

Tuesday Morning Bible Study with Ted

Exodus 16:2-15

Exodus 16:2-3. All the children of Israel murmured

2. The whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness; 3. and the children of Israel said to them, “We wish that we had died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots, when we ate our fill of bread, for you have brought us out into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

2. “The whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness

Life in the wilderness is not especially appealing.

This is not the complaint of a few complainers, but all of the Israelites.

The people complain to Moses and Aaron because they are the visible leaders.

3a. “and the children of Israel said to them, ‘We wish that we had died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots, when we ate our fill of bread

I think this is a serious case of distorted memory—**Do you remember reminiscing about the “good old days?” Were they that good?**

God’s people seem to be caught up in that memory game.

As slaves in Egypt, they had been oppressed in many ways

They almost certainly enjoyed better food in Egypt than they have had in the wilderness.

Realistically, without a miracle, feeding so many people in the wilderness would be impossible.

3b. “for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger

They accuse Moses and Aaron of such tragic leadership that they may die.

They are accusing Moses and Aaron of deliberately setting out to bring them to ruin.

We know that the Israelites “despoiled the Egyptians” as they left Egypt (12:36)—taking silver and gold and clothing (12:35). They also took “flocks, herds, and even much livestock” (12:38).

What problems could possibly arise out of taking all those animals. Why not eat them?

Exodus 16:4-8. I will rain bread from the sky for you

4. Then Yahweh said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from the sky 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. It shall come to pass on the sixth day, that they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.” 6. Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, “At evening, then you shall know that Yahweh has brought you out from the land of Egypt; 7. and in the morning, then you shall see the glory of Yahweh; because he hears your murmurings against Yahweh. Who are we, that you murmur against us?” 8. Moses said, “Now Yahweh shall give you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to satisfy you; because Yahweh hears your murmurings which you murmur against him. And who are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against Yahweh.”

4a. “Then Yahweh said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from the sky for you

The people had complained about bad water at Marah. God gave Moses a way to sweeten the water to make it drinkable. Now he promises Moses that he will “rain bread from the sky” to feed the people.

Note that the food is called “bread” here, as well as in verses 12 and 15. It will receive its name, Manna, in verses 31ff.

4b. “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 gather a day’s portion”

God words these instructions to make it clear that there will be more bread from heaven than the people will require for any given day. However, they are to collect only enough bread for that day, a message that is repeated by Jesus in the NT.

Jesus taught the disciples to pray for “daily bread” (Matthew 6:11; Luke 11:3). Presumably, the inspiration for that prayer comes from this provision of daily bread for the Israelites.

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

They are to collect twice as much on the sixth day so they will have food for the Sabbath. The concerns here are threefold:

First, Yahweh understands their need for food, even on the Sabbath, and so he is providing for their need.

Second, they are to honor the Sabbath by not working on the Sabbath, and collecting manna would constitute work.

Third, this is a test to see if they will obey Yahweh or succumb to the temptation to collect more than they need.

I find this interesting considering the timing of these words about not working on Sabbath.. Sabbath law has not yet been given. That will happen at Sinai not long from now (20:8-11).

6. “Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, ‘At evening, then you shall know that Yahweh has brought you out from the land of Egypt

The manna is a morning gift, but we will learn in verse 8 that quail will be an evening gift.

Moses and Aaron tell the people that Yahweh's daily provision of food is intended to remind them over and over again that "Yahweh has brought you out from the land of Egypt."

The people have shown that they need reminding over and over that Yahweh is with them. Yahweh saved them at the Red Sea and at Marah. Now they will be reminded again and again—every time they sit down to eat.

7a. "and in the morning, then you shall see the glory of Yahweh"

God's glory is like an aura associated with God's appearance to God's majesty to humans.

Biblical writers try to describe God's glory using human words. They portray it as "a devouring fire" later in Exodus 24:17.

When Moses asked to see God's glory, God replied, "You cannot see my face, for man may not see me and live" in Exodus 33:20.

Do you remember how God handled Moses' desire to see him??

7b. "because he hears your murmurings against Yahweh. Who are we, that you murmur against us?"

Moses re-emphasizes that their complaining, while apparently directed against him and Aaron, is really complaining against Yahweh.

8. "Moses said, 'Now Yahweh shall give you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to satisfy you; because Yahweh hears your murmurings which you murmur against him. And who are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against Yahweh'

Yet again, Moses emphasizes that their complaining is against Yahweh.

This is the first that we have heard of "meat to eat in the evening." Verse 13 tells us that the meat is quails that come in the evening.

