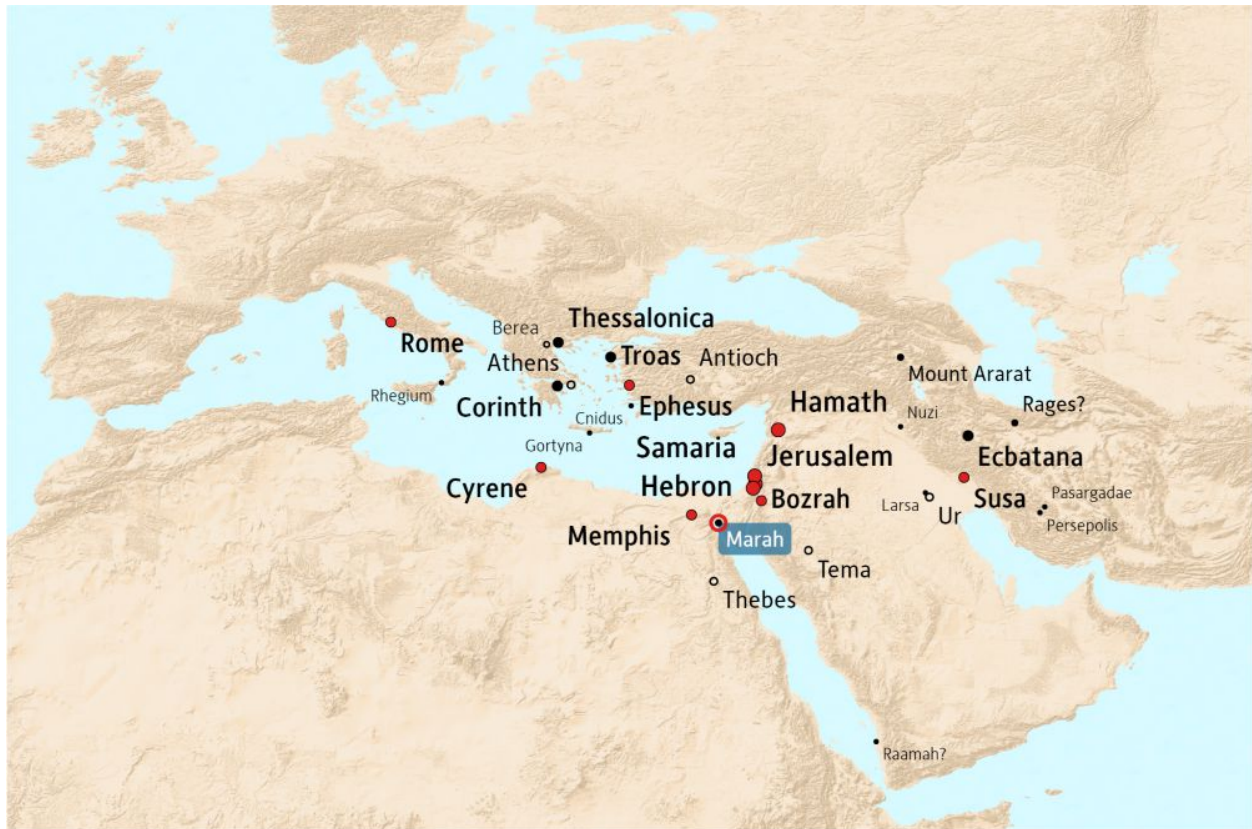
Douglas and Davies write “This was the first named camp of the Israelites after the Red Sea crossing, called Marah because only bitter water was found there (Ex. 15:23; Nu. 33:8–9), and perhaps also by comparison with the sweet water of the Nile Valley to which they had been accustomed. On the likely assumption that the route from the crossing led to the mountains in the S of the Sinai peninsula, Marah is often identified with the modern Ain Hawarah, c. 75 km SSE of Suez. However, H. H. Rowley (*From Joseph to Joshua*, 1950, p. 104) and J. Gray (*VT* 4, 1954, pp. 149f.) identify Marah with *KADESH, a view refuted by *GTT*, p. 252, n. 218; B. Rothenberg and Y. Aharoni, *God’s Wilderness*, 1961, pp. 11, 93f., 142ff., present both views. (*WILDERNESS OF THE WANDERING.)”¹³

¹⁰ Negev, A. (1996). *The Archaeological encyclopedia of the Holy Land* (3rd ed.). New York: Prentice Hall Press.

¹¹ Negev, A. (1996). *The Archaeological encyclopedia of the Holy Land* (3rd ed.). New York: Prentice Hall Press.

¹² Brand, C., Draper, C., England, A., Bond, S., Clendenen, E. R., Butler, T. C., & Latta, B. (2003). *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (1075). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

¹³ Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed.) (726). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.



The response of the Israelites was to complain to Moses. They quickly forgot all that the Lord had done for them in delivering them from Egypt. They saw the ten plagues and an elite division of the Egyptian army destroyed by the Lord at the Red Sea. Yet, they forgot all of this since they immediately complain when confronted with an adversity. Verse 25 tells the reader that the Lord was testing the Israelites' faith.

The Lord will test the believer's faith after conversion in order to produce endurance in them.

James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance 3 vand let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (NASU)

The Lord rewards the believer after his faith has been tested.

James 1:12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (NASU)

This principle is illustrated in the life of Abraham who is called the father of the believer's faith. Abraham was a man of faith. He was saved by faith and he walked with God by means of faith in Him (Romans 4).

