

# *Journey Through The Cities of Refuge*

Lesson #13

3 Wells

April 15, 2026

## *12 Wells of Water at Elim*

Ex. 12:34-37: It is Nisan 15. Over 600,000 adult males & families departed Egypt with a wealth of gold & silver.

Ex. 13:21 And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.

- Tangible and glorious guidance for this band of worn slaves trudging through the dry, rugged wilderness toward their goal of a Promised Land. [our abundant life]

Powerful Truth: God's presence and guidance is with them immediately in the journey.

➤ God led them to a place where the only way out was to trust God.

The location was chosen deliberately. God knew Pharaoh would believe the Israelites were "entangled in the land" and "hemmed in by the desert".

- God allows Pharaoh to trap them. Shekinah glory of the LORD intervened.

➤ Nissan 17: God parted the Red Sea and drowned the Egyptian army

- Purpose was to display the Power of God
- This is a New Beginning for the nation of Israel.

➤ Nissan 20: Bitter waters at Marah. Moses cast the tree in and waters became sweet.

Ex. 15:27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.

At Elim God provides 12 springs of water and 70 palm trees

God gives them some laws and promises to be their healer.

Historically, Elim was the second encampment of the Israelites after leaving Egypt and crossing the Red Sea.

It was a fertile area that provided a stark contrast to the barren desert surrounding it.

After enduring the terror of being chased by the Egyptians and the water scarcity before reaching Marah, Elim provided a needed respite for the weary Israelites. With its twelve springs and seventy palm trees, the area offered ample shelter, food, and water.

Move from Bitterness to Abundance: Elim represents a shift from the "bitter waters of Marah" to an oasis of refreshing.

Move past the testing and disappointment to a place of abundance to receive fresh strength.

Symbolism of 12 & 70: The 12 wells correspond to the 12 tribes of Israel, indicating that God's refreshing and sustenance are sufficient for all His people.

Represent God's abundant provision, comfort, and restorative rest for the Israelites after leaving Egypt. The 70 palm trees could symbolize the 70 who went to Egypt with Jacob.

➤ Therefore, Elim could be a reminder of God's promise to Israel's ancestors.

This promise would encourage the current generation and assure them of God's faithfulness.

Victory and Strength: Palm trees strongly symbolize power, victory, and righteousness in the Bible. They represent the resilience of the faithful.

Ps. 92:12 The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those in right standing with God will possess strength, resilience, and continued spiritual growth, much like durable and productive trees.

Unending Flow: The wells are described as artesian springs, symbolizing an unending, life-giving flow of the Holy Spirit.

Rest and Restoration: Elim signifies a necessary pause in the "wilderness" of life, where God provides peace and rejuvenation.

Abundant Provision: The twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees symbolize full, overflowing, and divine provision and nourishment, even in barren times.

Divine Timing: Elim is seen as a temporary, God-secured resting place that prepares believers for future battles. Prepare for challenges ahead. Renew their strength before moving on.

Preparation for Manna: They rested at this location, with its 12 wells and 70 palm trees, before continuing into the Desert of Sin, where God subsequently provided manna and quail. Just as God provided for the Israelites in the desert for 40 years, He is the same provider today, turning barren wilderness experiences into places of fruitfulness and rest.

### *Well of Beer      Numbers 21*

Numbers 21 details Israel's journey to the plains of Moab. It is close to the end of the 40 years of wandering. It focuses on their complaining, divine punishment via fiery serpents, and the subsequent healing through a bronze serpent.

➤ It highlights both rebellious nature and divine intervention.

Num. 21:16 From there they went to Beer, which is the well where the Lord said to Moses, "Gather the people together, and I will give them water."

This verse is a powerful reminder of God's faithfulness and provision for His people.

It serves as a reflection of the broader theme of the book of Numbers, which is the continuous care and guidance of God for the Israelites in the midst of their wilderness journey.

Context: Prior to this event, the Israelites had been wandering in the wilderness and had been complaining about their lack of water and food.

In the difficulties of the daily march, they'd forgotten God's promise that they would enter the Promised Land and claim it as their home.

Num. 21:5 Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?

For *there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.*

➤ Complaining hearts reap immediate recompense, revealing God's intolerance of unbelief.

Num. 21:6 So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

Note: This time, there was no warning. The judgment came immediately as the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people. They had rejected God's gift of life and health from heaven, so God sent them suffering and death from the earth, and many of the people died

Wiersbe: Fiery doesn't describe the appearance of the serpents but the inflammation and pain caused by their venom. Those bitten died quickly and apparently their death wasn't an easy one.

