

God Sends Quail and Manna

Exodus 16:1-26

After three days in the desert without finding water, the Israelites came upon a spring. But the water was bitter and the people complained. Despite the grumbling of the people, God turned the bitter water sweet so they could drink it.

Approximately 30 days have passed since the Hebrew people left Egypt. Apparently the food they had brought with them had run out, and they began complaining. How quickly they had forgotten the oppression of the Egyptians! All they could think of was the food available back in Egypt. Even though they complained instead of trusting God and asking him for what they needed, God came through again. Here was another opportunity for the Israelites to learn to trust God.

We don't know exactly what "the glory of the Lord" was that the Israelites saw in the cloud, but it was a visible sign to them (perhaps like the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night mentioned in Exodus 13). God wanted the Israelites to know that he was still there, that he was aware of their need, and that he was going to provide for them.

When the manna appeared the first morning, the Hebrews' question, "What is it?" apparently caught on as its name because *manna* means "What is it?" Though some have suggested various possibilities for what manna was, nothing we know of today is a good match for the description given in Exodus 16:31: "It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey." Certainly this was a miraculous provision that God made for his people.

The miraculous nature of manna is further exhibited in what happened to it over the course of a Sabbath as opposed to a weekday. The Israelites were not to work on

the Sabbath, but to keep it as a day for worship. Gathering manna on the Sabbath would have been work, so God simply didn't make it appear. If anyone tried to keep manna from one weekday to the next, it would spoil. However, if anyone kept it from the morning before the Sabbath, it would stay good through the Sabbath. God provided just what his people needed, just when they needed it!

Devotion for Leaders

The One Thing: God is our provider! These are words to trust and embrace. Everything we have is from God, and he has provided a way for us to have a relationship with Jesus. The eternal gift of salvation is the greatest provision we could ever receive!

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: What do you find yourself wanting more than anything? How often do you view this desire as a need? It is important to recognize the difference. God allowed the Hebrews to live as slaves for many years. When God decided they needed to leave Egypt, he provided the miraculous opportunity to do so.

Our greatest need is to honor and glorify God. Despite our wants and desires, we are fulfilled when living in God's will. Write down some specific circumstances in which you can glorify and honor God. Pray for the strength and awareness to do just that.