



Union
Gospel
Press

For Teachers of Teens
Ages 15 Through 17

SENIOR HIGH
Bible Teacher

FALL QUARTER
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SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

EX. 16:2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

3 And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, *and* when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

4 Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

5 And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare *that* which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

6 And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt:

7 And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what *are* we, that ye murmur against us?

8 And Moses said, *This shall be*, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that

the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what *are* we? your murmurings *are* not against us, but against the LORD.

9 And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings.

10 And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto 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 spake unto Moses, saying,

12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD your God.

13 And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.

14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness *there lay* a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.

15 And when the children of Israel saw *it*, they said one to another, *It is* manna: for they wist not what it *was*. And Moses said unto them, *This is* the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

God Provides Manna and Quail

Lesson Text: Exodus 16:2-15

Related Scriptures: I Corinthians 10:1-10; Exodus 6:1-8;
John 6:30-58; Numbers 11:4-34

TIME: 1445 B.C.

PLACE: Wilderness of Sin

GOLDEN TEXT—"Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

Studying the Text

In the Exodus, God had led the people of Israel out of Egypt and demonstrated His power. They were on their way to the Promised Land, but they were not yet ready to become a nation. There were lessons to be learned in the wilderness. The people needed to know that God would provide for them.

GOD PROVIDES TESTING— EX. 16:2-5

God had given the responsibility of leadership over the people of Israel to Moses and Aaron, so they were the ones the people approached when hunger began to overtake them as they traveled through the wilderness. In fact, all the people began to complain against Moses and Aaron. What they did not realize was that they were actually murmuring against God. Moses and Aaron had not rescued them from Egypt and led them into the wilderness; God had.

God was willing to provide for the people's physical needs, but He also wanted them to trust Him for their spiritual needs. He wanted them to know that murmuring against Moses and

Aaron would not accomplish anything. They needed to learn to trust Him and obey His commands. The lack of food was a test of their spiritual temperature.

The complaint of the people to Moses and Aaron revealed a complete lack of spiritual understanding. They wished that they had died "by the hand of the Lord" in Egypt (vs. 3). However, the real problem in Egypt was not the hand of the Lord; it was the cruelty of Pharaoh. He was the one who was killing them. Yet they remembered eating "bread to the full" when in reality they had been suffering as slaves under Egyptian taskmasters. They complained that they had been brought into the wilderness to die from hunger when God had really led them there to bring them into a land of plenty. They were on their way to a land that flowed with milk and honey.

The test God provided for them was quite simple. Bread from heaven would be provided daily. They were to collect just enough for their family for that day. On the day before the Sabbath, they were to gather twice as much. In that way they would not have

to work on the Sabbath.

God said the purpose for the test was to “prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no” (vs. 4). He wanted to know if they were willing to obey Him. He did not want them to work on the Sabbath, so He would not provide the bread on the seventh day. They were to gather enough for two days on the sixth day, for they would not find anything to eat the next morning (cf. vs. 27).

God could provide for them daily, and He could withhold the bread for a day as He chose. The people needed to learn that the provision came from Him, not from Moses or Aaron or themselves. When they understood that God was their Provider, they would be willing to obey His commands without questioning and murmuring. Their hunger was not a test of whether or not God would provide. It was a test of whether or not they would obey Him when He did provide.

GOD PROVIDES ASSURANCE— EX. 16:6-10

One of the complaints of the people was that they had been led into the wilderness to die. God had rescued them with mighty power through the plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea. But now they thought He was going to abandon them in the wilderness. To assure them that the Lord was still present and would not leave them there to die, Moses and Aaron announced that He would prove Himself to them in two ways. He would provide food, and He would reveal His glory.

The purpose for this twofold assurance was to prove to the people that it was God who had led them out of Egypt. They had heard Moses and Aaron announce the plagues, and they had seen the rod of Moses part the waters of the Red Sea. But they needed to know that it was the power of

God that had brought the plagues and provided their means of escape from the army of Pharaoh.

They needed to know this because of their murmuring. They were not just complaining about Moses and Aaron. When they murmured against their leaders, they were actually murmuring against God. They were criticizing Moses and Aaron but really finding fault with the Lord. He had heard their murmuring, and He wanted them to know that blaming Him for their troubles was a serious matter. It was one thing to gripe about their human leaders, but it was another thing entirely to complain that God was not able or willing to meet their needs.

The Lord’s provision to satisfy their physical hunger would show them that He could give them all that they needed, even in the wilderness. That night they would have meat to eat, and the next morning He would give them bread, so they did not need to complain.

The spiritual lesson, however, was even more important than the physical lesson. A God who could feed that many people in the middle of the wilderness with enough meat and bread to satisfy them was a God who should be honored and feared. The people had no reason to gripe and complain against such a God. They needed to listen to Him, obey Him, and trust Him to meet their every need. If they could learn that lesson, it would sustain them through the entire wilderness experience. He could be trusted to provide, and He could be followed without complaints.

