

God gives Bread in the Desert

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[0 : 00] for a little to the chapter that we read in Exodus, Exodus chapter 16. I'm reading at verse 12.

I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God. In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay round the camp. 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.

When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, What is it? For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.

The Old Testament really changes for a person once they become a Christian. Before you come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, and before you come, your whole, as it were, perspective and understanding and knowledge is developed and enlarged, there might be many of the stories of the Old Testament that really thrill you and fill you with wonder.

[1 : 30] Because some of these stories, some of the incidents and experiences are really quite wonderful. When you look at the life of Joseph and Jacob and the likes of David and Goliath, of the life of Daniel, and all these things, all these particular stories, they're really, really interesting.

And you know, a lot of people read them and say, Well, these are quite amazing. But once you become a Christian, it kind of changes, and you begin to see a whole new area.

It all becomes so spiritual. And you begin to see and understand the way that God works, because you see the spiritual experiences, and you see that these things are related exactly to where we are just now.

Because sometimes people think, What's the point in looking back historically at your characters like David and Daniel and all these people? But God has set them there, and we're told in Corinthians that they're set there as an example for us.

That's one of the reasons that they're given. So that we come to understand a lot about ourselves, a lot about Christian experience, and a lot about the Lord himself. And so, here we have, we find that in the Old Testament, it is a world of shadows and types very much.

[2 : 52] But the whole of the Old Testament is full of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is full of Christian experience. And there are few things that speak to us more clearly of the redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ than we have of the exodus of God's people out of Egypt.

Because we have there the great time of the Passover and the shedding of the blood of the Lamb on the doorposts and on the lintel and the angel passing over when they see the blood and of how God is redeeming his people and taking them out from slavery and from bondage and taking them to the promised land.

And it is something that we can see, we can follow, we can identify, and say, oh yeah, it's so where we are. And it doesn't take great genius very often just to be able to see and to understand what is happening.

Israel took a long time to get from Egypt to the land of promise. It shouldn't have taken them that long. But they took 40 years.

And they took 40 years because of the rebellion. Because of just their refusal to believe and trust God. And they were no sooner out of Egypt than that grumbling, that complaining against God started.

[4 : 14] This incident that we have here is only a month after leaving Egypt. So it's quite extraordinary that these people who had seen the plagues and they themselves, the ten plagues, had been free from them, but they had seen Israel, they had seen Egypt, the land of Egypt,

devastated by the plagues.

They in the land of Goshen were free from the plagues. But they had seen the impact and the effect. They had seen and witnessed that extraordinary miracle at the Red Sea where God had divided the waters.

They had crossed over on dry land. And then when the Egyptians' army had tried to cross over, how the waters came pouring back in and the Egyptian army that had been after them had been destroyed.

So only a month has taken place as elapsed because we're told here this is the second month after leaving Egypt. And yet, despite all that God has done for them and all that they have seen, they're complaining and grumbling.

In the previous chapter, God had provided water for them. They had come to these waters and the waters were bitter, but God had made them drinkable, lovely water for them. So they had seen God at work over and over again.

[5 : 34] And yet, we find them grumbling and complaining. And that's really what makes our complaint really quite extraordinary. And we find that the whole congregation in verse 2 grumbled.

And verse 3, talk of ingratitude. You see what they're saying in verse 3. And the people of Israel said, Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in 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. That's quite extraordinary what they're saying. Now, of course, when they complain against Moses and Aaron, what they don't realize is that they are actually grumbling against God.

And God makes that very clear. That Moses and Aaron, as God's representatives and God's mouthpiece, are only doing what God asked them to do.

And so God is saying, It's against me. And we find that whenever there is anger placed against people who are doing what God wants them to do, that it is ultimately against God himself.

[6 : 46] That's what we find when people persecute Christians for living and following the Lord Jesus Christ. That it is against Christ that their anger is really displayed.

