

WATER, MANNA, AND QUAILS

BIBLE TEXT : Exodus 15:22-27; 16:1-36

LESSON 58 - Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Corinthians 10:11).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Exodus 15:22-27

²² So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.
²³ 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.
²⁴ And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?
²⁵ And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, *which* when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,
²⁶ And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I *am* the LORD that healeth thee.
²⁷ And they came to Elim, where *were* twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

Exodus 16:1-36

¹ And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Waters of Marah

1. Israel's route led them through a dry wilderness, Exodus 15:22.
2. The first water they found was unfit for drinking, Exodus 15:23.
3. The Israelites proved their carnal condition by murmuring against Moses, Exodus 15:24;

Exodus 14:11

¹¹ And they said unto Moses, Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?

Psalm 106:15, 16

¹⁵ And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

¹⁶ They envied Moses also in the camp, *and* Aaron the saint of the LORD.

4. Moses demonstrated his Christian spirit by praying when they were in trouble, Exodus 15:25;

Matthew 5:44

⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

5. By a miracle God delivered the Israelites from further thirst, Exodus 15:25.

6. God gave Israel an all-embracing statute and an ordinance, Exodus 15:25, 26;

Jeremiah 7:22, 23

²² For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:

²³ But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

7. Israel encamped at Elim for a period of time, Exodus 15:27.

II Manna and Quails for Food

1. At the Wilderness of Sin the Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron, Exodus 16:1-3;

Exodus 5:20, 21

²⁰ And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh:

²¹ And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

Exodus 14:12 ¹² Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For *it had been* better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

Psalm 105:40

⁴⁰ *The people* asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. Psalm 78:14-28 ¹⁴ In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.

¹⁵ He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and

the wilderness of Sin, which *is* between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.

² And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

³ And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, *and* when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

⁴ Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

⁵ And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare *that* which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

⁶ And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt:

⁷ And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what *are* we, that ye murmur against us?

⁸ And Moses said, *This shall be*, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what *are* we? your murmurings *are* not against us, but against the LORD.

⁹ And Moses spake unto Aaron,

gave *them* drink as *out* of the great depths.

¹⁶ He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.

¹⁷ And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness.

¹⁸ And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.

¹⁹ Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

²⁰ Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?

²¹ Therefore the LORD heard *this*, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;

²² Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:

²³ Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,

²⁴ And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.

²⁵ Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.

²⁶ He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind.

²⁷ He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea:

²⁸ And he let *it* fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.

2. God promised to send bread from Heaven, not only to supply their needs but also as a test of their obedience, Exodus 16:4, 5;

Deuteronomy 8:3, 16

³ And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

¹⁶ Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

3. The daily provision was also evidence that it was God Who had brought them out of Egypt, Exodus 16:6;

Matthew 6:11

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

Philippians 4:19

¹⁹ But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

4. They were told by Moses that their murmurings were against God, Exodus 16:7-9.

5. God's glory appeared to the Israelites as He talked to them, as a further testimonial of His leadership, Exodus 16:10-12.

6. Quails were sent in the evening and manna in the morning -- enough for all, Exodus 16:13-15;

Numbers 11:7-9

⁷ And the manna *was* as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium.

⁸ And the people went about, and gathered *it*, and ground *it* in mills, or beat *it* in a mortar, and baked *it* in pans, and made cakes of *it*: and the taste of *it* was as the taste of fresh oil.

⁹ And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.

Joshua 5:10-12

¹⁰ And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.

¹¹ And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings.

¹⁰ And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

¹¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

¹² I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD your God.

¹³ And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.

¹⁴ And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness *there lay* a small round thing, *as small as the hoar frost on the ground.*

¹⁵ And when the children of Israel saw *it*, they said one to another, *It is manna:* for they wist not what it *was*. And Moses said unto them, *This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.*

¹⁶ This *is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, *according to the number of your persons;* take ye every man for *them* which *are* in his tents.

¹⁷ And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less.

¹⁸ And when they did mete *it* with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to

¹² And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

Nehemiah 9:19-21

¹⁹ Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.

²⁰ Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

²¹ Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so *that* they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.

Revelation 22:18

¹⁸ For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

7. A commandment concerning the manna and Sabbath observance was given as a test of Israel's obedience, Exodus 16:16-31.
8. A pot of manna was kept as a perpetual memorial of God's providential care, Exodus 16:32-36.

