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Then They Came to Elim

15: 27

Then they came to Elim DIG: Do you think ADONAI is trying to salvage a bad honeymoon or showing patience with His people? What did the seventy palm trees and the twelve springs represent to the Israelites?

REFLECT: What has God graciously given you, even after your grumbling? How can you be like a tree planted by streams of living water? When you are stuck in Marah, do you believe that Elim will be coming?

Continuing on **their** journey **they** traveled several miles south of Marah and came to **their second important stop of Elim**, meaning *large trees or oaks*. Many people believe that today this area is called Wadi Gharandel, but we cannot be sure. **Elim** portrayed a honeymoon period of the wilderness experience. **ADONAI** would later fondly reminisce: **I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved Me and followed Me through the desert through a land not sown (Jeremiah 2:2).**



The people must have been ashamed after their grumbling at Marah to see how graciously **God** had provided for them at **Elim where there were twelve springs** with good water, **seventy palm trees, and** grass for their flocks and herds. **They camped there near the water.** The picture is of an ideal oasis, with a spring for every tribe and a **palm tree** for every elder. We do not know how long **the people** stayed there, but it was no wonder that **they** settled down and camped for a while. For it was there that **Isra'el** would learn how

God could make **His people lie down in green pastures** and lead **them beside the quiet waters**, even in the barren desert of this life (**Psalm 23:2**).²⁹⁸

So after the bitterness of Marah, **God** brought **His people to Elim**. It was a place of abundant blessing and fruitfulness. The psalmist said: **Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5)**. Simon Peter may have been locked in the inner prison, but the angel was going to open the door. Paul and Silas may be beaten at midnight, but an earthquake would free them. **God's** plan for us always leads to Marah and then to **Elim**. Joseph, you remember, had that same experience. Moses did, Elijah did, and David did. Beyond every Marah there is an Elim. Beyond every cloud, there is the sun. Beyond every shadow, there is the light. Beyond every trial, there is a triumph. Beyond every rainstorm, there is a rainbow. This is the way **God** leads us.²⁹⁹