

Before we get into our passage for today, I want us to see something that is not spelled out in the story. When the people left Egypt, they were a "mixed multitude". Hebrews, Egyptians, slaves of other nations, all believers in YHWH left together. That is never brought up again. The whole multitude that passed through the sea are now referred to as Israel. So it is with the followers of Yeshua of Nazareth that pass through the waters of baptism. We become one. (Ephesians 4:5) Our chief identity is no longer this nationality, or that race, or that class of people, but children of faith, children of Abraham, sons and daughters of God. (John 1:12) **The Gospel invites everyone into a new family, the family of God.** (Revelation 21:6)

Commented [Paul Wall1]: Ephesians 4:5 (ESV)
5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

Commented [Paul Wall2]: John 1:12 (ESV)
12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

Commented [Paul Wall3]: Revelation 21:6 (NIV)
6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.

The Israelites already had their first two big tests. The first was at the waters of the Red Sea when all seemed lost, but God delivered them in an unforgettable miracle. Then after only three days, they found themselves dying of thirst at a watering hole that was undrinkable. God once again showed that He is the answer for every situation in life. We left the Israelites in a place of reprieve, the oasis of Elim, with its 72 palms and 12 springs of water.

God won't leave us in that place of ease for long, because we need to grow. (James 1:2-3; 1Thessalonians 3:3) God is working on our sanctification. (Hebrews 10:14) He has redeemed us and we are bound for heaven, but there is still a lot of work to be done in our minds and hearts. Most of that work is done in the wilderness, not at the oasis. So the cloud moved them on to the wilderness of Sin.

Commented [Paul Wall4]: James 1:2-3 (ESV)
2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,
3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

Commented [Paul Wall5]: 1 Thessalonians 3:3 (ESV)
3 that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this.

Commented [Paul Wall6]: Hebrews 10:14 (ESV)
14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

The place, Sin, does not mean sin as we know the word, but they did sin in Sin. It is now about 45 days into their journey. ² *And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness,* ³ *and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."*

Commented [Paul Wall7]: Psalm 78:18 (ESV)
18 They tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved.

It sounds like they wish they had died by one of the plagues rather than to be hungry. This is one of the weaknesses of man. We need to eat. But food can easily become a god to us, a source of satisfaction that we exalt. (Psalm 78:18) Not until you decide to purposefully go without food will you realize the powerful influence food has on your life. This was one of the gods of Egypt that hadn't yet been addressed. Has it been addressed in your own life?

God could have provided for them from the first day they left, but He was teaching them about their hearts. He is testing them so that they can see where

they seek satisfaction, and where they turn in times of struggle. (Exodus 20:20) It's no different today. If you have never fasted I would encourage you to do so. Take a day, or two or three, and drink water or even some juice, and you will be able to relate to this trial the Israelites are going through.

Commented [Paul Wall8]: Exodus 20:20 (ESV)
20 Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin."

On the other hand, remember that they had flocks and herds. It wasn't that they had nothing to eat. The flocks produced milk. They could be slaughtered for meat, but the flocks were their wealth. They weren't quite as desperate as they made it sound. We usually aren't. (Exodus 34:3)

Commented [Paul Wall9]: Exodus 34:3 (ESV)
3 No one shall come up with you, and let no one be seen throughout all the mountain. Let no flocks or herds graze opposite that mountain."

They were ready to go back. Funny how we remember the "good old days" but forget details like things like taskmasters, and long hours of labor, beatings, lack of freedom etc. All we remember is the one thing we are currently missing. Instead of giving thanks for what we do have, like Eve in the Garden, we focus on the one thing we don't have and wonder why God would be so harsh as to withhold this one thing. (Genesis 3:6) Love withholds it that we might grow spiritually.

Commented [Paul Wall10]: Genesis 3:5-6 (ESV)
5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

The people blamed Moses for their predicament, but really, **all our dissatisfaction is ultimately aimed at God.** Notice, too, that they say that Moses brought them out of Egypt. Moses will have to address these misconceptions.

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. ⁵ On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily."

God sent the answer. He would provide. He is Jehovah Jireh. (Genesis 22:14) The people needed to see their own heart before God met their need, and that is often the case with us. I would suggest that in every trial we face, we first look at our own attitude. Where did we go first? What or who do we blame? Is their another god in our heart? What is God trying to teach us through the difficulty? And what is His solution to the situation? Can I do what Moses suggested before, "Stand still and see the salvation of God"? (Exodus 14:13)

Commented [Paul Wall11]: Genesis 22:14 (ESV)
14 So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

God is teaching them to trust His word and obey Him. We learn to obey because His commands are for our good. (Deuteronomy 10:13) He gave them very specific commands. Gather so much on these days. Don't gather more except on the day before the Sabbath and then gather twice as much.

Commented [Paul Wall12]: Exodus 14:13 (ESV)
13 And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again."

⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, "At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble against us?"
Why they didn't realize that it was the Lord that delivered them after the

Commented [Paul Wall13]: Deuteronomy 10:13 (ESV)
13 and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?"

plagues, the Red Sea, and Marah is due to human nature. (Psalm 78:11) Israel is revealing the heart of man, just as Pharaoh revealed the heart of man. What does God have to do for us to give Him the credit?

Commented [Paul Wall14]: Psalm 78:11 (ESV)
11 They forgot his works and the wonders that he had shown them.

A life size reproduction of the tabernacle is being handed to us right when we get to that passage in Exodus. Some people will think I planned it. The material I chose for Wednesday night Bible study happened to start right where we were last Sunday in Exodus. Some will think it is a coincidence. Some will realize it is God. How many times have we seen God provide the perfect illustration for where we were in a sermon series? Will we give Him the credit due Him and recognize His hand? It is not me! It is the grace of God! What am I? Moses says what are we? We are dust. (Psalm 103:13) Without the breath of life we go back to the dust. Our salvation is of God. Our ministry is of God. The fruit is of God. Give God the glory due Him!

Commented [Paul Wall15]: Psalm 103:14 (ESV)
14 For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.

⁸ And Moses said, "When the LORD gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him— what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD." ... ^{12b} Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.' "
That should have put the fear of God into them. The last time God said, "Then they will know I am the LORD", was about the army of Egypt before they drowned. (Exodus 14:18) The difference is that God added a reassuring, "*your God*" on the end of the phrase.

Commented [Paul Wall16]: Exodus 14:18 (ESV)
18 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

God is patient and gracious. They didn't deserve it, but God dealt with them as children. They are just learning to walk. (Psalm 78:38) Most of us are in the same place, complaining about the one thing we lack when we have been given so much. The Lord meets our need, and hopefully we learn the lesson and know that He is the LORD our God!

Commented [Paul Wall17]: Psalm 78:38 (ESV)
38 Yet he, being compassionate, atoned for their iniquity and did not destroy them; he restrained his anger often and did not stir up all his wrath.

¹³ In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. ¹⁴ And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. ^{15a} When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. There have been numerous practical explanations how this may have been possible. Quail do migrate at night when it is cool and then collapse in the morning after flying so long. The problem with that natural explanation is the quail came in the evening.

The manna has been explained as a secretion of a desert aphid, but does anyone serious think there were that many aphids in the desert? Then the miracle would have been just as glorious, billions of aphids that secrete their nectar five days a week, and double on Friday, but nothing on Saturday. Why do unbelievers have such a hard time accepting the possibility of the God of creation doing something supernatural?

The people had never seen that white stuff before, so they called it "What's it?" in Hebrew, manna. (Actually "man" but through the Greek and Aramaic translations we came to call it manna.) Manna in the morning every day and on this special occasion quail in the evening. (Not to be confused with Numbers 11!.)

Commented [Paul Wall18]: Numbers 11:31 (ESV)
31 Then a wind from the LORD sprang up, and it brought quail from the sea and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, around the camp, and about two cubits above the ground.

Each person was to gather about 2 quarts and 4 quarts on Friday. It seems that no matter how big or small you were, it was just enough for you. (2Corinthians 8:13-15) In the instructions was an implied test. If you gathered more than you were told, by the next day it would stink and have worms. On Friday you had to believe it wouldn't if you gathered two days worth. Those who disobeyed found that God's word was true. If they went out Saturday morning, there was no manna to be found anywhere.

Commented [Paul Wall19]: 2 Corinthians 8:13-15 (ESV)
13 I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness 14 your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. 15 As it is written, "Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack."

Because they disobeyed, Moses became angry. Moses had come to the place of complete confidence in the word of the LORD. He didn't have the patience of God that saw them as children in the school of faith. He couldn't understand why they didn't believe God's word.

Sometimes your leaders are impatient as well. "We wonder why you can't discern something is not of God, or how you could dabble in the world, when the Word of God is clear on that subject. We get upset when you do not take God at His word. It's not that we are mad at you, but that we know your obedience to the Word is best for you. We need to have patience. You see, we are all in school. We may be in different classes, but we are all in the school of life nevertheless.

This story so clearly shows us God's attributes of patience and loving-kindness. After all they've seen, they are still maligning God's intentions for bringing them out of Egypt. *"...you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."*

How heartbreaking that must have been for God to hear, and yet, He knows their stage of spiritual growth and is humbling them to teach them that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. (Deuteronomy 8:3)

Commented [Paul Wall20]: Deuteronomy 8:3 (ESV)
3 And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

The answer to the question, "Why God?", is always the same. Because He loves us! It's because He wants our faith to grow for our eternal good. (Galatians 5:6) He accepts us as we are because of our faith in Jesus' sacrifice, but He won't leave us where we are. That is why He tests us. That is why He leads us to places of thirst and hunger, so that we will hunger and thirst after Him.

