

God Will Test Them

Exodus 16:1-15, "And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. 2 Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3 And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." 4 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather [a]a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. 5 And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." 6 Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "At evening you shall know that the Lord has brought you out of the land of Egypt. 7 And in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord; for He hears your complaints against the Lord. But what are we, that you complain against us?" 8 Also Moses said, "This shall be seen when the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the Lord hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the Lord." 9 Then Moses spoke to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near before the Lord, for He has heard your complaints.' " 10 Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. 11 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 12 "I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the Lord your God.' " 13 So it was that quail came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. 14 And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. 15 So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat."

Heavenly Father, You are a God who provides, You are a God who hears, You are a God who knows our needs, who takes care of our needs. You are a God who tests and heavenly Father we are a people prone to complain. We are a people prone to the desires of our flesh. I pray that You would cause us to be able to see ourselves in this passage, to be able to see You in this passage and that we would be changed more into the likeness of Jesus the true bread from heaven that You gave to us to satisfy all our needs because You heard our complaints. In Jesus' name, amen.

As we come back to Exodus after going through Hebrews 3, where the encouragement was to make sure you have entered into His rest, we come back to Exodus 16 where God is testing them to see if they would enter into His rest. We know they failed. We know in the day of

rebellion they refused to enter into His rest so we know the outcome of this story. We know that God sends the manna to test them and they fail. As we read this passage we should understand that it is a blessing when God tests us because it's not helpful to believe you're saved and you're not saved. That doesn't help you at all, that just means you're damned to hell and you don't know it. God is merciful that He sends tests to prove whether we are saved or not, that is part of the mercy of God that He makes it possible for us to know our state before Him. If you think of the parable of the sower where some falls on the shallow soil, it requires persecution before that seed recognizes that it has not found the rest of Jesus Christ. It's merciful that God causes the thorns to come up and choke out the seed and those thorns represent the care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and it is the mercy of God when He sends a test of whether we will follow Him or whether we will follow the cares of this world and the deceitfulness and riches. It's not helpful to know you're not saved, there is no blessing in that so God does this for the Israelites. He does this to show how few of them truly have faith in Him because they don't want to obey. One thing to recognize is trials are not a bad thing, trials are merciful. Trials that test our faith so that it can be proven. When we were in 1 Peter and we were talking about how faith is this precious thing, this thing that's more precious than anything in the world and trials are what God sends to prove it, to show whether it's real or not. This is why we should count it all joy when we fall into diverse trials. So here we see the testimony of, are they actually of faith and putting their trust in God or are they just trusting their own wisdom and sight? Look at them and think about them. They are the people who came out of Egypt that God separated and He destroyed the Egyptian army to protect and they're sure they are fine with God. God sends them a trial and He sends them another trial and another trial and they don't enter His rest. As we consider this, make sure you're going to enter His rest because Hebrews 3 is directly tied to what God is doing here with the Israelites. He's going, 'You are not going to enter My rest'. So as we hear this passage let's not just walk by it as Jonathan prayed and say that it was them. Instead, let us see how it applies to us. In this case the trial is actually that God gives them what they want. They cry out to God for meat, they cry out to God for bread and God gives them meat and bread but it is still a trial, it is still a test, it is still God proving to them whether they will follow Him or not because He gives them what they want and the answer is if they still follow His commandments. They answer, 'no'. When we receive Christ, when we receive the true manna from heaven, this is the result from it. If you have received the true manna, He tests us by seeing if we will walk in His way. That's how you find out if your faith is real. Will you walk in obedience or will you walk in the ways of the world? As we start to talk about the manna this week and how God fed them for forty years in the wilderness, it's important to put this in the proper context, which is clearly stated by Christ in John 6:31-35, "Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." This is a picture of the true gospel, a picture of what God did by sending Christ. The last passage we read in Exodus 15, there was this water that is death and the branch gets thrown into it and it becomes life. That's a picture of Christ, the manna is the picture of the true bread of heaven, which is Christ. God sent the type to see if

they would obey, but when He sent Jesus Christ it wasn't to see if they would obey because He sent His Spirit that writes the law on our hearts so we will obey. The antitype is far greater than the type because when He sends the true bread of heaven into your life, you do obey because God gives you His Spirit and His Spirit is the Holy Spirit that makes you holy and does cause you to obey. As we think of this passage, let's not forget the greater context and the greater blessing that we have than just bread raining down from heaven. We have the blessing of the bread that gives eternal life.

