

# Exodus 15:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

## Analysis

Finding water at Marah should bring relief, but 'they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter.' The name 'Marah' means bitterness. Undrinkable water is worse torment than no water—mockery of hope. The explanation 'therefore the name of it was called Marah' makes this a memorial of disappointment. Yet God orchestrates this to teach dependence and test faith. Bitter providences serve divine purposes.

## Historical Context

Marah's location is uncertain but likely somewhere in northwestern Sinai. Bitter (possibly alkaline or saline) water sources exist throughout the region. The naming reflects Israel's experience there.

## Related Passages

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

1. How do you respond when God's provision seems to mock your need (water present but undrinkable)?
2. What 'Marah' experiences has God used to teach you dependence rather than self-sufficiency?

## Interlinear Text

מִקְהָה:	מִקְהָה:	לְשַׁתְתַּתְ	יָכַל וְאֵל	מִקְהָה:	לְיִבְאֹת
And when they came	Marah	H3808	they could	not drink	of the waters
H935	H4785		H3201	H8354	H4325
for they were bitter	קָרָא	קָרָא	מִקְהָה:	שָׁמֶן הַ	
H3588	H1992	H5921	H3651	of it was called	therefore the name
	H4751			H7121	H8034

## Additional Cross-References

**Numbers 33:8** (Parallel theme): And they departed from before Pi-hahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah.

**Ruth 1:20** (Parallel theme): And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.