When God's people continually rebel in the wilderness, they show a sinful preference for Egypt that manifests in a lack of faith in Yahweh [Num. 11:5, 18; 14:2-3; 16:13; 20:5; 21:5].

This leads us to think that God's response in Num.21 might have something to do with Egypt. The people's reason for preferring Egypt and questioning Yahweh's plan [Num. 21:5] is that they reject the very manna that God has provided to sustain them. Their cynical response to God evidences a *distrust* and dissatisfaction with God's plan and provision.

- The serpents point to the upright cobra that was on the headdress of the Pharaoh.
- The rod of Aaron that became a serpent swallowed the serpent rods of Pharaoh's magicians.

Garret: The Egyptian snake symbol was a powerful emblem of protection and authority.

The serpents, the spiritual guardians that Pharaoh thinks he can depend upon, are actually under the direct control of YHWH.

These fiery serpents inflicted pain, suffering, and death.

- The serpents were released on all due to Israel's sin.
- The biting was not directed just at those who were actively sinning. [illustrates the fall] In Genesis 3 the serpent comes to the woman and deceives her. Eve eats the fruit and gives some to Adam. Adam then sins against the LORD and death is released upon the earth.

Romans 5:12 As by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men because all sinned.

Because of Adam's sin, death was released upon the earth and had dominion over all men. In similar fashion, Israel's sin released fiery serpents, which had dominion over them. They could not prevent the serpents from killing them.

Num. 21:7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

- Notice God's solution: God did not remove the serpents from Israel's camp. He commanded Moses to make a bronze serpent and lift it up in the midst of them.

His intent: Whenever a person was bitten, they could look at the bronze serpent and not die.

Death was still in the midst of them, but it had no power over them.

Why was Moses was told to make a model of a serpent, the very creature that was causing the people to die? Jesus became sin for us—the very thing that condemns people—and bore in His body that which brings spiritual death [II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 3:13; I Peter 2:22-24].

Moses didn't hide the bronze serpent; he lifted it up on a pole and put the pole where everybody could see it! The uplifted serpent was the only cure in the camp.

Our Lord was crucified publicly, outside the city of Jerusalem, and those who hear the gospel can "look to Him" and be saved.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"

Note: The serpent becomes paradoxically a means of deliverance.

John 3:14-15 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness,

so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life.

Num. 21:10-15 The Israelites continue their journey. The Israelites are once again in need of water. God instructs Moses to gather the people at the well of Beer, where He will provide for their needs.

Num. 21:16 From there they went to Beer, which is the well where the Lord said to Moses,

Gather the people together, and I will give them water.

- They are a gathered people, waiting to see the delivering hand of God.
- Comes after the account of the fiery serpents and the bronze serpent.
- God providing grace even after disciplining the people for their lack of faith.

It reminds us of the need of the right condition of heart toward Jehovah, in not only waiting but expecting to know His abundant supply.

Numbers 21:17-18 describes the Israelites singing a song of praise [the "Song of the Well"] to celebrate God providing water at Beer, marking a shift from complaining to gratitude.

This passage features a rare song of joy from the Israelites—

- "Spring up, O well!" All of you sing to it—
  - ❖ No song is recorded from the shore of the Red Sea until now.
- The people celebrating in anticipation of God's promise, turn a practical necessity (water) into an act of worship.
- The act of singing while digging ["Spring up, O well!"] is interpreted as an action done in faith—singing to the well before the water appeared.

"The Princes Dug The Well... With Their Staves"

It marks a shift from miraculous water (rock) to collaborative labor (well-digging) with leaders (princes) acting as servants, representing "living waters" of grace and shared responsibility.

- God's provision through their active faith.

Servant Leadership: The "princes" and "nobles" didn't just delegate; they actively participated in the labor, setting an example of leadership that serves rather than dominates.

- Men willing to devote themselves to the care of saints.

From Deut. 1:18, we are reminded of three requirements for such men.

1. They were to be men of wisdom.                      taught of the Word.
2. They were to be men of understanding.              men of experience
3. They were to be men known.                          men respected and proven.

"Spring up, O well" This song served as a prayer or celebration of faith, acknowledging God as the source of necessary water in the desert, urging it to burst forth.