Verses 1-3, "And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." So Elim was the place where they had the twelve wells of water and the seventy palm trees. So they move out from that place and all these places are pretty close to the Red Sea. On the way to Mount Sinai there is still a place called the Wilderness of Sin in Hebrew today that's about nine miles from where Elim is thought to be and it's about one third of the way to Mount Sinai. So this isn't a long journey that they are doing. They knew when they left Egypt that they were to go where Moses had met God, where there was the burning bush, which was on Mount Sinai so they are headed in that same direction. These events happen "on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt." This is the first time marker that we have that tells how long it took to head south along the Nile to return to the Red Sea, to pass through the mountain pass, go through the Red Sea, go to Marah where the water is and then to Elim and they end up in the Wilderness of Sin. We know that they left on the fifteenth day of the first month and it's not the fifteenth on the second month so all those events, the destruction of the Egyptian army, the gathering of it and chasing after them so it could be destroyed, this all took a month. We know it only needed to be a three day's journey because when Moses talks to Pharaoh he said they only needed to go on a three day journey. He knew where they were supposed to go in the wilderness, but it's a lot different journey if you have a man walking versus three million people and women and children and animals. They're already thirty days into that movement. I should mention about the Wilderness of Sin. When we see sin we think it means something, but the word actually is pronounced 'tsin' because the Hebrew has more of a 'ts' sound. Sin means clay, it has nothing to do with iniquity. So the Hebrew word transliterated is the Wilderness of Sin, but it isn't saying this is a sinful place, this is just a place where there is a lot of clay. "Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness." Where it hadn't been that long since they were rejoicing with them, when they saw the Egyptian army being overthrown in the sea and sing the song of Moses, they rapidly turn against him. We should recognize this example because it happens a lot. Those without faith, they can have hope that has substance. They can have hope that they can actually look at and say this is what is going to happen in the future. Their hope comes and goes because it doesn't have the substance that faith gives it. So they have this hope that God is going to lead them, but

as soon as they are without food they forget that God just provided them water, they forget that God just destroyed Egypt. They forget because their hope in what's going to happen has no substance to it because it's faith that makes it so we can stand on the hope that God gives us. The testimony of the past is not enough to give them hope in the future. History alone is not enough to give confidence in the future, it requires true faith that God is unchanging and that if He said He did it, He would do it. They've seen it how many times with the plagues? They saw it with the traveling, they saw it with the Red Sea, they saw it with the water, but yet they couldn't believe because they didn't have the gift of faith. They couldn't think that that God who had done all this, He will continue to provide for them. Instead they say Moses just brought them out there to kill them. Without faith you always need another sign. As Christ said in Matthew 16, after He had done the sign of healing the lepers, the sign of feeding of 5,000, the sign of causing the blind to see, He's done all these signs and what do they say? They want a sign. Matthew 16:4, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed." Jesus Christ said to the Jews then that they're never satisfied, they will always want another sign. It's the same thing, without faith all they can say is to prove it to us again, prove it to us again, and that is exactly what Israel is doing in the Wilderness of Sin. Notice also that they're complaining about Moses and Aaron. They're not charging God and remember as we say this there is a pillar there that is a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. In the midst of it, they're standing there and God is present with them. It's not like they're going, 'Oh where is God?' They were just following God, that's how they got here, but yet what had been so unusual, so unbelievable thirty days before is now just normal and how it is, of course there was a pillar leading, of course there are flames leading that have no source of fire, of course this is just how it should be. It's not that pillar that brought us into the wilderness, it's Moses and Aaron. We look and we laugh at them, but understand we're the same way. Every time that somebody plants a seed and puts a seed in the ground that starts to rot and from that comes our life because without that seed we would die and it's a miracle that testifies to the gospel of Jesus Christ and we say, 'That's just the way it is'. They're saying, 'That's just the way it is, why wouldn't we have a pillar there?' Don't think that we're not quick to reject the miraculous working of God and the miraculous kindness and mercy He shows to both the just and the unjust. Rain comes down on both the just and unjust and it's a mercy of God, but how often do we say that in three days it's supposed to rain and we don't say, 'This is actually the mercy of God'? We're not that much different and it's important for us to recognize that. The whole world testifies to the nature of God, the whole world testifies to His godhead, but how often do we look around the world and say it's about a testimony of who God is because all that testifies to who He is just like the pillar did. Even though they saw it was the hand of God, even though they had the testimony with the pillar there, they still look and accuse Moses and Aaron because they are ones they can blame, they are ones they can lay hands on and do something about. It's normal to attack those who can be seen, those who can be reached. If you're carnal you're not thinking about spiritual things because spiritual things can't be understood. Romans 8:5, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." The Israelites were carnal minded so of course they seized on the leader, not the real leader, the One who was directing Moses and Aaron. Their first thoughts are going to be on physical things they can grab, not on a pillar that they can't grab. "And the

