

The Book of Exodus

The Miracle of Manna and Quail

Text: Exodus 16:1-36

- I. Israel Complains (Exodus 16:1-3)
 - A. After refreshing themselves at Elim, the children of Israel journeyed into the wilderness of Sin.
 - 1. This area stretched from the Red Sea to the region of Mount Sinai.
 - 2. Numbers 33:9-15 mentions several stops along this path.
 - B. Again, Israel began to complain against Moses and Aaron.
 - C. This time, they murmured over a lack of food – claiming that they had been led into the wilderness to be killed with hunger.
- II. God Instructs (Exodus 16:4-8)
 - A. Upon hearing their complaint, God answered with a promise of provision.
 - B. God would provide Israel with their “daily bread,” but there were certain instructions to be followed.
 - 1. These conditions served as a test from God, to prove the faith of Israel.
 - 2. A certain rate – an omer (vs. 16) – was to be gathered every morning.
 - 3. On the sixth day, they were to gather twice as much – two omers.
 - C. Note that even though God provided the bread, each Israelite still had to work for it.
 - 1. They had to go out of their tents.
 - 2. They had to gather the manna.
 - 3. They had to obey the specific laws of God.
 - D. Moses used this as an opportunity to explain that when they complained against him they were actually murmuring against God.
- III. God Provides (Exodus 16:9-15)
 - A. In spite of their bad attitude, God heard their complaint and provided for them.
 - B. As the congregation looked into the wilderness, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.
 - C. God spoke to Moses, promising to give them flesh in the evening and bread in the morning.
 - 1. Take a moment to consider how much food would be needed to feed around 2 million people.
 - 2. Remember that God continued to do this every day (except the Sabbath) for 40 years.
 - 3. Do not lose sight of the scope and magnitude of God’s wonders toward the children of Israel.
 - D. At evening, quails came up and covered the camp of Israel.
 - E. In the morning, when the dew evaporated, the ground was covered with small, round matter that was called “manna.”
 - 1. The word “manna” means, “What is it?”
 - 2. This miraculous substance had never before been seen.

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IV. God Proves

(Exodus 16:16-36)

- A. God instructed them to gather an omer per person per day.
 - 1. When they measured their manna, each had the same amount.
 - 2. This is further evidence of the miraculous nature of this food.
 - 3. It had to be gathered in the morning before the day became hot or it would melt.
- B. God instructed them to leave none of it until the next morning.
 - 1. This was a reminder to trust in God for daily bread.
 - 2. Those who tried to save some for the next day found that it bred worms and began to stink.
- C. God instructed them to gather twice as much on the sixth day.
- D. God instructed them to rest on the seventh (Sabbath) day – and, what they had gathered and prepared on the sixth day would remain until the seventh.
 - 1. This is the first mention of the keeping of the Sabbath in the Bible.
 - 2. It was anticipatory and preparatory for the giving of the 10 commandments.
 - 3. It was based upon God's example in Creation (20:11; Gen. 2:2-3).
 - 4. However, the Sabbath was not kept until this instruction was given from God through Moses.
- E. God instructed them to gather an omer to be kept as a reminder of God's goodness and faithfulness for generations to come.
- F. Eventually, this pot of manna was placed into the Ark of the Covenant (Heb. 9:4).

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V. Lessons from Manna

(Exodus 16)

- A. Their hunger represents the pull of the physical against the spiritual (vs. 3).
 - 1. They preferred to have died in Egypt by the hand of God – in rebellion to God – as long as their bellies were full.
 - 2. To them, this would have been better than suffering hunger while maintaining fellowship with God.
 - 3. Many will sacrifice their souls to die in worldliness – rich, famous, etc.
 - 4. Remember Job's wife – "Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9)
 - 5. Remember Demas – "Having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10)
- B. The food provided by God also provided a test of their faith (vs. 4).
 - 1. Would they honor God for His gifts?
 - 2. Would they show gratitude by obedience?
 - 3. We are tested by what we do not have, but also by what we have (Proverbs 30:7-9).
 - 4. To pass this test required obedience and self-control.
 - a. Preparation for the Sabbath in advance
 - b. Submission to God's instructions – trust and obey
- C. Manna was used to help Israel break from their past.
 - 1. They would no longer eat the food of Egypt.
 - 2. Instead, they would find their nourishment in God (cf. Eph. 4:28; Luke 3:10ff).
- D. Manna provided for their need, not their want.
 - 1. It was a necessity, not a luxury.
 - 2. It did not permanently satisfy their hunger, but had to be gathered daily.
 - 3. It showed that there were things more important than eating (cf. Jn. 4:31ff).
 - a. Divine vocation
 - b. Divine mission
 - c. Divine purpose
- E. Manna was not given to encourage laziness.
 - 1. To be gathered constantly
 - 2. To be gathered trustfully
 - 3. To be gathered one day at a time – by faith (cf. Matt. 6:31-34)
- F. Manna was not given because it was deserved.
 - 1. Israel murmured and complained, but God blessed them anyway.
 - 2. Israel did not earn the gift of manna.
 - 3. It was a gift of God's grace and love (cf. John 3:16).
- G. Manna was free – it could not be purchased or earned.
 - 1. Though it was free, it was still conditional.
 - 2. It required trust and obedience.
- H. Manna was given equally (vs. 17-18).
 - 1. All our needs are met by Jesus.
 - 2. 2 Corinthians 8:10-15 – This principle applies to our giving!
- I. Manna was spiritual food (1 Corinthians 10:3; John 6:32-35).
 - 1. Not a natural product multiplied.
 - 2. It was a unique food supplied by God supernaturally.
 - 3. This typifies Jesus and His virgin birth.
 - 4. The soul cannot be fed with the things of this world (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4; Luke 12:16-21).

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5. Worldliness is the attempt to find spiritual nourishment in earthly things.
 6. When we recognize God as the source of material blessings, they become divine resources of which we are the stewards.
- J. Jesus is the Bread of Life (John 6:26ff).
1. Israel was dependent upon divine resources for their escape and journey to Canaan.
 2. Likewise, we are dependent upon God for our escape from sin and our journey to Heaven.
 3. Man's soul is fed by divine resources – Jesus, and all spiritual blessings in Him.
 4. Consider the context of Jesus' statement:
 - a. Jesus miraculously fed a multitude of about 5,000 men.
 - b. The people desired to take Jesus by force and make Him their king.
 - c. Jesus rejected this notion and went across the Sea of Galilee.
 - d. The crowd followed Him and Jesus began to teach them the true nature of His mission and His kingdom.
 - e. He emphasized that He was come to feed man's spiritual needs, not their physical hunger.
 - f. Thus, they must eat His flesh and drink His blood – depend solely upon Him for spiritual nourishment.
 - g. Many did not like this doctrine and ceased following Him.
 - h. It is here that Jesus mentions the sinful heart of Judas – who was more concerned with the material than the spiritual.
- K. Manna was for all people.
1. All could eat of it and be satisfied – old, young, rich, poor, etc.
 2. All spiritual needs can be met by Jesus.
 3. Anyone who went hungry could blame only themselves.
 4. Likewise, anyone who is lost can blame only himself.
- L. Manna had to be gathered every day.
1. Likewise, spiritual growth and blessings must be a part of our daily lives.
 2. We must not gather our blessings on Sunday and Wednesday alone!
 3. Daily study, prayer, service, and devotion
 4. Like manna, spiritual food cannot be hoarded from one day to the next.
- M. Manna was to be a reminder of God's past blessings and mercies (vs. 33).