

Exodus 15:22 – 16:36

“Complaining in the Desert – Manna and Quail”

Read 15:22-27

People mistakenly assume that once they decide to follow the Lord, everything will be perfect. But the Word of God says otherwise (John 16:33). Israel had just experienced the blessing of a miraculous escape, and yet quickly grumbled when faced with a bitter trial. And almost just as quickly then received the blessing of protective shade and refreshing drink at Elim (v.27). God in His gracious mercy forewarns us that in this life there will be trials as well as blessings; When we are mindful of this, we can stand prepared for whatever may come our way. Look up: Ecclesiastes 11:8

The waters of Marah are contrasted with the springs of Elim. Be on guard, it is easy to quickly grumble and complain only to be embarrassed later by God’s help in His perfect timing. Can you recall such a time?

Read 16:1-18 – Manna in the Morning, Quail in the Evening

v.2-3 – It happened again. As the Israelites encountered inconvenience they were quick to gripe. They didn’t really want to be back in Egypt, they just wanted things to be easier. Look up: Isaiah 40:26-27, 1 Corinthians 10:10-11

v.4 - The Spirit of God and His Word are the bread/manna by which our souls are nourished (Matthew 4:4); The comforts of the Holy Spirit come from God as did the manna in the desert (Revelation 2:17).

God moved in response to their need (Philippians 4:19). This bread that lay upon the ground in the morning for 40 years (v.35), was everything they needed to sustain their lives and satisfy their needs until they reached the Promised Land. The Manna conveys a clear picture of Jesus Himself. He even compared Himself to Manna: *the living bread that came down from Heaven*. Look up: John 6:48-51. Also like Jesus, the manna was misunderstood (16:15); The Israelites called it Manna which means, “*What is it?*” Jesus was misunderstood by the very people He came to save. Look up: John 1:11.

v.17-18 – an omer is about 2 quarts, but the true unit of measure was “as much as he should eat.” Jesus is the all-sufficient Savior. He meets the exact need of every person’s soul.

So we pray: “*Give us each day our daily bread*” (Luke 11:3)

v.13 - The quails came and the people caught with ease as many as they needed. The people were taught to be practical and diligent in providing food for their households with daily work; and not to eat the bread of idleness or deceit. God’s bounty leaves room for man’s duty. They were not to eat until they had gathered. And most importantly, they were to be content with *enough*. Look up: Proverbs 31:27, Philippians 4:12

Read 16:19-36

v.20-21 – God’s clear command was to gather only what they needed. Yet they failed to obey God’s command. There was a penalty for their disobedience: what they gathered in disobedience bred maggots and it stank. But v.21 shows the benefit of that penalty. The result caused by their defiance led them reluctantly to obedience.

v.21 - We must each take the opportunity to gather the “Living bread” (John 6:51) in the *morning* of our days. And if we let the opportunity pass, it may be too late to gather.

v.23 -. God designed a day free of distractions and labor (no bread from heaven) so His people would worship Him. Obviously many today have no choice but to work on the “Sabbath” to provide for their families. Quality time spent with God and other believers however is essential and non-negotiable. Look up: Luke 10:38-42, Hebrews 10:24-25

v.27 - Despite what God said, some went looking for bread from heaven when He said there would be none. God’s word was true and they found none. This is an important reminder to us that God is in charge, not us.

v.31 – Beyond meeting their very life sustaining need, God went even further and lavished Israel with pleasing food. He didn’t give them tasteless gruel. He met their physical need and more. When they kept manna against God’s command, it stank; when they kept it *by* His command, it was sweet and good.

v.32 – God’s miracles and mercies are to be received and remembered.

v.35 - As important as it was for God to provide this bread from heaven, it was also important for God to stop providing it. It was essential that Israel be put again in the position to receive God’s “normal” provision, through hard work - which in itself is a blessing of God and part of His design (Gen 2:15).