children of Israel said to them.” They blamed them and also accused them. It’s important for us to recognize that this is normal, this is what always happens. This is why Jesus Christ said on the Sermon on the Mount that you are blessed when people lie about you for righteousness’ sake, for Jesus Christ’s sake. That’s what they did to Moses, that’s what they’ve done to every prophet before so we’re to rejoice and be exceedingly glad because that’s how they treat prophets. That’s how we should expect to be treated. We’re either going to be like the Israelites where we are accusing people that don’t deserve the accusation or we’re going to be like Moses and receive accusations. We should recognize you are in one of those two places. So they are blaming Moses and Aaron for what God did. “Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt.” Notice what’s happening here, because of their fear of death they are re-writing history. They forgot that God sent Moses because God had heard their groaning, how they said they were so miserable. They forget all that and they say it was wonderful there. If we get all the other actions God had done and the other ways God had rescued them, they said they would have been killed by the Lord. They don’t see the miraculous deliverance and say they were delivered from the hand of the Lord. They’re saying the natural course, the world would have killed us in Egypt, but we’re going to assign it to the hand of the Lord so we feel better, but they’re just saying if they had been given natural consequences because they don’t look at God and see Him as the miracle working God, the God that is sovereign over all things, the God that can feed them in the Wilderness of Sin. They had no expectation that God was actually acting, they were expecting the future to be just like the past. They were sitting there starving so they just assumed they were going to sit there and continue to starve and there was nothing God could do about it. They assigned continuity to God that you are born, you live and die and that this is just the normal path. They say this happened normally because of God, that’s not believing and trusting in God, that’s believing and trusting in what you can see, even though they say it’s by the hand of God that they would have died in the land of Egypt. Then they say, “when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full!” They had all the food they wanted and the meat they wanted, it was a land of milk and honey, it was filled with everything. There’s no evidence this was true. The testimony before this was that it was a land of groaning, a land of suffering. We know that God sent the locusts, He sent the hail, He sent all these things that destroyed the food supply in Egypt. It’s not like they can go back to Egypt and have plenty to eat. That is not what Egypt looked like, it looked like a destroyed nation. They had to know that the slaves would have not continued to eat well if the masters were starving, but they say, ‘If we were just in Egypt.’ They reject the testimony of their own eyes and what they saw, what they knew to be true, because they didn’t want to submit to God. “For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” Now they accuse Moses and Aaron as being out to kill them, that that’s what Moses and Aaron wanted to do, to kill them. Their fear of death, they were afraid of death with the water and manna. I’m not saying the possibility of death wasn’t real in front of them, but instead of crying out to God they attack Moses and Aaron. God responds in verses 4-5.

Verses 4-5, “Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring

in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.” So God responds, they complain to Moses and so God doesn’t speak to the people and rebuke the people, instead He speaks to Moses. “Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you.” God was going to fulfill their desire for food. He caused miraculous provision to be made for them, provision that they had nothing to do with except that they had to pick up what they were given, which if you’re starving and there is food in front of you, that’s not a choice. Your body forces you to pick it up, it’s not like you can sit there with food in front of you and say that you’re going to sit there and starve. That’s not how the body works. So we think of Christ, this is the picture of Christ that God made them recognize their need, God fulfilled their need, and He put them in a position where they didn’t really have any choice except to pick up the bread. This is salvation. God opens our eyes to our need, God makes us desperate for salvation. God puts upon us fear of Him, God puts upon us the judgement that is to come and then God provides the only out which is Jesus Christ, the bread from heaven. Then we embrace it, not because of how wise we are, not because of how great we are, but because the reality is, what other choice do I have? Eternal damnation. Nobody chooses that. This is the picture of Jesus Christ the living bread. It’s a picture of God showing mercy to a bunch of sinners. “And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day.” He would give them enough for the day so that they would learn to trust God. They wouldn’t get store rooms or say that it was like a harvest to store up for the next year. Every day that had to trust that God would provide for that day. God forced them to trust Him day by day and He did it so He could test them. When we think of the manna we can think of the kindness of God, we can think of the provision of God how He pointed to the provision of Christ that there is a way to the Father, but the point of God doing the manna the way He did was to test to see if they would obey Him. Whether they would put their trust in God or if they would put their trust in worldly means. As God says at the end of the forty years in Deuteronomy 8:2-3, “And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.” That’s why He did the manna the way that He did, to test them whether they would trust God or they would trust their own sight, they would trust that they thought was good or if they would trust God. He was training them to understand that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. God tested them not so He would know what was in their hearts, God tested them so they would know what was in their hearts. Trust of God was in their hearts and it logically follows that they would do what God said to do. If disbelief in God were in their hearts it logically follows that they’re not going to be concerned about what God commands, they’re going to do what seems logical to help themselves. God still tests us the same way, it’s no different. God still gives us the manna from heaven, He gives us Jesus Christ and then He tests us. Will you deny Him? Will you be merciless? He has all these things where He says if you don’t show mercy, He won’t show mercy to you. These are the tests that God puts in the lives of believers so that they can understand if their faith is real. It’s not that you obey when God agrees with you, it’s that you obey when God doesn’t agree with you, when you’re living based on every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord, that’s the test to know if you truly know Jesus Christ. It’s not that this