Jesus said that about the Apostle Paul when he was Saul. Why, he says, Why are you persecuting me? Not the church. Why do you, Saul, persecute me?

So we see that the Lord is saying to them, It's against me you're grumbling. And we can see, as we said, the incredible ingratitude because only a month had passed.

And it just shows us how quickly we forget what God has done for us. In Egypt, they were crying out for help, for deliverance to God because they were there as slaves with no rights, with nothing.

There was a program of infant genocide taking place. Remember how there was that command that every baby boy born had to be put to death? And so there was this infant genocide going on.

[7 : 55] They were slaves. They were living in the most horrendous situation. The only thing that they had that they could look back on really and say, Well, you know what? The one thing I'm missing in Egypt is my meat.

We've got nothing here. But rather than seeing the whole picture of what God has done for them and remembering the whole picture of how it was in Egypt, they focus on one thing that they enjoyed in Egypt.

And it's like everything that's in the present is awful. And they're saying to Moses and Aaron, You've taken us out from Egypt and you brought us into the wilderness to die.

Talk of ingratitude. But there's no point in pointing the finger at the Israelites because we can be like that as well. Do you know, there's times the Christian looks back and maybe when they're going through a hard time like Asaph in Psalm 73.

Asaph was having a really, really tough time and he began to look around and he was seeing the godless people who didn't care for the Lord in any shape or form and they were getting on and prospering.

[9 : 04] And he was struggling and he started to become envious of the unbeliever. And you know, sometimes it's possible for the Christian to get like that as well.

We forget what God has actually done for us. And you know, there are times that the Christian will sometimes say, you know, it was better for me before I started following the Lord.

Really? Was it? No. just think back because you know whatever the world gave you, it didn't give you anything of any lasting satisfaction.

It didn't give you anything that would satisfy your soul. It didn't give you anything for your future when you come to leave this world. The world has nothing to give you that you can take with you out of this world.

will all disappear with the using. Do we really want to go back to that? Do we want to go back to something being aware of God's wrath and anger towards us?

[10:14] Go back to the thought of if you die that you go to hell? These thoughts where you were before, do you really want to go back there?

Well, that's the kind of spirit that Israel were showing at this particular juncture. They were saying it was better for us back in Egypt. No, it was not by a country mile.

But this is where they are at this moment and they're complaining. And God said, right, I'm going to deal with the situation. And that's what I find quite extraordinary is that instead of God saying, right, I'm not going to take these people along.

This is ridiculous. I'm not putting up with this because we find that God displays his love, his mercy, his grace. And he tells him in verse 12, this is what he says, I have heard the grumbling of the people.

At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. In verse 13, in the evening quail came up and covered the camp. And as you know, quail are a little sort of, I suppose, kind of like partridge birds.

[11:20] And commentators will tell us that at that particular time of year there's usually a huge migration from Africa up into Europe of quail.

And at that particular time that is when they would be passing through the, that part of the Sinai desert. And very often at night they would rest on the ground and so on.

So it's quite amazing how God's timing, God's providence, God's everything is bringing together what would actually be happening but bringing it all just to fit in on this particular, this very night. But then comes this absolutely miraculous thing, this supernatural provision where God is going to feed his people with bread from heaven.

Every morning there would be this fine flake like thing on the ground which fell every night. People had never seen anything like it, they asked, what is it?

[12:21] And that really is the Hebrew manna. It's called manna and manna simply is what is it? That's how it got its name. Now, this miraculous or supernatural feeding of the people of Israel with manna is such a spiritual picture for ourselves.

There's an incredible amount in it but just very briefly to look at a few things. As we said already, first of all it is a display of God's grace. There was no need for God to do this but God out of his love and his mercy and his grace, he gave to the people.

And that's exactly what the Lord has done for us too in sending his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the fulfillment, who is the bread of life.

Jesus himself said that. I am, it's one of the great I ams, I am the bread of life. I am the true bread. Remember in John talking about how the Lord had given bread through Moses to the people in Israel.

