



• *The journey continues*

• *Two opportunities to learn that God will provide*

• *Will they trust?*

• *Needless grumbling*

• *Manna – ‘what is it?’*

The manna tested their obedience

• *God was preparing them for the Sabbath law*

The people have left the Sea of Reeds^{□1} and have travelled into the wilderness of Shur^{□2}. They have passed Marah^{□3} and Elim^{□4} and are now in the wilderness of Zin^{□5} where again they are complaining in unbelief^{□6}. They are facing the trials and the testings of faith. They have shown faith in crossing the Reed Sea^{□7}. Now will they apply their faith when they meet practical difficulties? First they faced the enmity of Pharaoh – but God destroyed Pharaoh and he is no longer around to trouble them. Then they lacked water and God gave it to them. Now they have no food^{□8}. They have twice had opportunities to learn that God will continue to meet their needs. The God who saved them by the blood of the lamb will continue to care for them. But will they trust Him?

Immediately it becomes clear that their grumbling is needless. Every time the people of Israel groan and complain they are very close to their rescue. When they complained about Pharaoh and his armies, he was about to be destroyed so that ‘not even one of them remained’^{□1}. When they complained about there being no water at Marah, the water was just about to be purified for them^{□2}. Whenever they complain the remedy is near at hand. So it is again when they grumble about having no food while in the wilderness of Zin. God is just about to literally drop food for them from the sky^{□3}. God was about to provide for them. They were grumbling but God was already announcing what He was about to do.

So God sent the manna. The Hebrew word (‘manna’) seems to be a very old word meaning ‘What is it?’ They called the food the ‘what-is-it’, the ‘what’s-its-name’, the ‘manna’

The manna tested their obedience. They had to collect it each day. They could not store it. It had to be collected one day at a time. If they tried to store it, it would go bad and could not be used. But there was an exception for the Sabbath^{□1}. On Friday God would send twice as much and they would not have to collect manna on Saturday, the Sabbath! The people were approaching Sinai. Soon the law about the sabbath would be given. God was getting them ready for the Sabbath-law which had never been in existence before this time.

□1 15:22
 □2 15:22
 □3 15:23
 □4 15:27
 □5 16:1
 □6 16:3
 □7 Heb 11:29

□8 16:3

□1 14:28

□2 15:25

□3 16:4

□1 16:5

The manna demonstrated that their ultimate leader was God

• *If we attack one of God's leaders we are attacking God*

The manna was proof of God's great care for His people

• *Despite God's care, they were still showing unbelief and disobedience*

• *Wilderness provision*

• *For the Christian, Jesus is our manna from heaven*

• *When we feed on him daily we do not hunger or thirst*

The manna demonstrated that their ultimate leader was God. They were always criticising Moses. But their leader was God. He was the one who was providing for them. Moses was the one appointed by God, but Moses had not brought them out of Egypt and Moses could not get food to fall from heaven. 'You will know that Yahweh has brought you out of the land of Egypt', said Moses. 'What are we that you grumble against us?' ^{□1}. Jesus made the same point; He obviously had studied this passage. 'It is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven...' ^{□2}.

If we attack one of God's leaders because we ourselves are full of unbelief, then we are attacking God. 'Your grumbings are ... against God' ^{□1}.

The manna was proof of God's great care for His people. Even though the people grumbled against God, He still provided for them. Soon the glory of God appeared ^{□1} and the people were promised meat in the morning and bread in the evening ^{□2}. Quails fell in the evening time ^{□3} and the 'What-is-it', the manna, appeared in the morning ^{□4}.

However the people still were disobedient. They were told to collect just what they needed and that is what they did ^{□1}, but then they became disobedient. Some tried to leave some of the manna to be collected the next day ^{□2}. The manna fell in such a way that they did not have to collect it on the sabbath ^{□3} but some of the people tried to collect it on the sabbath ^{□4}. Despite God's great care for them, they were still showing unbelief and disobedience ^{□5}.

It was called 'manna' ^{□1} and later a pot of it was kept 'before the Lord' (that is, in the tabernacle when it was built) to remind them of how God provided for them ^{□2}. The manna continued to fall all the years they were in the wilderness. As soon as they crossed into Canaan forty years later, it ceased ^{□3}.

God meets our needs. His provision will fall day by day as we need it. He will never fail us. For the Christian the manna that comes from heaven is Jesus! Jesus said 'The bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world' ^{□1}. Jesus came from heaven. His coming was entirely miraculous. 'I am the bread of life', said Jesus ^{□2}. 'The person who comes to me will never hunger, and the person who believes in me will never thirst' ^{□3}. We are to learn to live on Jesus as the Israelites lived on the manna. God gave them manna from heaven day after day regularly, persistently, unfailingly, all of their years in the wilderness. God will do the same to us. God will let Jesus be our food. Through Jesus God will give us strength and provision every day of our lives. When we need a double portion of strength He will give it to us.

We have to go to collect our manna every day. If we eat of Jesus every day, we shall never hunger. If we believe in Him daily, we shall never thirst.

□1 16:6-7

□2 John 6:33

□1 16:8

□1 16:9-10

□2 16:11-12

□3 16:13

□4 16:14-15

□1 16:16-18

□2 16:19-20

□3 16:21-26

□4 16:27

□5 16:28-30

□1 16:31

□2 16:32-34

□3 16:35-36

□1 John 6:33

□2 John 6:35

□3 John 6:35



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