way is better so you're going to do it, it's that this is what God commanded and you trust that He is the One who provides eternal life. If you don't want to obey God you don't want Christ because Christ obeyed God. If you don't want to obey God you don't want to be like Christ. If you don't want to obey God you don't want to be in heaven because in heaven everyone perfectly does His will. The new heavens and new earth is what Christ prays for when He teaches them how to pray for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. That is eternity. If you don't want to obey God, you don't want eternity so God will give you eternal judgement. He taught them that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. It's not long before Moses goes up onto Mount Sinai and the passage that we quoted this morning, the Ten Commandments. Before he received this he had no food or drink for forty days and nights. You know that kills people right? You can go without food for forty days, that's easy, but it's hard to go without water for forty days. God says He is his living water so Moses lived. Do you trust God like that? Do you trust God is the One that teaches us how to live, that says how we're to live? He's the One that sustains us, not the earthly things. He uses those means and that's not rejecting the means, but in the end the way we survive is by living by the word of God and He will provide what we need. If God provided for rebellious Israel, how would He not provide for His beloved bride? So He's going to test them "whether they will walk in My law or not." He's going to test them the same test He gave to Adam who promptly failed. The command was to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and they failed so here God does the same thing with the manna. He says He's going to make it really simple, He's going to show them His power and how He rules the world, how He divides the sea, how He destroys the most powerful people in the world, He demonstrated all this to them, He demonstrated how He miraculously fed all of them. Will you obey the command? He showed them more than He showed Adam and said, 'Here's the command, gather six days and don't gather on the seventh.' If you're not willing to keep the Sabbath, you're not Mine, your faith has proved to be false. He gives them a simple command and what do they do? They're no better than Adam because they have the same unbelief as Adam so they immediately go and break the commandments of God. Jesus Christ was sent so that we would keep His commandments. Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and sent His Holy Spirit so that we wouldn't be like the first Adam, we would be like the second Adam who obeyed to the point on the cross. "And it shall be on the sixth day." Again, the test is if they will keep the Sabbath day. There are other laws that they are tested by related to the manna, but the specific one God cites when He says He gave them the manna to test them is if they will keep the Sabbath. Will they prepare on the sixth day for the seventh day? Remember, we just came from Hebrews 3 where the Sabbath is described as entering into the rest of God so God's saying if you believe Me, if you believe I am your provider, if you have entered into My rest, then on the sixth day you will prepare for the seventh. They were found not to enter God's rest, let's make sure we're entering into God's rest. They receive the manna of God and will they stop thinking they can provide for themselves and instead trust in the provisions of God which means they do what He commands? They don't. "That they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." God was going to do it ahead of time, He was going to give them twice as much and cause twice as much manna to be on the ground so they could easily be prepared for the day of rest. God was going to provide more on the sixth day so they have plenty for the seventh day that they can prepare and keep unlike the other days of the week.

The law was really simple that He was testing them with, would they gather it on the sixth day to prepare to eat on the seventh or could they not rest in the work of God and had to insist that they had to rest on their own terms?

Verses 6-10, "Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "At evening you shall know that the Lord has brought you out of the land of Egypt. And in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord; for He hears your complaints against the Lord. But what are we, that you complain against us?" Also Moses said, "This shall be seen when the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the Lord hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the Lord." Then Moses spoke to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near before the Lord, for He has heard your complaints.' " Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud." "Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel." After God spoke to them, they speak to the people. "At evening you shall know that the Lord has brought you out of the land of Egypt." They declare what was spoken to them, they will be reminded of what they already know. They saw that it was God that took them out of Egypt, but they still wanted another sign. God had delivered them from cruel bondage which had been imposed on them by a cruel taskmaster, Pharaoh, and yet God was patient with them and God showed them another sign. They would see how God could provide for them without any work on their part. "And in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord." That was when they would see the manna and it is the glory of the Lord because it is a picture of Christ. The quail is a picture that God is sovereign over all things, but the manna in the wilderness for forty years is the picture of the living bread that comes from heaven, it is a picture of Christ. God is far more glorified in the manna than He is in the quail. He's doing a new thing, He's creating a new carbohydrate that would sustain them and be food for them, that would give them strength for forty years that had never been seen in the world before and He's glorified by that because it points to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is God who manifests, but it's so we can understand that He promises that He will give eternal life, that He can sustain us. He is the living bread from heaven. The glory of the Lord is that He will show mercy on whom He will show mercy and they will see that in the morning that God chooses to show them mercy. When they're in the Wilderness of Sin He chooses to show them mercy even though they are rejecting Him, even though they haven't entered His rest, even though they are in rebellion against Him, God is glorified because He shows them mercy. They had no claim that He had to feed them, but God still shows them mercy. Then Moses and Aaron continue, "for He hears your complaints against the Lord." They also express the reality that Moses didn't free them from Egypt. They didn't have the power or ability to kill Pharaoh. He didn't bring them into the wilderness, they were following the pillar of cloud and fire and the Israelites were pretending that it was Moses and Aaron, but they knew better and Moses called them on it. We need to be willing to call people on it. It's really important because it's really easy for us to be accused and then become defensive of ourselves instead of doing what Moses and Aaron do which is, 'You're not upset with me, you're upset with God. You're complaining to us, but the reality is that you don't like what God is doing. Well, I don't have anything to do with it, take your complaint to