NOTES:

Carnality Compared with Christianity

The great triumph at the Red Sea was scarcely past when another crisis arose for the Israelites. The wanderings of the Children of Israel were similar to the life of a Christian. When we get into "wilderness experiences" we are put to the test as to the real measure of our acquaintance with God and with our own hearts. There is a freshness and an exuberance of joy at the opening of our Christian career which may soon receive a check by a keen blast from the desert; and unless we have a firm realization of what God means to us, above and beyond everything else, and have a strong determination to persevere, we are apt to break down, and, in our hearts, turn back again to Egypt.

A three-days' journey in a desert would make great demands upon the water supply an individual could carry. No doubt the Israelites were looking forward with anticipation to the first spring they could find from which to drink the cool, thirst-slaking waters. It is easily understood that there was great disappointment when that spring gave bitter waters instead of sweet. Here was a test for them. Was God really their God? Would He take care of them in all their way? The succeeding events showed their failure and lack of faith.

Bitter Waters or Sweetened Springs?

Observe the difference between the rank and file of Israel and the godly man, Moses. They complained against Moses, accusing him; but he cried unto the Lord. Here is manifested the great difference between the carnal and the godly. One is filled with complainings, bitterness, and ingratitude; but the other has none of these things in his heart, for he has a Fount that never fails, a Source of strength and support that is always his, and an Ear that is never closed to his cry. The bitter waters are a picture of the trials, temptations, sorrows, pains, bereavements, and losses in this life, which come to all. But the Christian has One to Whom he can go in times of crisis to obtain relief and consolation.

Life's greatest triumphs, like the passage of the Red Sea, may be succeeded by vexatious incidents even though we are in the

his eating.

¹⁹ And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning.

²⁰ Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them.

²¹ And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

²² And it came to pass, *that* on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.

²³ And he said unto them, This *is that* which the LORD hath said, To morrow *is* the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake *that* which ye will bake *to day*, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

²⁴ And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein.

²⁵ And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day *is* a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field.

²⁶ Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, *which is* the sabbath, in it there shall be none.

²⁷ And it came to pass, *that* there went out *some* of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.

²⁸ And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?

²⁹ See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh

right path. But beside each Marah pool there grows a tree, which when cast into the waters makes them palatable and sweet. A tree? Truly so; but a tree without a leaf, roughly hewn and as bare as the frosts and winds of winter can make it -- the great grim, dear, sad, and yet wondrous Cross of the Son of God. By the merits of the Atonement purchased on the Cross we can find the help we need in any crisis of life. This tree that the Lord showed Moses is a beautiful picture of the blessings that Christ, through His cross of shame and His subsequent resurrection, brings into the life of the believer. The wood itself had no more healing virtue than the clay, which Jesus applied to the eyes of the blind man or the Jordan waters where Naaman was cleansed of his leprosy. Casting the tree into the waters was an exercise and manifestation of the faith and obedience that brought the desired results.

A Statute Given Prior to the Levitical Law

God made a statute and an ordinance at this time for Israel's benefit and guidance that included, as did the Law given later on Mt. Sinai, moral principles which were in existence from the beginning (**Exodus 15:25, 26** ²⁵ And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, *which* when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, ²⁶ And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I *am* the LORD that healeth thee.). The giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai was but another step in God's revelation of Himself and His will. This ordinance, given before the first altar was reared in the wilderness, is most valuable as setting forth the real nature and spirit of the Levitical ordinances. It was given with a promise to the observer that none of the diseases of Egypt would come upon him and that God would be his healer as well as his guide and protector. This is one of the great promises upon which we stand in times of sickness and trial.

The Journey to the Wilderness of Sin

The Israelites encamped at Elim because there were 12 wells and three score and ten palm trees there. An explorer, who is a devout man, recently located what he believed to be the area in which they camped. He reports that 9 of the wells are still open and unstopped by the sands of the desert. The 70 palm trees have grown into a forest, which produces considerable revenue for those who harvest the dates.

But the Israelites murmured again! This time Aaron was included as an object of their complaint. The Israelites seemed to consider that their being brought out of Egypt was the work of Moses and Aaron. The miracles were convincing; but as soon as they were past, the Israelites relapsed into their former unbelief. God therefore gave them a daily miracle that they might have proof of His interposition constantly before their eyes. Besides the miraculous supply of quails He gave them daily manna for their food.

