

WATER, MANNA, AND QUAILS

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

LESSON 58 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings" (Philippians 2:14).

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 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

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Victory Soon Forgotten

The Children of Israel had, through the Lord, triumphed gloriously over the Egyptians who had pursued them to the Red Sea. All the horses and the horsemen had been drowned, and the Israelites could see with their own eyes how great had been the defeat of the ungodly. The Israelites had had a great victory celebration, and had sung songs glorifying their Redeemer. But how quickly they forgot His providence!

Only three days after they had sung the song of Moses, "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? . . . glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? . . . Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation," they again became discouraged. Had they not just sung that God had led them out and had done wonders for them? Why could they not believe that He would continue to do His wonders for them? Just because the water they came to was not fit to drink, they thought they were going to die of thirst. We think they were foolish indeed not to trust God; but how many times the same thing happens to us. God will pour out a rich blessing upon us, and we feel we will never again doubt Him. But if we are not careful to study God's Word and pray much, we shall find soon that just a little discouragement will come, and right away we look at our trouble rather than trust God.

Our Examples

The story of the Children of Israel becoming a nation through a long trail of suffering and discouragements is given to us in the Bible as an example of what happens when people get their eyes off the Lord and look to their troubles. We shall find as we follow their history that whenever they lived to please God, He prospered them and gave them victory over their enemies; but when they lived to please themselves, and worshiped other gods, terrible afflictions, captivity, and even death came upon them.

God's Care

It really was a problem when about three million people were thirsty and there was no water fit to drink; but we read in our last lesson that God said: "Fear ye not, stand still, and *see* the salvation of the LORD." Now God tells Moses to cut down a tree and throw it into the bitter water, and it will be made sweet. It is not hard for God to do the things that seem so big to us. They are just little things for Him He wants us to think of them, too, as little things and let Him take care of them for us. He has told us to cast all our cares upon Him, for He cares for us (**1 Peter 5:7** ⁷ Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you).

Divine Healing

When the people had satisfied their thirst they were content for a little while. It was here that God promised them that if they would obey His Word and live for Him He would let none of the diseases of the Egyptians come upon them. He said very plainly, "I am the LORD that healeth thee," and He is saying the same today. If we live to please Jesus, we need only call upon Him when we are sick, and He will heal us. Not very many people today like to trust God to heal their bodies when they are sick; but God is just as

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, 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

displeased with His children today if they fail to trust Him as He was with the Children of Israel when they murmured against Him.

When the Israelites came out of Egypt there was not one weak nor sickly one among them (**Psalms 105:37** 37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and *there was not one feeble person among their tribes*). That in itself was a miracle, because they had worked very hard for many years as slaves of the Egyptians. God would have kept them in that perfect health all the way to Canaan if they had not sinned against Him, but we shall learn of some terrible plagues that killed thousands of them at times when they disobeyed. It is a serious thing to disobey the voice of God.

Rest

Elim was a beautiful oasis in the desert, and here Israel camped for about three weeks, and rested. They seem to have had enough food to eat until this time; but when they took up their journey from Elim, they became worried about what they would eat, and began to murmur against Moses again. They should have considered how wonderfully God had supplied their needs up to this time, and trusted Him for more; but people forget so quickly the blessings of God!

For a Mess of Pottage

It was now a month since they had left Egypt where they had been beaten with whips, and had been forced to do more than they thought it possible to do. In just thirty days they had forgotten the cruel taskmasters, and could remember only the fleshpots, the melons and onions they had had to eat. They were willing to sacrifice their hope of an inheritance in Canaan for something to eat! They were like Esau who had sold his inheritance for a mess of pottage.

When the Children of Israel were hungry they murmured again against Moses — and God heard them! We should be very careful not to murmur against any of God's children, especially His ministers, because when we do so we are really murmuring against God.

God in the Pillar

Aaron went out to tell the Israelites that God had heard their murmurings, and that He was going to send them bread from Heaven. As he was speaking, they all looked toward the cloud that had gone before them all the time they were on the march, and God spoke from the pillar of the cloud. He told Moses, to tell the people that in the evening He would send them quails to eat, and in the morning there would be bread. He tried hard to impress upon these unbelieving people the fact that He was the Almighty God. The food came, just as God said it would.

Manna

The manna that fell on the ground was different from anything we eat. The Psalmist called it "angels' food" (Psalm 78:25). When the dew would lift, there would be the little white kernels, something like tapioca. It could be boiled, or could be ground into flour and baked. It had the taste of honey, and evidently contained all the vitamins necessary to keep them strong, because they lived on this food for forty years. Every morning when the dew went up, the ground was white with manna, so the people never again had to go hungry.

God said that He would prove His people through giving them this food, to see if they would obey His Law. But it seems there were some who disobeyed Him every chance they had. First He told them to gather no more than they could eat in one day; but some people were greedy and probably did not believe that God would send more the next day, so they took as much as they could. But it did not do them any good. The manna spoiled and bred worms. Then came the day before the Sabbath; and God told them they could gather enough for two days on that day, and it would not

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 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.

spoil. But again some people disobeyed and went out on the Sabbath morning to gather, when God had told them not to go out — and they found no manna.

The Day of Rest

God said He made the sabbath for man He realized that a person cannot work all the time and live a healthy life. He ordered him to rest on every seventh day. Later God commanded: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). Our sabbath today is the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, and we must remember to keep it holy. How much happier our world would be if everyone honored God on the first day of the week!

Was not the manna an unusual food? For forty years enough manna fell every day, except the Sabbath, to feed that great company of people. Another reason why we know it was supernatural food was that in spite of the fact that it could not be kept overnight without spoiling (except for the Sabbath), God told Moses to save a pot of it to show future generations what had kept them alive during their wanderings in the wilderness, and it did not spoil.

Our Manna

The Word of God is manna to us; it is food for our souls. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). We cannot read enough of the Bible in one day to last us for a week or a month. We must read His Word daily, and get fresh "manna" every morning. That will keep us healthy spiritually, and make us grow to be strong Christians.

QUESTIONS

- 1 How long were the Israelites in the wilderness before they murmured for water? For food? Against whom did they murmur?
- 2 What did they want to do?
- 3 Why was the pillar of cloud important to them? Give three reasons.
- 4 What kind of food did God send? For how long?
- 5 How did God prove the people through the food?
- 6 What is our manna?

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 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.