God.' Too often we become defensive instead of doing what Moses did. Your problem is really with God and not with man. I had this experience a few times last week, especially talking about women not being pastors. It's a very useful saying to remember, your complaint is not against me, you're complaining about what God did. The fact that I'm standing here doesn't mean that your complaint is not about God. "But what are we, that you complain against us?" They point out the fact that various things that happened, even because Aaron raised his staff, it was not by his power. Who are we? We're just serving God, we're just servants. As we talked about in Hebrews 3, he's not the builder of the house, he's just the servant. That's what he's saying. We should point people to their problem which is really with God. When we allow it to become personal between us and them instead of between us and God, we're not pointing them to hope and salvation. No more than Moses could deliver them from Egypt, we can't deliver anybody. The things that happened went far beyond the power of man and they knew it so they said, 'Why are you complaining against us? You're pretending it's against us.' "Also Moses said." Now Moses speaks, and again before it was Moses and Aaron, but now it's Moses declaring what God would do. "This shall be seen when the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening." They will see the power and control that God has over the whole world, when He caused a people who had not had meat for sometime, probably not since the Passover and they weren't allowed to take any of that with them. That was probably the last time they had had meat, thirty days before, then He causes a people who hadn't had meat all of a sudden receive meat from the heavens. They said in Egypt their meat pots were full so God is going to make their meat pots full in the wilderness because whatever meat they had in Egypt was also because of the mercy of God, it was also because God gave it to them. Even as they raised the animals God gave to kill, even as they did the work to raise their lamb, God could have caused the Egyptians to take it away from them. Anything they received in Egypt was from the hand of God, just as much as it was in the Wilderness of Sin. As much as it is when we sit down at the dinner table, we have meat because of the mercy of God. "And in the morning bread to the full." They said they were filled with bread in Egypt and God is saying He is the One who makes them full of bread, it wasn't Pharaoh, it wasn't Egypt, it wasn't the Nile, it was Me. It's always God, you can sow and reap, but it's always God who provides the increase. "For the Lord hears your complaints which you make against Him." They claimed to be murmuring against Moses and Aaron, but God knew who they were really complaining against. They were really complaining against God and He always knows our complaints are directed towards Him, that we are not satisfied with what He is doing, that we are not satisfied with how He is directing things by grumbling and complaining. It's always a sin because it's always against God. It's always us wanting something that God said wasn't best for us and us not having the faith to say that it's what is best for us. We should recognize that our complaints are always against God and it was obvious God had led them. There was still the pillar of clouds and fire, it wasn't subtle. They are standing there claiming it's the work of Aaron, but how often do we pray and give thanks to God for the meal we receive and then something goes wrong and we complain about how this happened or that happened and we complain about this person did this to us or we got fired from our job because of this reason. We pretend like yes, we give thanks to God for providing the food, but when it doesn't come we complain about the world. No, we're complaining about God and we need to recognize that. Again, he goes back and says, "And what are we?" It's very important for us to not take attacks personally. When Moses and Aaron said this, they knew they were

complaining about God and that they were just targets, but they said, 'Who are we? We're just servants.' If God wants to send people to complain about His servants, we should just be saying their problem is really with God and not take it personally. God understood, Moses and Aaron understood, they all understood that the Israelites were attacking God, but that seems too dangerous so instead they attack Moses and Aaron. We need to understand this is the pattern of the world. We need to understand the reason why the first story starts with Cain and Abel after the fall where Cain kills Abel. He wanted to kill God, he couldn't kill God so what did he do? He killed Abel. That's the same thing that's happening here. They can't kill God but they are angry about being in the wilderness so who do they attack? Moses and Aaron. This is normal, this is normal throughout all the history of the world. It's the first example that God gives of the behaviour of man after the fall, the unrighteous hate when people worship God. If we're faithful to worship God there will be people that are angry with us and they will blame us for all the problems. That's why when all that happens with Nero when he is burning the Christians on the stake because the city burned down? This is normal and we should expect it and we should recognize it's really not personal, we're suffering because they hate God, but that suffering gives us an opportunity to bring glory and honor to God. "Your complaints are not against us but against the Lord." Their complaints were against God. "Then Moses spoke to Aaron." They had both spoken to the congregation, then Moses spoke and now Moses speaks to Aaron who then speaks. So everyone is speaking to the congregation. "Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel." Aaron was to be the authority when he was appointed high priest, so leading them to worship. Now he is supposed to lead them to "Come near before the Lord." They were pretending like they were complaining against Moses and Moses says to approach God. It's not Moses and Aaron, it's God, "for He has heard your complaints." Remember, they know where God is, there's the pillar there, but God's presence is with them. It's not a secret how they approach God. "Now it came to pass." As Aaron says these things God testified to the truths of his words. "As Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness." They looked towards that pillar that they had been following, that had lead them to where they were, that pillar that already showed the glory of the world. We know it was daytime "and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud." It was already a testimony that God was with them, but God still did something. My guess is that He caused the cloud to shine so that they had no doubt that it was the glory of God that was there. That seems the most likely how they could behold the glory of the Lord in the cloud. God said, I am here, you're pretending like this is just some weird cloud, that it's just some weird fire by night but My presence is here. Maybe it drew closer to them or shined brighter, but the presence of God that they were used to all of a sudden changes its nature so they see that God is there. Again, think of how quickly we become complacent. We see the mercy of God in allowing us to worship, we see the mercy of God in providing for us, we see the mercy of God in causing our work to mean things in the world, we see the mercy of God in so many ways and it's so easy for us to become complacent. Let's not be a people that we need to have some shining thing. You go to Nigeria and they say you have to speak in tongues for us to understand the glory of God, you have to be able to foretell in order to see the glory of God, you have to be able to heal, you have to be able to raise people up that are sick to see the glory of God. No, the glory of God is all around us, it is an unbelieving people that demand signs, it's an unbelieving people that God is showing mercy to here by causing His glory to shine out of the cloud different as it had for the previous

