

**EXODUS 16:1-36      MANNA FROM HEAVEN**  
**THE SECOND TEST IN THE DESERT**

In our journey, we face many tests. These are tests of our faith designed by the Lord for us to trust in Him. They are to strengthen us and bring us closer in our relationship to the Lord. Of course when we are tested, we may not like it but we know that it can be for the good. The key for us is always trust Him and obey. These are two vital thoughts in the story of the Israelites in the wilderness. They don't know where they are going, what they will drink, and what they will eat. When the time is stretched out between the water and food, it gets very difficult to keep the faith and people will show their fleshly nature as their endurance wears down. This is where the Israelites manifested their hearts. The test of lack of water for three days exposed the Israelite's hearts as they made evident their inward attitude as they complained. This is what the Lord wanted them to see. It was not for Him to know whether they would pass or fail the test for He already knew that. He wants them to see their sin and how they break His commands. The remedy is to trust Him and listen to His instructions and obey them.

We come to another test for the Israelites. It is another difficult one for it is concerning another basic need, food. How long can they go without food? The Lord knows exactly how long and when He will give them the food they need. God wants His people to know Him and His great care for them. Again, this is another true story and it is all about God. It is about His goodness, power, mercy, grace, love, and patience. Let us be challenged by this as we are to take our eyes off our circumstances in which we are tempted to complain against, and recognize God for who He is. Because of this, we can be content in any situation.

**1. COMPLAINTS**

**(VV 1-3)**

**A. THEN----A TEST OF TIME**

Right after they had been at rest at the oasis, enjoying their dates, relaxing under the cool shade of the trees, and sipping cool water from the springs. This is when the test of time occurred. They had to go back to the wilderness. They had experienced that before. They went three days without water. They have to be asking, why go back?

Wilderness of Sin—This is not to be confused with the word sin, as if it was a sinful place, although that may have seemed

like what it was. It is related to Sinai. It was about halfway between the oasis and Sinai.

One month after the Passover—A mere month has passed since the departure from Egypt.

## B. MURMURINGS AND DISCONTENTMENT

### A TEST OF HUNGER

When physical pains happen, we tend to complain.

How short their memory is. They had just experienced the provision of the water by God. They immediately start to grumble against Moses and Aaron. Why did they grumble?

They were looking back at the days when there was plenty in Egypt. Back then, is always better than the present circumstance. Oh for the good old days. Boy, it was great back then. They were in bitter bondage and the conditions were almost unbearable, but all of a sudden they remember that it was great. We often idealize the past in how great everything back in the day. It is very easy to diminish the troubles of the past and magnify the good things. The Israelites were ungrateful for their deliverance.

Psalm 106:13-14

Many of us make grumbling a habit. Whether it be in traffic, or with difficult people we are given to complaining. This is not a gift. There is no gift of complaining. It is amazing we can be provided with an abundance and still grumble. We might get a hamburger and complain because it is not a t-bone steak.

## C. THEY COUNT UPON BEING KILLED

What an absurd and ridiculous statement. They said they had wished the Lord would have killed them in Egypt. Wow, I guess we can say anything when the hunger pains strike.

## D. BLAME PUT UPON MOSES

God is the one who brought them into the wilderness. They had done this before when they blamed Moses.

Exodus 15:24

Moses had to say, hey this wasn't my idea. We are just flesh and blood. We didn't lead you into the wilderness. This was God's direction. We didn't put that cloud up there, or the pillar of fire. If only they had reminded themselves that it was God who took them there. He is leading them and will always supply the needs. We need to remember, God is the one who has made your circumstances to be what they are. Don't blame anyone else.

A. GOD'S GRACIOUS PROMISE 4-5

This is remarkable that God would respond this way. After the attitude they had, I would think that He would have been angry and would have put the fear of God in them. God is so patient and gracious with His people. He did not punish them here. He provides for them again.

Bread from heaven God hears all our murmurings. Here He takes pity on them and provides a miraculous supply of food. He promised a constant supply. It was out of His infinite power and goodness.

Test---Whether they walk in His law or not The response to grace is obedience. God offers His provisions that required believing and doing. The food needed to be gathered the way God said so. They were not to hoard, but to trust God that He would bring food the next day. Every seventh day, they were reminded that it was not their work that supplied their needs but God's grace.