Wiersbe: What may have happened is that God showed Moses where the water was located, the leaders all thrust their staffs into the ground around that place, and the well opened up and the water gushed out.

God provides sustenance [water] to those who gather in obedience, often requiring active participation—like digging—to receive it.

Truth: We must often dig, invest effort, into the Word of God to unlock the spiritual water that is already there.

This event serves as a continuation of God's faithfulness to His people, despite their repeated disobedience and lack of faith.

The well of Beer becomes a powerful symbol of God's sustenance and guidance in the midst of the Israelites' journey through the wilderness.

The passage can also be seen as a foreshadowing of the ultimate provision and satisfaction that comes through Jesus Christ. Jesus refers to Himself as the living water that quenches all thirst [John 4:14] and provides eternal life to those who believe in Him [John 7:38].

Through this verse, we are called to trust in God's faithfulness and provision, even in the midst of adversity, and to find our ultimate satisfaction in the spiritual sustenance that is found in Jesus Christ.

### The Well of Harod: The Fountain of Trembling

Background Info:

1. For 7 years during harvest time, the Jews had suffered the raids of the Midianites.
2. God allowed the Midianites and their allies to ravage "the land of milk and honey," leaving the Jews in the deepest poverty. Why?

Judges 6:1 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.

Judges 6:2 The hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: because of the Midianites the children of Israel made the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds.

Judges 6:3-4 And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites [FLESH], and the children of the east, even they came up against them;

<sup>4</sup> And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth,  
till thou come unto *Gaza*, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor donkey.  
Judges 6:5-6 For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers  
for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the  
land to destroy it. <sup>6</sup> And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites;  
and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.

Ps. 18:6a In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God

Prov. 3:11-12 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of His  
correction: For whom the LORD loves He corrects; even as a father the son in whom he delights.

Spurgeon: "The Lord does not permit His children to sin successfully.

His ultimate purpose is that each child be conformed to the image of His Son."

Judges 6:7-10 Unnamed prophet rebukes Israel and reminded them of God's past dealings with  
them. I brought you out of Egypt; out of bondage; gave you victory over your enemies;  
Do not fear the gods of the Amorites; I gave you the land; ALL you needed!  
But you have not obeyed Me.

Application: New Testament believers are betrothed to Jesus Christ, our bridegroom.

Eph. 4:1 We are to "walk worthy of our high and heavenly calling."

Col. 3:1ff Live like people who are seated with Christ in glory.

II Pet. 1:3 as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness,  
through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.

As harvest time was approaching in year 8 [8 = number of new beginnings],  
God called Gideon, a farmer, to become the deliverer of His people.

Judges 6:12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him,

The LORD is with thee, thou Mighty Man Of Valor. [promise based on what he will become]

God's Words To Gideon: Judges 6:14-16

- I will give you the strength to overcome the opposition.
- Surely I will be with thee, and you shall smite the Midianites as one man.

Judges 6:33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east  
were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel.

Judges 6:34-35 But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet;  
and Abiezer [his hometown] was gathered after him. And he sent messengers throughout  
all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher,  
and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

- 32,000 answered the call to battle; to fight in the Lord's army

## God Tests Their Faith:

1. Is our faith real or counterfeit?
2. Strengthen our faith for the tasks He sets before us.

Spurgeon: "The promises of God shine brightest in the furnace of affliction.

As sure as God puts His children in the furnace of affliction, He will be with them in it.

- It is in claiming those promises that we gain the victory."

A.B. Simpson: "You will have no test of faith that will not fit you to be a blessing

if you are obedient to the Lord. I never had a trial but when I got out of the deep river, I found some poor pilgrim on the bank that I was able to help by that very experience."

Judges 7:1 Then Jerubbaal, Gideon, and all the people who *were* with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley. [about 4 miles away]

Well of Harod is located at the base of Mount Gilboa in the Jezreel Valley.

This area is characterized by its fertile land and strategic location, making it a significant site for military encampments in ancient times.

- The spring itself is fed from water under Mount Gilboa which means bubbling spring; swelling heap; water bursting from the rock.
- The water then flows into a large pool, providing ample space for the army to drink.
- The well of Harod would have provided a crucial water source for Gideon's troops.

Harod, meaning trembling or fear, reflects the anxiety and trepidation of

the Israelite soldiers as they prepared for battle against a formidable enemy.

- References their initial fear & the separation of the courageous from the timid.
- Recall: 6:33 = Enemy is camped in Valley of Jezreel = God sows; God scatters
- God is sowing FEAR in the Jezreel Valley.