thirty days that they were following it. Let's make sure we see the glory of God without God having to be that obvious because through the eyes of faith we should see the glory of God in everything.

Verses 11-15, "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'" So it was that quail came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat." "And the Lord spoke to Moses." God came forth with a greater glory, but He didn't come to speak before the people, He just speaks to Moses. He manifested His glory, but He still shows that Moses is His servant. They're attacking Moses and God is saying that Moses is His servant and he's the one who I am going to talk to you through. So He tells him, "saying, "I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel." Moses was to tell them again what he had told them before, they would see the glory of God. He was to tell them what was going to happen to make it harder for them to believe it was just by chance. "Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat." God was going to feed them first with meat. 'And in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'" He's saying here that He will tell them what is going to happen so they know it's by God's hand. Again, it's over and over and over again that God has done this, but because of unbelief they couldn't see it. Let's make sure we're not like that, let's make sure we're not like them, that we see the movement and glory and mercy of God. "So it was that quail came up at evening and covered the camp." God sent quails to satisfy them. The word translated 'quail' is Greek and it's only used in the context of God feeding the Israelites during their journey in the wilderness. It's here and then the when they are stacked like three feet deep all the way around them. There's a couple places where it references them, but that's the only place where this word is used. We don't know exactly what kind of bird it was, but what the word comes from is sluggish and prosperity. So these aren't skinny birds, these are like fat birds. The theory is that the reason God does it this way is that they probably came from Egypt and flew over the Red Sea so they were exhausted, and there are cases where people have actually seen this, where the birds are so exhausted because they get blown out to sea and they keep flying that direction and they have to fly a long way so they are exhausted by the time they get to the Sinai Peninsula and they just kind of collapse when they get there so the Israelites were able to pick them up. These aren't skinny birds, they would have been exhausted because of having flown from Egypt. That may not be what happen, but it very likely could be what happened because they don't have to set up fowling nets, they don't have to do anything you have to do to catch birds, they're just laying on the ground to be picked up. God provided meat for them. The covered the camp, they covered the ground. It's not like in judgement where He would send them so they all start to spoil and rot, God is just giving them plenty so their pots are filled with meat. God would send quail later in judgement, but that's not what He is doing now, he is sending them to bless. They want meat, He can give them meat. Even as they grumble and

complain against Him they will give them what they want to test them. He gives us what we want sometimes to test us. We pray for us to have a good job so we can easily provide for our family and He gives it to us to test us to see if the cares and riches of the world will lead us from Him. Don't think He tests us just with doing calamity, He frequently tests us by giving us what we want. They would have had to cover the ground. There are three million people there and for all of them to eat a bird, if we had a cornish game hen, it would take like three million to feed people. This is a lot of birds that God sends, but He can bless them and He can curse them. "And in the morning the dew lay all around the camp." God provided the quail, potentially using natural means in a supernatural way, but He also provided bread and it's not question that this is supernatural. They had seen lots of grains, and they said there was no grain like this. So they look around, they see all the dew all around the camp. "And when the layer of dew lifted." It looks like the manna is being covered by the dew. If you look at Numbers 11:9, it says, "ADD" According to Numbers there's dew underneath, according to this there's dew on top. The Jews, to this day, when we had the Seder and they put the napkin underneath and on top of the bread, it's because of this. They say God took the manna and clearly protected it underneath and on top so they should do the same thing. I think that is the right answer, God put a layer of frost down and He caused the manna to fall on that frost so it wasn't spoiled by the dirt and everything else, and then He put a layer of frost on top so when they sun comes out it melts the top layer and they see the manna sitting there. So when the lay of frost was lifted, "there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground." It was sitting so they could tell the difference between it and the frost underneath. It also means they have a time limit, when they are told to go gather, they need to go gather. Today, if you will hear His voice, when God shows mercy to you, flee to Him, don't wait. So they find a small round substance and that word translated 'small' actually means 'crushed'. It's like if you take a grain and you crush it, that would be the word for it. You don't take whole grains of wheat, you take thme and crush them and that's what that word means, it's small like a grain that's been crushed. That word translated 'round substance', it comes from an unused word, it's not used anywhere else, but that word is probably 'to peel'. So the picture here is this is grain that has been crushed and it's grain that has all the chaff removed. When you have a seed of wheat, like the disciples had to rub the wheat to remove the coating on the outside, to peel it, because that's chaff, that's not the part that gives you nourishment. So God sends this manna and it's pre-crushed and it has all the chaff removed from it. So this is pure food, this isn't defiled food, this isn't food that you have to do more work to. Obviously the crushing is a picture of Christ, God sent His Son and crushed Him so that we could have life. So this is a pre-crushed, chaffless thing unlike anything they had seen before and it was as fine as frost on the ground. It was small, like frost has small crystals in it, and that's the size it. So when they gathered it up, they weren't gathering it up, they were gathering like crystals of frost. It was very fine on the ground. It doesn't look very promising for food, but God said it would feed them. "So when the children of Israel saw it", they see this fine pre-ground grain that has no chaff in it. They see these small crumbles and "they said to one another, "What is it?" They don't neccesarily grumble and complain, but they ask what it is. God had already removed the chaff so it's a lot less work, but instead of saying to look how God has blessed us, He has taken this labor away from us, they say, 'What is this?' That word 'what is this', is 'manna'. So it's really like a noun form of 'what!?' . That's what manna means. "For they did not know what it was." They were