B. GOD'S GLORY 6-12

They shall know-----Deut 8:3

When He provided for them, it was to make them know that He was their God.

God cares

Come near and see His glory. The cloud should have been enough to leave them in awe. The most important thing was that the people were to focus on the glory of God. It is important that God be glorified. It isn't important that we get our way but that God get all the glory.

C. GOD'S SON (John 6:30-36)

Jesus is the very bread. He is the essence of what we need. He is the True bread that came out of heaven. The manna was a picture of God's Son who came to give Himself as the Bread of Life for hungry sinners.

Food for the soul—Isa 55:2 Jesus gave eternal life. The manna just sustained them. We feed on Christ daily. His Word is what is our bread. We must eat of this to survive.

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D. GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Meat—That evening the quail came and the people caught them, dressed them, and cooked them. This was fresh meat they wanted and God provided.

Manna (What is this?) Ps 78:17-25 The bread of angels

They never heard of this before. It was like snow like flakes.

This was some kind of a miracle, never done before. It appeared on the dew of the ground. All they had to do was eat it. They baked it, broiled

it, ate it raw, everything you could think of.. They never went hungry for forty years.

### **3. GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS (VV 16-31)**

#### **A. GATHERING OF THE MANNA 16-18**

There was enough for everyone but not too much. God meets the needs for everyone and he does not like greed. Fallen man believes if some is good, more is better. We have a fear of not having enough. We stockpile stuff we don't need and will never use. Abundance leads to self-sufficiency.

#### **B. KEEPING OF THE MANNA 19-21**

They were to gather it every morning as they lived by daily providence. What God gave, they must gather. They had to trust God everyday for supplying this manna. It was sure and safe in God's storehouse. Two million people were daily supplied without money. When the sun came out it melted as if what was left was drawn up by the sun into the air to be the seed of the next day's harvest. It was important that they get up early and get the manna.

Lazy Israelites might plan to save some manna so they could sleep in the next morning but they were warned not to do that. Some did it anyway and the manna bred maggots and had to be thrown away. This shows that there were disobedient people. It doesn't pay to rebel against the Lord and His Word.

We as Christians need fresh manna each day to be healthy . We need fresh nourishment from God's Word everyday. We need to spend time with the Lord everyday.

#### **C. MANNA FOR THE SABBATH 22-31**

Sabbath-to cease working, rest God gave one day in seven for man to not have to work. That would be a relief to people who had been slaves. The Lord gives work and rest.

In v 23, Sabbath is mentioned for the first time in the Bible. It is called the seventh day in Genesis 2:1-3 The Jews were probably taught about the Sabbath long before the 10 Commandments.

Reminder of God's covenant Ex 20:8-11, 31:12-17

Nehemiah 9:13-15

They were not to work on the Sabbath, so they prepared their meals in advance. They were to go out on the day before the Sabbath and gather up twice as much as they would other days.

All these instructions were given as a test from God to see if they would obey. It was a simple matter of gathering manna six days a week. Some went out on the Sabbath anyway. God rebuked this disobedience. Some obeyed and some did not.

The giving of the manna everyday was a miracle but the preserving of

it on the Sabbath was another miracle.

#### **4. REMEMBER GOD'S LESSONS (VV 32-36)**

##### **A. MEMORY IS TO BE PRESERVED**

It was important to preserve a memory of the miracle for the days when Miracles would no longer be the norm and people would be expected to live in light of the truths that the miracles had taught.

The instructions anticipate the giving of the law and the ark, and the Tabernacle.

Ark of the testimony---Heb 9:4 The ark was the throne of God in the camp. It stood in the holy of holies in the tabernacle. In the ark were the tablets of the law, Aarons rod, and the jar of manna.

Some of the manna was to be kept in a jar as a perpetual reminder to future generations This was to encourage them to trust God always.

##### **B. MERCY WAS CONTINUED**

The manna never ceased till they came to the borders of Canaan.

The manna was called spiritual meat.

1 Cor 10:3, John 6:49-51, Matt 4:4, Rev 2:17

We are to feed on Christ by faith and not hunger.

**Grumbling is unthinkable. We are to be content, no matter the circumstances.. We are to be content in every situation, whether hungry or filled, in plenty or in want. We can do all things through him who strengthens us. Phil 4:11-13**