He said, I am that true bread that has come down from heaven. I am the bread of life. And God loves us. And God has displayed his love by sending his son Jesus, the true bread of life, into our lives.

[13:44] bread. And I hope tonight that all of us have taken and tasted off that bread. But we also see that it was a liberal pouring out of bread.

Verse 4 tells us that. Then the Lord said to Moses, Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven to you. Not just give you a little, but I am going to pour out from my abundant supply.

And that's what God does to us in and through his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He doesn't give sort of just grudgingly. He doesn't just give us a little bit.

If we tonight only have a little bit of Jesus, if tonight we're only feeding a little bit on Jesus, the fault does not lie with Jesus, but with us.

Because if we truly hunger and thirst after righteousness, we will be filled. Filled! Not just get an appetizer, not just get a little, we will be filled.

[14:51] That's what the word tells us. So if we're going about with a spiritual, where we're struggling spiritually, where we're not enjoying spiritually, surely it is because the fault lies with ourselves.

angels. But more than that, the Lord also tells us, behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a portion every day, that I may test them whether they will walk in my law or not.

And you see, God has a purpose in everything that he does. And in the supply of the bread from heaven, he's going to be testing Israel, whether the supply of bread would be a blessing to them or whether it wouldn't be.

And you know, it's the same for ourselves as well. Because God fills our lives with so many blessings. Do you know that you can actually abuse the blessings of God?

You can turn the blessings of God into sin? And you say to yourself, how can you do that? Well, there's just so many different ways. Just take for instance, supposing a person is blessed with great spiritual gifts.

[16:08] Supposing a person is blessed with a great spiritual gift in prayer. And then that person begins to realize they have that, and then they become puffed up with pride.

And they begin to think that they are better. Like the Pharisee was in the temple, he thought he was the most eloquent man of prayer, and he despised the publican over in the corner who could hardly put two or three words together.

So you see that even spiritual gifts can be abused. All the blessings that we receive, God can bless us, not just spiritually, but in providence. These blessings can be abused.

God is going to test us with these things. Do we use them, or do we abuse them? And that's what the Lord was testing Israel with here as well.

And it is so important that the blessings that we get from God should draw us closer to God rather than further away because you know it's all too possible that we want the gifts and not the giver.

[17:14] That we want the good things from God but we don't want himself. We've always got to be very careful with that. And then the Lord again, we're told in Deuteronomy because we find reference to this quite often in Israel's journey through the wilderness, that God used the giving of the manna to humble them.

That's what we're told. And he humbled you in Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 3, and he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna. It was a humbling thing for the Israelites.

Why? Well, for a start, there was not one thing that they were able to do themselves to get that manna onto the ground.

And in fact, when the manna was there on the ground, all they had to do was to stoop down and to pick it up. But they couldn't bring that manna, they couldn't produce that manna, nothing about their abilities could make that manna come onto the ground.

It was God and God alone. And it's the same for you and for me with regard to the salvation in Jesus Christ. There is not one thing that we have, any single one of us, that can go to God and say, because of this, I deserve to be a Christian.

[18:38] Not one person will ever arrive in heaven and say, you know, I'm in heaven because I did know. It is because of what Jesus did.

Not one of us could ever have planned up the idea and say, once man had sinned and gone wrong with God, I know an idea.

How about if God the Father sends his son into this world to die for me? Wouldn't that be a great, nobody would have thought that up, nobody would have, it was all of grace, it was God's plan, God's purpose, God's provision, from A to Z beginning to end, just as it was with the manna.

And that's humbling. And you know, that's one of the reasons why a lot of people don't like the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, because it strips away from us anything that we could do.

Tells us that in Ephesians, you're saved by grace, not of works. Why? Lest any one should boast. Nobody can boast.

[19:48] There's not one Christian that can boast, because it is all of grace. And so we find the Lord making this provision, and we're also told that they were to gather a portion every day.

