

## Bread from Heaven

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Zach Carter / General

Exodus: Redeemer and Redeemed

### Discussion Questions

1. In times of hardship or stress, where do you usually turn for comfort or relief? How does this compare to the Israelites longing for Egypt in Exodus 16? How can you begin to turn to Christ for satisfaction and provision instead?
2. The Israelites grumbled and desired to return to their old life in Egypt when faced with challenges. Identify any old patterns or 'comforts' you tend to revert to when life gets tough. How can acknowledging these patterns help you rely more on Christ?
3. God provided manna daily to teach the Israelites to trust Him for their daily needs. What are some ways you can practice trusting God for your daily needs? Share a specific instance where you saw God's provision in your life.
4. The sermon highlighted the importance of daily reliance on God's provision and trusting in Jesus as the Bread of Life. How can you incorporate this principle into your daily routine? What practical steps can you take to cultivate a heart of obedience and trust?
5. Jesus is presented as the ultimate fulfillment of our deepest needs, offering eternal life and satisfaction. How does this understanding change your perspective on seeking fulfillment and satisfaction in life? Discuss ways you can deepen your relationship with Christ to experience His provision more fully.
6. The sermon challenges us to live in faithful dependence on God, overcoming grumbling and trusting in Jesus as our daily bread. What are some practical actions you can take this week to live out this faithful dependence? How can you encourage others in your community to do the same?

### Introduction

There are times when the connections between the Old and New Testament are a bit more obscure or require a bit more digging. The work of a pastor is to lead his people to Christ's pasture every Sunday so they can see Christ. Sometimes, this requires more study than others. This is not one of those days. This is one of those paradigmatic texts we've encountered before, where what happens here shapes the entire New Testament because this is an identity-forming moment in the nation of Israel.

We are exactly one month since they left Egypt. Perhaps they have run out of any stores they were able to take with them. Perhaps the pace means the goats cannot produce enough milk for the people. Remember, they didn't have days to pack a well-organized caravan. They had to leave that day. They were to be—and now are—in a place of dependence.

Freedom, true freedom in Christ, comes when we realize we no longer need old haunts, comforts, or patterns because Christ has satisfied us.

1. So what's happening in Exodus 16? Moses wants to show us how the Israelites were taught by God to rely on him for provision, even their own food.
2. You and I are going to learn the same lesson by our loving Father: finding our joy and satisfaction in Christ along, the very bread of life.
3. Think right now: when life is hard, where do you go? Christ? Or default settings?

I'd love for us to see the gospel today in Exodus 16: that we're called to trust God, but often go to old comforts in trials. But Jesus perfectly satisfies us with his life and work.

#### **Exodus 16:1-3 ESV**

<sup>1</sup> They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, <sup>3</sup> and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

### **We long for old comforts in times of trial.**

Right off the bat, we're back to grumbling. Again, grumbling is a contagious disease which kills morale. We've escalated from "people" grumbling (15:24) to the "whole congregation" is grumbling.

At the heart of all grumbling is a pretty arrogant assumption: I could do better if I were in charge. Isn't that what's at play here? They're grumbling at Moses like he forced them come with him. And they're assuming they could do better.

What's their alternative solution? "It would have been better to be in slavery back in Egypt."

Now, you see the insanity of this moment, right? Pharaoh had murdered their baby boys; crushed them with oppressive workloads; and turned Hebrew against Hebrew in that whole system.

Why do they want to go back? Is it better the devil you know than the devil you don't? I don't think so.

You see, humans have this incredible talent to reframe almost any memory we must to justify our current opinion. So, we will *regularly* lie to ourselves to make ourselves feel better about something in any given situation. That's what happening here.

And, like I said a bit ago, I venture to say you know *exactly* what I'm talking about. Stressed? I must \_\_\_\_\_. Lonely? I have to \_\_\_\_\_. Sad? I'll just \_\_\_\_\_.

Remember: they have left Egypt but Egypt has not been fully taken out of them. They must be sanctified through refining trials. God is resettling them. He will get the memories of Egypt in their mind clarified.

#### **Deuteronomy 8:2-5 ESV**

<sup>2</sup> And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. <sup>3</sup> And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>4</sup> Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. <sup>5</sup> Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you.

What do you know in your heart? The legendary bible teacher John Calvin reminded us that since the fall, men's hearts have been a "perpetual factory of idols."

## We're Called to Trust and Obey

God, of course, has planned this moment. Remember, he is manifesting his presence in the pillar by day and fire by night. He's omnipresent, so he can hear them talking about him. He's omniscient, so even if they didn't grumble out-loud, he'd know the grumbling in their hearts. He's no Clark Griswold. He hasn't taken his people on a trip without having attended to every detail.

He tells Moses his plan: I'll rain bread (*le-hem*) from heaven. He states he does this to test whether the people will listen to his words and actually do them. The entire camp would be covered in this food, which they've never seen before.