used to barley wheat and other grains, but this was just a passing resemblance. "And Moses said to them", he had to explain it to them. They had been promised that this was bread from heaven, he probably didn't have to receive any special revelation and probably had enough trust to say, "This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat." He said He would send it and you see this miraculous thing on the earth covering the ground and instead of saying, 'God fulfilled His promise' you say, 'What is this?'. That word 'bread', we use the word 'bread', but it has a lot more meaning than bread. It doesn't just mean prepared grain, it also means the grain itself. That word translated 'bread', because most food is actually carbohydrates, it's the substitution for food. You don't really need meat, you can live just on bread and every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, but that is sufficient nutrition so their word for bread was also their word for food. So when he said, 'This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat', he's saying this is your food, this is what you will be eating. So God clearly and miraculously gave them what they needed and it would be their primary source of food for the next forty years. Remember why God sent the manna, He sent the manna to test them. He sent the manna to prove that even if they received it, even if He gave them everything they wanted, they would not obey Him so they could know they weren't trusting in God. From the beginning He could have provided food for them by other means. He sent the quail and the reason He sent the manna was so they would learn that man should not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. This is the lesson, when we read this, this is the lesson that we are supposed to take away from this. This is why He sent manna, this is why He sent Christ, so that we would learn we are to obey God, that the way we live is by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. He is our Lord and if we treat Him as Lord it means we do what He says and that's why He sent the manna. That's why He sent Christ, so we would obey God. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. He sent His Son so we would seek His righteousness which is to obey God. This is the picture that wandering in the wilderness for forty years, this is the picture of sanctification for the believer, it's turning away from what we want to do and turning towards obedience to the commands of God. That's what sanctification is about, it's us learning that man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. That's what our live on earth is supposed to be about and that's how we teach the nations to obey all things that Christ has commanded.

Applications:

1. The first one is, seeking a sign is a testimony of unbelief. We need to understand the reality and the importance of that. As I said, in Nigeria they want to see a sign of healing, a sign of tongues, they want to see a sign of fortelling. That's not a sign of fath, that's a lack of faith. If we're seeking signs we're testifying to our unbelief. The wicked and perverse generation need more and more testimony that God is real. Our testimony is supposed to come from a changed heart, our bondage to sin is broken. That's how we know God's real, not because somebody is healed.
2. Gratitude is a sign of belief. The Israelites forgot what God had done for them and instead of considering how He protected them from the plagues that came upon the Egyptians, intsead of considering how when the food of the Egyptians was destroyed