Now we hardly need to highlight this, that they were to gather it, but that also is important, because when they went out of their tents, there was the manna on the ground. It was no use simply looking at the manna.

that wouldn't feed them. They had to go and gather it, and we read that they could either bake it or boil it or do whatever they wanted with it. It was a wafer-like thing, like coriander seed, wafer-like thing that tasted like wafer and honey.

But they had to go and gather it. And it's the same with their shells, with regard to the bread of heaven. Jesus, the bread of heaven, has come down from heaven, heaven. But it is not enough for us simply to come to church.

It is not enough for us simply to know about him, because we can say, wasn't that wonderful? Wasn't it amazing how God sent his son into this world to save sinners?

[20 : 59] We can know all that and not do anything about it. That would be like the Israelites, seeing the manna, but not going out to gather it. So it's absolutely essential that we go out and we gather together.

In other words, we take Jesus to our shelf. We believe in him. We accept him. We lay hold upon him. We trust him with our whole heart. And they were to gather every day.

It was a daily provision that God gave. And for six days that they were to gather. And we see that if they gather too much, then if they were keeping it, they say, oh, look, I've got loads today.

I'm going to gather so I won't have to go out tomorrow. Maybe say like on a Tuesday, they say, you know, I'm going to have a long lie tomorrow. I'm not going to bother going out tomorrow. I'm going to get today's supply and tomorrow's.

But they would discover in the morning that what they had gathered from the previous day, it would rot and worms in it.

[22 : 08] They had to gather just for the day. And again, that's a great lesson to us about God's provision for us. Because he gives us his grace every single day.

And I'm sure we've all been in situations where we have something, not saying necessarily tomorrow, but we have things ahead of us and we worry.

maybe you have something tomorrow, something big, something that's worrying you, and you're saying to yourself, you know, God isn't giving me the grace, I'm so worried.

But it's today, it's not tomorrow. God will give you tomorrow, when it becomes today, the grace sufficient for you.

And that's what we're often wanting. We're wanting tomorrow's grace, we're wanting our lives all planned out and the grace for every moment, way ahead. No, the Lord gives us it day by day by day.

[23 : 16] My grace is sufficient for you. That is all in the present tense. And so the Lord will give us day by day the grace sufficient for us.

Sometimes, like the Israelites who tried to go on yesterday's bread for today, sometimes we can do that as well. You know, there are times where God really helps us and gives us his grace.

And we become lazy. And we think, ah, it's amazing, I was so helped, and like that. And we just assume everything is going to be the same the next day.

Instead of going day by day by day for the grace. Every day we need to go back again and again and again.

So this is what we find. But there was one exception to the gathering. Six days they gathered, but on the sixth day they were to gather a double portion.

[24 : 18] Why? Because the seventh day was the Sabbath. And again we find some of the Israelites, they were, oh my, they were stubborn.

because some of them, as we saw there, they gathered during the week a double portion and of course it rotted. And there were others on the sixth day who decided, no, I'll go out on the Sabbath and I'll get some.

But they went out and there was none. They were told that's the way it was to be. People who were just, they were so defiant of God. And you know, it's still the same.

And you notice the great importance God puts upon the Sabbath. Eat today, for tomorrow is a Sabbath to the Lord. For six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh, which is a Sabbath, there shall be none.

And so the Lord is saying to the people, or Moses is saying, see the Lord has given you the Sabbath. Therefore on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Remain each one in his place.

[25 : 25] And again in verse 25, Moses says, eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord. Today you will not find it in the field. For six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none.

The Sabbath is to the Lord. We must never forget that. We are, here we have the Christian Sabbath, the first day of the week, the Lord's day.

It is to the Lord. And it is binding upon us that this day belongs to the Lord. Every day belongs to the Lord, but this day especially belongs to him.

And you know, people who dishonor his day really dishonor him, because everything that belongs to the Lord, it's his. This is God's word. People who dishonor God's word dishonor God.