### Exodus 16:31 ESV

<sup>31</sup> Now the house of Israel called its name manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

My friend Sam Emadi pointed out about this verse: The Passover meal was bitter just like Egypt—this meal is like honey comparable to the land to which they'll soon go.

Manna is a compound word. Hebrew for "What" is *man*, and Hebrew for it is *hu'*, which sort of works in English too: "Man. Huh?" The Hebrews will gather it and be curious and ask one another what it is.

They were to gather an omer for every person in their home on each day except for the sixth day of the week when they were to gather a double portion for each person to avoid gathering on the seventh day.

This is a weird but vivid and accurate comparison—I looked it up. An omer weighs about as much as a Costco rotisserie chicken. Imagine a Costco chicken per person per day. That's way more than enough food.

God wants to reveal to them the conditions of their own heart. The purpose of testing passages is not to suggest the passibility of God. God does not actually need the test to know anything. This is language that Moses and the people can understand: do this to show who you are. **Test** in the Bible is not pass or fail—no ACTs here. Instead, it means more like showing what something really is.

My kids will have no idea what I'm about to talk about because they've only seen a world of payment that involves tapping or inserting. I'm almost positive not one of them has ever seen me put green paper into someone's hand. And when you put it like that, it does sound totally arcane doesn't it. Here is piece green paper with a dead guy's face on it. Now give me my pizza.

One of my earliest jobs was at the Dominos. Anytime we got a bill larger than a twenty, we had a special marker that we were use to test to see if that green paper was a genuine U.S. Treasury note or just green paper. The marker revealed what was already true about the note. Nothing to pass or fail, just an answer to the question: who are you really? General Grant? Here's your four large pepperonis and change.

## We Can't Trust and Obey on Our Own

The people fail two different ways, in both ways trying to carve out exemptions to God's law. Isn't that how you and I all fall into sin? Well, they cut me off. Or, that person is annoying so I don't really care if gossip about them. Or, they aren't really like us so I don't have to bother with them.

### Exodus 16:19–20 ESV

<sup>19</sup> And Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it over till the morning." <sup>20</sup> But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.

So, some people gathered way more than they should have and it spoiled on them.

But others failed to gather when they should have:

### Exodus 16:26–28 ESV

<sup>26</sup> Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none.” <sup>27</sup> On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. <sup>28</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws?”

At the heart of every single sin from garden on is a singular doubt: Did God really say?

Which is to say: does God have my best in view? Because collecting every day seems like a pain, why not do a little work ahead, right?

It’s interesting to me that Jesus teaches us to not just pray for our bread, but our what? Daily bread. Daily reliance on the Lord.

But our repeated failures to trust and obey demonstrate our deep need for a Savior.

## **Jesus Trusted and Obeyed Perfectly**

Now, not every pivot to Christ is so clear. But this one is crystal.

John tell us of a moment that is absolutely meant to remind us of the hunger and need for provision and see Jesus as the fulfillment of it.

Jesus leads the people away from where they can just buy food—a wilderness of sorts. He tests Phillip—same idea as Exodus 16—by asking him where they’ll get food. Jesus already knows. He’s going to teach them that he’s the one they should rely on!

Jesus multiplies the bread; the people love it because it fills their bellies but they miss the whole point. When Jesus tells them who he really is...do you know what they do? They grumble.

Jesus tells them that he was sent by the Father to draw his people to himself and raise them on the last day.

You and I have a life problem. Our rebellion against God cut us off from the only source of life. Sure, we eat and drink today to make sure we have sugars and minerals for ATP, water as a catalyst and conveyer, and amino acids for protein repairs. But, those things stop death. We have a God problem—we will die.

But Jesus tells us something about who he is.

### **John 6:48–51 ESV**

<sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup> This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

Unlike the manna, which provided temporary sustenance, Jesus offers eternal life and satisfaction (John 6:48-51).

Jesus’ perfect obedience and sacrifice provide the solution to our inability to trust and obey.

By looking to Jesus, we find the ultimate provision and fulfillment of our deepest needs.

## **Through Jesus, We Can Trust and Obey**

Favorite confession at the end of John 6. Where else can we go? Manna is kept as a testimony to remind of God’s provision. Unconditional gift of bread. Unconditional gift of Christ.

Obedience is not the gospel because it is the fruit of the gospel. Do not put it in front of justification. That’s man-made religion.

The gospel is you try but can't, so God did so you are.

### **Empowered by Christ**

Through faith in Jesus, we are empowered to trust God daily and rely on His provision ([John 6:35](#)).

Jesus invites us to partake in His life, sustaining us spiritually and enabling us to live out obedience through His strength ([John 6:56-58](#)).

Our call is to trust in Jesus as our daily bread, recognizing that He is everything we truly need.

### **Bibliography**

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