

Study 21: Moses, Part 8 Exodus 16-18

The Israelites have escaped Egypt through the Red Sea, and the Egyptians, who wanted to destroy the Israelites by drowning their sons in the Nile, have themselves been drowned in the sea.

Ex 16 The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. 2 In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. 3 The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.”

4 Then the Lord said to Moses, “I will *rain down bread from heaven* for you. [John 6:32 - Jesus said, “...it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. 35 I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”] And, in John 6:57-58, “...the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”] The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. [“Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt 6:11; Luke 11:3)]. In this way I will **test** them and see whether they will follow my instructions. [In Deut 8, as the Lord is preparing them to enter into the Promised Land, Moses says, starting in verse 2: “Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. 3 He humbled you, **causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna**, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that **man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord**” (quoted in Matt 4:4 and Luke 4:4). The *test* was not only to see if the people would obey the Lord, but whether or not their reliance would be totally on Him for their sustenance]. 5 On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.”

6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “**In the evening** you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, 7 and **in the morning** you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him. [Once again, we see in the use of the terms “evening” and “morning,” the theme of **creation**]. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?” 8 Moses also said, “You will know that it was the Lord when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord.”

9 Then Moses told Aaron, “Say to the entire Israelite community, ‘Come before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.’”

10 While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud.

11 The Lord said to Moses, 12 “I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.’”

13 That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. 14 When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. 15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. [This could be a question, but it might also be a statement: “This is a gift,” or “This is provision.” The verbal form of the word *man* is used in Jonah and Daniel, and is usually translated as “appointed,” “provided,” or “assigned,” e.g. “The Lord appointed a fish to swallow Jonah” (Jonah 1:17 – NASB), and Nebuchadnezzar “assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king’s table” (Dan 1:5)].

Moses said to them, “It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat. 16 This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer [possibly about 3 pounds] for each person you have in your tent.’”

17 The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. 18 And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed.

19 Then Moses said to them, “No one is to keep any of it until morning.”

20 However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them.

21 Each morning everyone gathered as much as they needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away. 22 On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much—two omers [possibly about 6 pounds] for each person—and the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. 23 He said to them, “This is what the Lord commanded: ‘Tomorrow is to be a day of sabbath rest, a holy sabbath to the Lord. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.’” [According to Num 11:8, the people would grind the manna in a hand mill, or crush it in a mortar, then cook it in a pot, or make loaves out of it].

24 So they saved it until morning, as Moses commanded, and it did not stink or get maggots in it. 25 “Eat it today,” Moses said, “because today is a sabbath to the Lord. You will not find any of it on the ground today. 26 Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any.”

27 Nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, but they found none. 28 Then the Lord said to Moses, “How long will you [plural – indicating He is speaking to the people *through* Moses] refuse to keep my commands and my instructions? 29 Bear in mind that the Lord has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where they are on the seventh day; no one is to go out.” 30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

31 The people of Israel called the bread manna [sounds like the Hebrew for *What is it?*]. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey. 32 Moses said, “This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Take an omer of manna and keep it for the generations to come, so they can see the bread I gave you to eat in the wilderness when I brought you out of Egypt.’”

33 So Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar and put an omer of manna in it. Then place it before the Lord to be kept for the generations to come.”

34 As the Lord commanded Moses, Aaron put the manna with the tablets of the covenant law, so that it might be preserved. 35 The Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan.

36 (An omer is one-tenth of an ephah). [I hope that clears things up for you.]

Ex 17 The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 So they quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.”

Moses replied, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?”

3 But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?”

4 Then Moses cried out to the Lord, “What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.”

5 The Lord answered Moses, “Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. **Strike the rock**, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. [In 1 Cor 10:11, Paul says that these things were *types*, and were to serve as admonitions and warnings to the Christians of the 1st century, “upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” Starting in verse 1, Paul says: “For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual **rock** that accompanied them, and that **rock** was **Christ**.”]

7 And he called the place Massah [*testing*] and Meribah [*quarreling*] because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

8 The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. [Amalek was the grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:12; 1 Chr. 1:36)] 9 Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.”

10 So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. 11 As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. 12 When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a **rock** and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. 13 So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. [Lots of sermon material here. It is necessary for a minister to be firmly planted on the Rock of our salvation (Jesus), and no one can do it all alone. Someone must come alongside and “hold up our hands,” i.e. assist in the work, in order for it to succeed].

14 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven.”

15 Moses built an altar and called it The Lord is my Banner. 16 He said, “Because hands were lifted up against the throne of the Lord [the meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain], the Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation.” [Deut 25:17-19 says, “Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. 18 When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and attacked all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God. 19 When the Lord your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!” In Jewish folklore, the Amalekites are considered to be the symbol of evil. Haman, in the book of Esther, is apparently an Amalekite.]

Ex 18 Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt. [So, Jethro comes for a visit, bringing Moses' wife, Zipporah (v 2), and his two sons, Gershom [sounds like the Hebrew for *a foreigner there*] (v 3), and Eliezer (*my God is helper*) (v 4). When Jethro arrives with Zipporah and the boys at the camp “near the mountain of God” (v 5), verse 8: Moses told his father-in-law about everything the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the Lord had saved them.

9 Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the Lord had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. 10 He said, “Praise be to the Lord, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. 11 Now I know that the Lord is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly.” 12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God.

13 The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. 14 When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?”

15 Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God's will. 16 Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions.”

17 Moses' father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. 18 You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. 19 Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. 20 Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. 21 But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 22 Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. 23 If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.”

24 Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. 25 He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 26 They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves.

27 Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.