Their whole speech only goes to prove that they preferred their bondage in Egypt to their immediate state in the wilderness with its promise of a land of peace and plenty ahead. They could not have been in absolute want, as they had brought an abundance of flocks and herds with them out of Egypt. Their cry to Moses and Aaron, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD," would seem to indicate they preferred death in one of the plagues sent upon Egypt, to their present state. In their impatience and unbelief they envied the lot of their slain oppressors! Such ingratitude and forgetfulness of God's grace and

day.

³⁰ So the people rested on the seventh day.

³¹ And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it *was* like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it *was* like wafers *made* with honey.

³² And Moses said, This *is* the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt.

³³ And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.

³⁴ As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept.

³⁵ And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

³⁶ Now an omer *is* the tenth *part* of an ephah.

strength seem incredible till we look within our own hearts and see what would be there were it not for the grace of God!

Israel's Disobedience

The giving of the manna was also a test of Israel's obedience. In the morning they were to gather their needs for that day only, an omer to a person. (An omer is said to be about 3 quarts in our measure and literally signifies a heap.) On the sixth day of the week they were to gather extra supply for the Sabbath since none would fall on that day of rest. Any manna gathered and kept until the next day would ordinarily produce worms and be worthless for their use, but the portion taken on the sixth day would keep fresh for the Sabbath. The sun would melt whatever manna was left in the field after they had gathered their supply, and yet the manna could be baked in an oven like any flour made from grain. It came with the dew, and still it was hard and could be ground in mills or beaten in their mortars.

Every detail of the plan was designed to teach Israel a great lesson. They had not only distrusted God's providence as to their food, but they had regarded the food itself as the chief thing for which they were to live; and so God humbled them and suffered them to hunger, and fed them with a food unknown to them, that He might make them to know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.

The first lesson was one of daily dependence upon God for their needs. Jesus taught His disciples to pray the familiar Lord's Prayer in which He told them to ask for their daily food. God wants us to be dependent upon Him for everything -- all the time! We are strong when we realise our weakness and come to Him for help.

Another lesson was that of obedience. Different individuals showed their disregard for God's commands and their distrust of His Word, as well as their greed and covetousness, by gathering more than the stipulated amount for their daily needs and by going out to gather manna on the Sabbath day. Their disobedience brought words of condemnation from God, and no doubt only His mercy prevented Him from cutting them off in their sin.

Whosoever Will

This daily manifestation of God's benevolence was typical of another daily outpouring that God gives to His children, which is a great lesson to us. The manna was a type of Christ, the Word of God. Jesus said He was the Bread of Life. He came down from Heaven to give life to all who would believe and obey Him. And that Bread, too, must be gathered daily if we would benefit from it. The Israelites would have perished in the wilderness had not God fed them with bread from Heaven; and every soul would have perished had not Jesus come down from Heaven and given Himself for the life of the world. There was manna enough for all (**Exodus 16:18** ¹⁸ And when they did mete *it* with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.); and the great Gospel invitation, "Whosoever will," guarantees an admittance into eternal life for every man, woman, and child who will accept that miracle of Grace.

The day-break blessing is a daylong gain. When one meets with God in the morning, before becoming entangled with the cares and responsibilities of the day, he has made a contact and received a blessing that will last the entire day. And the plan of our day is the same as that of our lives. If we seek the heavenly manna in the morning of life, the whole span of years allotted to us on earth will be filled with blessing and climaxed by a glorious

rapture in our eternal Home where we shall enjoy our Lord and Saviour forever.

QUESTIONS

1. What blessings are we to expect and receive from a "wilderness experience"?
2. What reaction did Israel have when they found the waters of Marah unsuited for their use?
3. What did Moses do? and what present application can be made out of his example?
4. Quote, or state in your own words the contents of the statute and the ordinance given to Israel at this time.
5. What great promise did this statute contain?
6. When Israel murmured the next time, against whom did they think they directed their complaint? Against whom was it really directed?
7. What was the basis for this complaint?
8. How did God answer it?
9. Name the things contained in the Bible text, which show us that the manna was given miraculously.
10. What great lesson of Sabbath observance and reverence was taught at this time?