Commented [Paul Wall21]: Galatians 5:6 (ESV)
6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

²⁷ On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. ²⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? ²⁹ See! The LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Remain each of you

*in his place; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day."*³⁰ *So the people rested on the seventh day.* The Sabbath is a controversial topic to many today. When we get to the laws given to Moses, we'll discuss it more fully. The Sabbath rest goes all the way back to the creation story. (Genesis 2:2-3) It preceded the laws of Moses. This was another test, just as the order to gather only a certain amount on certain days, so they were to rest on the Sabbath and devote it to the worship of God.

The New Testament clearly shows us that for the early Christians the day of worship became the first day of the week, Sunday. (1Corinthians 16:2) It was called the Lord's Day as Jesus is our Sabbath rest. (Hebrews 4:9-11) The Apostle Paul tells us a number of times that we are no longer under the law. His most definitive statement on a day of worship is in Romans 14:5 (ESV) *⁵ One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.*

If you decide to take a day, whether Saturday or Sunday and do nothing but worship, good for you. If you are convinced that every day you should be dedicated to God in your every action, then good for you. We all answer to God for our own convictions and not for another's. (Romans 14:13) Know in your own heart how God is leading you. Don't condemn another believer because they are led differently in regards to these debatable issues. (Colossians 2:16-17) Physiologically it is good for you to take a day off. No other culture at the time had this custom. God blessed His people with rest. We need it!

³³ And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar, and put an omer of manna in it, and place it before the LORD to be kept throughout your generations." There was something about this manna that they were to always remember. It was first placed in the tent of meeting where Moses met with God. After the Ark of the Covenant was built, it was one of the three elements in the Ark. (Hebrews 9:4)

Not only was it a reminder of God's faithful, miraculous provision for the Children of Israel during their 40 years of wandering in the desert, but it was also a sign of God as the Great Provider for all His creation. (Psalm 147:9)

Most importantly, it looked forward to the great provision of God. Humanity has a spiritual hunger that can only be filled by God alone. We try to fill that spiritual emptiness with all kinds of things, food, entertainment, security, power, but nothing fills that great void. (Ephesians 4:19)

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He fed the multitudes with a few small fish and five small loaves of bread. (John 6:11) It reminded the people of Moses and the manna in the wilderness. They asked for Him to feed them again as sign that He was indeed the Messiah. (John 6:30-31)

Commented [Paul Wall22]: Genesis 2:2-3 (ESV)
2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.
3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Commented [Paul Wall23]: 1 Corinthians 16:2 (ESV)
2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

Commented [Paul Wall24]: Hebrews 4:9-11 (ESV)
9 So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, 10 for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. 11 Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

Commented [Paul Wall25]: Romans 14:13 (ESV)
13 Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

Commented [Paul Wall26]: Colossians 2:16-17 (ESV)
16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.
17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Commented [Paul Wall27]: Hebrews 9:4 (ESV)
4 having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant.

Commented [Paul Wall28]: Psalm 147:9 (ESV)
9 He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry.

Commented [Paul Wall29]: Ephesians 4:19 (NIV)
19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

Commented [Paul Wall30]: John 6:11 (ESV)
11 Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted.

Commented [Paul Wall31]: John 6:30-31 (ESV)
30 So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' "

³² Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." John 6:32-33 (ESV) Moses didn't give them manna. God did. Jesus point was this, God is the only One that can really meet our need. The manna was just a shadow of the real bread from heaven. The real bread from heaven is the Man who comes down from heaven and gives His life to the world. Of course, Jesus was speaking of Himself.

He went on to make it clear. *⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."* John 6:48-51 (ESV) God has provided bread that gives not just physical life, but eternal life. It is the very body of Jesus who took our sins upon Himself and died in our place. (Isaiah 53:6) He is the bread of life.

What is it, that white wafer upon the earth that tastes like honey? It's a picture of God sending from heaven the answer to our desperate need. Without Him, we will starve spiritually.

Manna is still falling! Every morning we rise and many of us have a habit of going and collecting enough for our spiritual hunger for that day. Some gather a little and some a lot, but it ends up being just enough. He truly satisfies!

Prayer: Father give us a spiritual hunger for our daily bread. Give us the Word made flesh. Help us to see Him through the enlightened eyes of our heart. Give us a greater revelation of the dimensions of Your love and the life that You give us in your bread from heaven, Jesus. Amen!

Questions

- 1 Who makes up the family of God?
- 2 Why isn't the Christian life easier?
- 3 What was the next test they faced?
- 4 Why didn't God give them manna from the start?
- 5 Where is our dissatisfaction ultimately aimed?
- 6 Why did Moses become angry with the people?
- 7 What was the origin of the Sabbath?

Commented [Paul Wall32]: Isaiah 53:6 (ESV)
6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

8 What did the Apostle Paul teach about the Sabbath?

9 Why did God have them keep a jar of manna?

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