Exodus 16:9-12. Come near before Yahweh

9. Moses said to Aaron, "Tell all the congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near before Yahweh, for he has heard your murmurings.'" 10. It happened, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of Yahweh appeared in the cloud. 11. Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, 12. "I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At evening you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread: and you shall know that I am Yahweh your God.'"

9. "Moses said to Aaron, 'Tell all the congregation of the children of Israel, "Come near before Yahweh, for he has heard your murmurings"

Aaron is appointed spokesman here. He is to tell the people to "Come near before Yahweh." This expression normally describes an act of worship.

By gathering together in Yahweh's presence, they will demonstrate their readiness to hear what Yahweh has to say.

10. “It happened, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of Yahweh appeared in the cloud.

Yahweh has been leading them in the form of a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. As the congregation gathers, they see “the glory of Yahweh...in the cloud.”

I shared comments on the glory of the Lord in verse 7a above.

11. “Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying

The people have presumably gathered in the presence of the Lord, as Aaron directed, but the Lord addresses his remarks to Moses.

12. “I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, ‘At evening you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread: and you shall know that I am Yahweh your God

Other than the mention of meat pots (some translations say flesh pots) in verse 3, we have not heard a complaint about the lack of meat in this story.

In any event, Yahweh promises meat in the evening and bread in the morning. Not only will they have both meat and bread, but Yahweh promises that they will have their fill of bread but not necessarily of meat.

Exodus 16:13-15. There was a small round thing, small as frost

13. It happened at evening that quail came up and covered the camp; and in the morning the dew lay around the camp. 14. When the dew that lay had gone, behold, on the surface of the wilderness was a small round thing, small as the frost on the ground. 15. When the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, “What is it?” For they didn’t know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread which Yahweh has given you to eat.”

13. “It happened at evening that quail came up and covered the camp; and in the morning the dew lay around the camp

Now Yahweh begins making good on his promises. In the evening, quails cover the camp. This is the last time that quails are mentioned in the book of Exodus. However, in addition to the Numbers 11 story, Psalm 105:40 says, “They asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of the sky.” This phrase, “bread of the sky,” is usually synonymous with manna rather than quail.

In the morning, there is a layer of dew around the camp. The layer of dew is not the manna. Most commentaries agree the manna will be revealed as the dew dissipates.

14. “When the dew that lay had gone, behold, on the surface of the wilderness was a small round thing, small as the frost on the ground”

This is the first appearance of manna (but this flaky substance won’t receive its name until verse 31).

Just for fun?, you should know that some scholars, in an attempt to explain that manna occurred by natural means, suggest that manna was the secretion of insects—and there are insects in that wilderness that secrete a sweet substance.

Do you think it's just another scientific attempt to explain away a miracle?

Recall Gerald's stories to explain away the plagues.

However, the major point revealed in scripture is that Yahweh provides for his people. The lesser point, the means by which Yahweh did this is not revealed in scripture, is simply a matter of guesswork.

I'm adding the following details here rather than add them to the list. It is simply more of the same...

- Verse 16 tells us that Yahweh commanded the people to collect one omer per person per day. Verse 36 tells us that an omer is a tenth of an ephah. I'm not certain of either measure. Estimates of the ephah range from a half bushel to a bushel.

There is no prohibition against families dividing the manna unevenly—i.e., a child might get less than an omer per day with the excess going to one of the adults.

- Verses 17-18 tell us that some people collected more than an omer per person and some less. However, they experienced no negative consequences unless they tried to keep it overnight.

- Verse 20 tells us that some people tried to keep manna overnight, but “it bred worms and became foul.”

- Verse 21 tells us that when the sun became hot, the manna melted.

- Verse 23 tells us that the people could bake or boil the manna. Numbers 11:8 tells us that they could grind it in mills or mortars and make cakes of it.

- Verse 31 says that the people called it manna—and that “it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.” Numbers 11:8 describes the taste as that of “cakes baked with oil.”

- Verses 32-34 tell of Yahweh's commanding Moses to keep a jar containing an omer of manna for future generations. Moses and Aaron comply with that requirement.

- Verse 35 tells us that the Israelites ate manna for forty years in the wilderness. Joshua 5:12 tells us that it “ceased on the next day, after they had eaten of the produce of the land” in the Promised Land.

15b. “Moses said to them, ‘It is the bread which Yahweh has given you to eat

Moses could have told them the components of the substance or the manner by which Yahweh made it. However, he goes straight to the point—the manna is bread given by Yahweh to provide for their nourishment.