God didn't destroy their food, instead of considering how the Egyptian army was destroyed to protect them, instead of considering how He had just provided them with water and an oasis in the desert, their response wasn't to be grateful, their response was to grumble and complain. A sign of belief is that you're grateful with what God gives you, even trials, even difficulties. A sign of belief is that you are grateful and you have thanksgiving on your lips continually because you trust that even when things go not the way in your worldly wisdom you think would be best, you're grateful because you trust that God knows what's best. So gratitude is a sign of having true belief. Fear of death is a sign of unbelief. They were afraid that God had brought them out to first kill them with thirst and then to kill them with food. They feared death and didn't trust God. Jesus Christ came to break the bondage of sin, which is fear of death. He came so that we could be free and if we continue to fear death like the Israelites do, that is a sign of unbelief. Part of what God does is He sanctifies us, and I'm not saying a new believer doesn't have fear of death, but the maturity of belief means that you don't fear death. Maturity of belief means that you don't say, 'God just brought us here to kill us!' and instead say, 'God brought us here to glorify Himself and if that means we die, we die.' That's what Paul said, it's better to die and be with the Lord, but if it's needful for us to remain, then so be it. That's the attitude we should have, that's the attitude of a mature Christian. That's the attitude that God sanctifies us to. Fear of death is the sign of unbelief and not trusting in eternal life through Jesus Christ. Using language about God doesn't testify to belief or unbelief. Everybody in Nigeria, they assign everything to God, but so did the Israelites. They said if we stay in Egypt God would kill them there, it's God's hand that does it, but yet they don't have any belief in God, they just believe in the order of the world. Make sure that you don't think that someone using God language, if they are attributing things to God that it means they have true faith, or it means that they don't. It doesn't really mean anything, what they do is what testifies. It's easy to honor God with your lips and your heart to be far from Him. Obedience is a sign of belief. God tested them to see if they would obey His commandments. God rejected them from the Promised Land because they would not heed His commandments. He said to go in and they said no. Obedience is a sign of belief, obedience to the law of God is the sign that you're trusting in God, that you're having faith rather than walking by sight because when we walk by sight we ignore the law. When we walk by faith we do what God tells us to do and not what seems right in our own eyes. Obedience to the law is one of the basic signs of faith. A sign of belief is keeping the Sabbath, it's a testimony that you're resting on the finished work of God. That's the sign that He commands them to do, that's the sign that was established at the foundation of the world. The sign of believing that it's the finished work of God is that you keep the Sabbath. Unlike circumcision or baptism or the Lord's Supper, these all get added, they get deleted, but one that doesn't change is the Sabbath because it goes back to the created order that testifies to all creation that it is through God that we can have rest and not through man.

3. Grumbling and complaining is always a sin against God, it's always a sin against God. We want to think it's not, we want to think we are justified that God was mean to me, but it's always a sin against God because God sent that person to be mean to you. It doesn't mean that he didn't sin or that you shouldn't rebuke him, but to grumble and complain is

to say that God messed up and God never messes up. God is perfect and everything He does is perfect. When we grumble and complain it's always because of covetousness, we want something that is different than what God wants for us and it's always sin. It's a serious sin. 1 Corinthians 10 says that this is why God left all their bodies out in the wilderness, because they grumbled and complained. Let's not take it as a light sin, it's a sin of unbelief, a sin of not actually trusting in God and saying God did the right thing. Philippians 4:11-13, "ADD" That's Paul saying to not grumble and complain, God's taught me not to. We should work to learn that from God.

4. Be careful not to consider secondary causes first causes. What I mean by that is the first cause of them being freed from Egypt was God, but yet they blamed Moses and Aaron because Moses and Aaron were secondary causes. It's really easy to do that, it's really easy to look at things in the world and say this is why it happened instead of saying, 'No, it is God who decreed that that would happen. When we look at secondary causes and think they are primary causes, then we start to disobey. Hey, I have a family to feed and my boss says I have to lie, I better go lie because that's the only way to feed my family. We substitute secondary causes for the primary causes. The reason you can feed your family is because God provides. It's important for us to recognize how easy it is to do this and how our typical way we do this is to say we have a duty before God to feed our family so therefore I'm going to lie to do it because I'm fulfilling the commandments of God. No, you're not. Let's not take secondary causes and make them primary causes. God is the One who feeds His people, God is the One who gives us every breath we take, God is the One who gives us rest, God is the One who gives us food, God is the One who gives us everything we have. He just wants us to obey and we can never look at the world and say that we should obey the world to get what we need. No, that's not how it has ever worked. That's why Jesus Christ can truly say to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these other things will be added to you.
5. Make sure you do not boast in yourself about your salvation. The picture in this passage is God led them out for thirty days so they were hungry and desperate. God is the One who provided the food, God is the One who pre-crushed it, God is the One who removed the chaff, God is the One who made it easy to eat, God is the One who made them hungry enough so they would just grab anything. God is the One who did it all because it's a picture of salvation. God is the One who does it all. Christ is the manna from heaven that opens our eyes to our desperate need for a Savior. He provides the means of salvation by being the living bread and He's the One that caused us to pick it up. We need to remember that because so much of the church wants to brag that they were the ones who picked up salvation. No, God provided it all. We need to boast in Christ, not brag about ourselves because this is what the church is doing and this is offensive to God. We need to make sure we don't participate in that offense because we can't cause the bread to come down from heaven, He is the One who causes it to come down from heaven. Praise be to the name of the Lord.

Let me close us in prayer. Oh Lord God we do thank You for this passage that You have us in. Lord, we pray that You cause us to understand how You would have us to apply it, how You would have us to think about it as we go forth. Lord, convict us of our sin, use this passage to

test us and to cleanse us. Lord, I pray that if there is anybody here that hears these tests and we know there are some here that do not know you, they hear these tests and recognize they don't have true faith, Lord we pray that today You would cause the bread of heaven to come down upon them, the living bread by which it's the only means to the Father. We pray that You open their eyes, we pray that in Your mercy You work so that they flee to You. Anybody here that professes to know You but doesn't obey, who fear death, who is filled with grumbling and complaining, Lord convict them where they truly stand before You for it is easier to be tested by Your word than it is to be tested by the world. We pray that You use Your word to cut us and to heal us. We ask this in Your Son's name, amen.