People who dishonor God's cause dishonor God. People who dishonor God's day dishonor God.

You cannot separate God's house, his day, his people, his anything from himself.

[26 : 35] They belong, all these things belong specifically to him. And so he keeps establishing the importance of this day.

And it's something we should take to heart. This day is a special day to him. manna. But there's just so many, many things that we could see with regard to the manna.

Maybe another time we'll come back to it. But one of the things we see, it was something that was happening all the time. It was a perpetual thing that happened in the experience of Israel.

Because it was going to happen all the way through the wilderness. People of Israel were told in verse 35, ate the manna for forty years till they came.

to the land of Canaan, till they came to the land of promise. And in fact it tells us that in the book of Joshua chapter 5, the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land.

[27 : 36] there was no more need of the manna. And you know, as we go through this world, the Lord is providing for us day by day, day by day by day, every day.

And we get up and go to bed and each day there's a great similarity about life. Although our experiences may be very different and sometimes we go through harrowing experiences, sometimes very pleasant experiences, but it's day, day, day runs into day, and day runs into night, night to day, and so on.

And always God is providing with his grace, with his mercy, and so on. But one day, the way that it has been in this world will come to an end.

And we will be taken into another world, into the heavenly world, and we will eat the produce of that land. Not this one, but that one.

How that will be, and what that will be, I don't know, but we will feed upon the land who is in the midst of the throne. That's what we're told. And our experience will be so, so different, but it will be eternally fulfilling, and satisfying, and thrilling, and gratifying.

[28 : 59] The world of the highs and the lows of this world will be gone. It will be a perpetual high there. It will be quite amazing. Because we cannot stay, we can have really, there are times in this world where we say, whoa, this is great.

Where we've had, we're on a high, on the crest of the wave, everything's going well, we're full of life, full of enjoyment. But it doesn't last, it cannot last, that's the nature of this world.

It doesn't matter how much you try, it doesn't matter how much money a person may have, it doesn't matter how much power a person may have, they cannot remain on the crest of the wave all through this life.

Because it's a fallen, broken world. There's going to be sorrows, there's going to be pains. But you know, in Jesus Christ, the bread of life, he's taking us to a land where all these sorrows and pains have gone.

There's going to be no more. That's one of the ways that heaven is defined, it's defined in negatives. no more pain, no more sorrow, no more tears, no more death.

[30 : 08] All the bad things of this world, only perpetual light, seeing face to face with Jesus. I hope that Jesus, the bread of life, is the one that you're feeding upon tonight.

Let us pray. O Lord, our God, we give thanks for the great gift of Jesus into this world, the true bread of life. We pray that we may feed upon the heavenly provision that is given to us day by day. Lord, bless and pity us, shine on us with your face, grant us your grace every day of our lives, do us good, we pray, take us to our home safely.

We pray, Lord, that you will be with each and every one of us and forgive us our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. Our concluding psalm is psalm 28 from the Scottish Psalter on page 238.

Psalm 28, and we're going to sing from verse 6 to the end, the tune is martyrdom. Forever blessed be the Lord, for graciously he heard the voice of my petitions, and prayers did regard.

[31 : 33] The Lord's my strength and shield, my heart upon him did rely, and I am helped, hence my heart of joy exceedingly, and with my song I will embrace, their strength is God alone, he also is the saving strength of his anointed one, with thine own people do thou save, bless thine inheritance, them also do thou feed, and them forevermore advance.

Junus Martyrdom, Psalm 28. Forever blessed be the Lord, for gracious he he heard, the voice of my petitions, unwritten regard.

The Lord's my strength, name to the John booth, earth, earning them Exceedingly I'm with my soul I will embrace And strength is all alone He also is The saving strength

Of His anointed one O I know Thee The new love of sin As I in heaven It just And also do Thou King of heaven O evermore Now may the grace, mercy, and peace Of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore Amen Bow Why the power and rebirth coexist the easy of his hand

But Wedni■ And your bloodhos x son