In Exodus 15:25, we read that in response to the Israelites' complaint, Moses cried out to the Lord for help in this matter. The Lord showed him a tree and instructed him to throw it in the waters of Marah, which instantly became sweet. This was another demonstration of the Lord's omnipotence and sovereignty over creation. This miracle was to teach the Israelites that He cared for them and that He would faithfully provide for them.

In verse 26, the reader is told that the Lord issued a decree or a law in order to provide the Israelites a general understanding of His policies and principles and what He required from them as His people. This spiritual law taught that if they obey the Lord, the Lord will bless them but if they disobey Him, He will discipline them. This verse summarizes what is taught in detail in Deuteronomy 28.

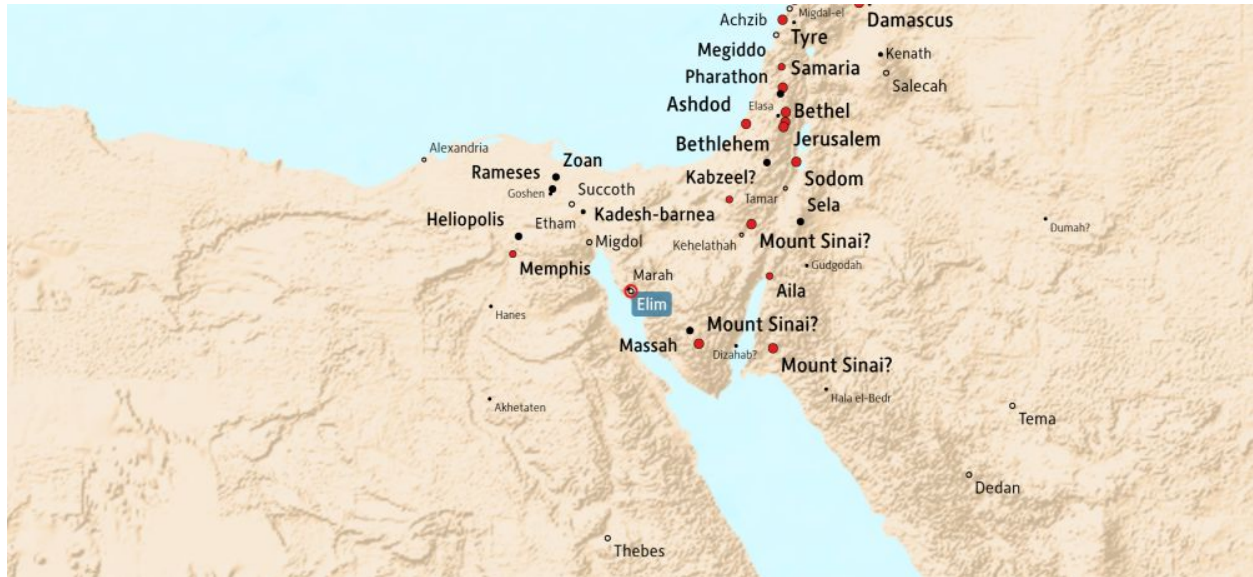
Exodus 15:27 says that the Israelites moved from Marah to Elim, which was probably Wadi Gharandel, which was approximately seven miles south of Marah. Water was in abundance in Elim as is the case today.

Kitchen commenting on Elim writes "Second stopping-place of the Israelites after their crossing of the Re (e)d Sea from Egypt. Beyond the wilderness of *SHUR, E of the modern Suez canal, they first encamped at Marah in the wilderness of Etham not far away (because named after Etham in E Delta), and thence reached Elim with its twelve springs and seventy palm-trees. After this the Israelites went on 'and pitched by the Red Sea', before eventually reaching the wilderness of *SIN, Ex. 15:27; 16:1; Nu. 33:9–10. By putting the stop at Elim shortly after the escape from Egypt and passage of its desert edge (Shur), and before a stop by the Red Sea prior to reaching the wilderness of Sin, the biblical references suggest that Elim is situated on the W side of the Sinai peninsula, facing on to the Gulf of Suez. Any closer location is still not certain, but a plausible suggestion of long standing is Wadi Gharandel (or, Ghurundel), a well-known watering-place with tamarisks and palms, c. 60 km SSE of Suez along the W side of *SINAI." (*WILDERNESS OF WANDERING.)¹⁴

Stuart writes "Marah was a place to drink but not to encamp. The Israelites actually camped further on, at Elim, which is described as having abundant water ('twelve springs') and being wooded ('seventy palm trees'). The location of Elim is, like so many other places mentioned in Moses' ancient narrative, uncertain; but assuming the people continued traveling southward toward Mount Sinai, a reasonable conjecture would be to associate the spot with the Wadi Gharandel, a riverbed in Shur that has plenty of water and trees in certain places. Any groundwater source other than a dug well may be called a 'spring' (*ayin*), so the twelve springs mentioned here may have been twelve separate 'water holes' available for drinking and drawing water and watering herds at that time of year—

¹⁴ Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed.) (313). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

even if all twelve holes were fed by one main source when the Israelites found the place over three thousand years ago. The number of trees may have been exactly seventy then, but the same number could hardly be expected all these years later. Accordingly, the identification of the spot cannot be made on the basis of a precise count of ‘springs’ and trees in modern times.”¹⁵



¹⁵ Stuart, D. K. (2007). *Vol. 2: Exodus* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (368). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.