The Well of Harod: God commanded Gideon to reduce his army from 32,000 to only 300 men.

## God's Plan Reveal God's Glory

Judges 7:2-3 And the Lord said to Gideon, "The people who *are* with you *are* too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'

Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying,

'Whoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'

And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

Separate the Fearful from the Faithful: Fear is contagious. It reduces faith.

Before battle, God directed Gideon to remove those who were afraid to ensure the army was fully dedicated and trusting in Him.

G. Campbell Morgan: "The fearful and trembling man God cannot use. The trouble is the fearful and trembling man insists upon remaining in the army. A decrease that sifts the ranks of the church of men who fear and tremble is a great, a gracious and glorious gain."

Wiersbe: "Pride after the battle robs God of glory.

Fear during the battle robs God's soldiers of courage and power."

"Fear and faith cannot live together very long in the same heart."

Question: When it comes to engaging the enemy and taking on enemy strongholds in my life; when it comes to standing for the Lord; when it comes to yielding to the Lord for victory over sin in my life, what is my attitude?

1. Am I afraid to yield? What will God ask of me?

2. Do I just want to be justified without yielding in absolute surrender for sanctification?

3. Do I have any desire to be saved daily from the bondage of habitual sin in my life?

4. Am I afraid of absolute surrender? Am I afraid of committing to be a disciple of Christ?

Gideon says: Go home! He didn't have to say it again! They disappeared!

Next Step: After the fearful left, God tested the rest by the manner in which they drank from the water.

#### The Troop Reduction Test Judges 7:4-7

- The Lappers: Those who "lapped with their tongues" [300 men] were selected because they remained alert, holding their weapons while cupping water from the spring to their mouths.
- The Bowed: The 9,700 who got down on their knees to drink were sent home.

Judges 7:7 Then the Lord said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place." By claiming this promise and obeying the Lord's directions, Gideon defeated the enemy and brought peace to the land for 40 years. [Judges 8:28]

John Wesley: "Give me 100 men who fear nothing but sin and love nothing but God, and I will shake the gates of hell."

Victories won because of faith bring glory to God. Nobody can explain how they happened.

Dr. Bob Cook: "If you can explain what's going on in your ministry, then God didn't do it."

Judges 7:13-14 God sent Gideon's enemies a dream of their defeat.

7:13-14 And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said,

This is nothing else save the Sword Of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for Into His Hand Hath God Delivered Midian, And All The Host.

7:15 when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he Worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, **ARISE; FOR THE LORD HAS DELIVERED INTO YOUR HAND THE HOST OF MIDIAN.** God took the fear in Gideon's heart and put it in the hearts of the Midianites - the enemy. He took the courage and confidence that was in the enemy and put it in Gideon who infused courage into the others' hearts.

7:16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a **TRUMPET** in every man's hand, with **EMPTY PITCHERS**, and **LAMPS WITHIN THE PITCHERS**. Verses 17-22 lists the God's battle plan procedure.

- Blow the trumpet
- Break the pitchers which exposed the lamp within
- Shout: The Sword Of The Lord And Of Gideon

Imagine the scene...the noise...the lamps suddenly being revealed...the racket...the confusion for the Midianites, roused from a sound sleep.

"Break the pitcher." The light will shine through the broken pitcher.

7:21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran, and cried, and fled.

Victory depended on obedience and commitment.

Consider: Clay pots are a symbol of the earthen vessels that we are. II Cor. 4:7-12

1. God is not interested in polishing, smoothing and making bigger and better earthen vessels.
2. Victory comes when the clay pot is broken to let His light and life shine out.

Contradiction: When I try to keep my clay pot intact and let His light shine forth.

It cannot be done.

3. God has deposited His life and the work of the Holy Spirit within our earthen vessels.
4. Until the vessel is broken, it is extremely hard for the light to shine through.
5. I must be willing to let Him break me of everything He does not want in my life.
6. I must be willing to allow the Holy Spirit to mortify [put to death] the deeds of the flesh in me.
7. Our suffering and brokenness allow the light and power within us to come forth.

I dedicate my troubles, fears, frustrations, etc. to you so you can use them for **YOUR GLORY**. Let people see in me the reality of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ.

Worship God with my troubles and my sorrows.

This is my sacrifice of **PRAISE** and **WORSHIP** to Him.

God never uses anyone until they are first broken and poured out for Him.