The assurance of God’s presence, the proof that He had not abandoned them in the wilderness, was given even before the miracle of the physical provision. Knowing that He had not left them to die was more important than seeing physical proof of His provision.

Moses and Aaron called all the people together. They could all see the cloud that had been leading them every day since they had left Egypt (cf. 13:22). The people only had to look at the cloud to know that God had not abandoned them, but they were more interested in complaining than in seeing the evidence of God's presence. Now they were compelled to look, and as they did, they could see the Lord's awesome glory in the cloud.

When the glory of the Lord appeared, every person in the entire camp of Israel was assured of God's presence. They no longer had any excuse for complaining. He had not led them into the wilderness to die. He had not abandoned them, and they could trust Him completely to provide for them. That spiritual assurance should have convinced them to trust the Lord and obey the instructions He had given them concerning the promised bread from heaven. His presence and the special appearance of His glory should have taught them to trust Him to keep His promises.

GOD PROVIDES SUSTENANCE— EX. 16:11-15

The most important lessons God wanted to teach the people through His provision of bread and quail did not come from the physical satisfaction of their hunger. Even before they ate and were satisfied, He wanted them to decide to obey Him and learn to trust Him without murmuring.

When the food He gave did satisfy their hunger, God wanted that satisfaction to help them know that He was the Lord their God (vs. 12). Meeting their physical needs was God's way of teaching them lessons concerning Himself. His words were truth and did not need to be questioned. His presence was constant and did not need to be doubted.

That evening a large flock of quail

flew in and "covered the camp" (vs. 13). All the people had to do was capture the birds and roast them for eating. Every family in the entire camp had meat enough to satisfy their hunger. They did not need the flesh pots they had left behind in Egypt. God provided the meat they desired right there in the wilderness.

The next morning, after the dew melted away with the rising of the sun, the people discovered the ground covered with a "small round thing" (vs. 14). They called it "manna" (meaning "what is it?") because they had no idea what it was. Moses assured them that it was the bread from heaven God had promised to send.

When the people murmured, they had mentioned the abundance of meat and bread they had when they lived in Egypt. Now they had both and at the same time were free from the slavery they had endured for years. The God who had rescued them had proved that He would provide for them both spiritually and physically. He had given important lessons about Himself and about them through this experience.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

- M — God Provides Good Water. Ex. 15:22-27.
- T — The True Bread of Life. John 6:41-51.
- W — Do Not Grumble. I Cor. 10:1-12.
- T — Remember God's Goodness. Deut. 8:10-18.
- F — God Gives to His Children. Ps. 68:4-10.
- S — God Meets Our Needs. Phil. 4:14-19.
- S — God's Miraculous Provision. Ex. 16:2-15.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why did the people complain to Moses and Aaron when they became hungry?

2. How did the lack of food test the spiritual condition of the people?
3. Why did God not want them to go out on the Sabbath to gather manna?
4. Why did God want them to know that He was the one who would provide for them in the wilderness?
5. What did God use to assure them of His presence?
6. How did the quail show that their murmuring about returning to Egypt was unnecessary?
7. What lesson were the people to learn about God through this wilderness experience?

REAL-LIFE APPLICATIONS

The spiritual lessons God wants us to learn are always more important than the physical difficulties we face in life. The satisfaction of hunger was most important to the Israelites, but helping them learn to trust Him was more important to God.

This truth should have a direct impact on the life of every believer. A young person may feel that being accepted by a peer group is the most important element of school life. From God's viewpoint, what is really important is for that person to learn to obey Him and stand up for what is right, even if that means not being accepted by the "in" crowd.

The value of spiritual growth should also affect the way we pray. Too often our prayers focus on material needs rather than spiritual ones. We prepare long lists of what we want God to give us but give little attention to asking what He wants to teach us. God has the ability to pro-

vide just as He did for the Israelites in the wilderness, but what He wants to provide may not always be what we desire to have. He may provide a test in order to teach us to obey Him and trust Him.

When we learn to trust God completely, we will realize that griping and complaining are just as much sins against God today as they were for those in the wilderness. He has promised never to leave us. He has promised to provide what we need through His Son, Jesus Christ. If we trust Him to keep His word, then we will understand that what we have right now is what we need right now. He has kept His promise, and we have no reason to complain.

Understanding this truth does not exempt us from working hard and seeking ways to improve our physical condition. The Israelites still had to capture the quail and gather the manna. We need to take responsibility for doing our best whether in school or at a job. Griping and complaining will not improve the situation. Instead, we need to trust God to help us make the best of whatever situation we face in life.

Simply learning the stories that we read in the Bible must not be our ultimate goal. It is important to realize that the stories are there to teach us lessons about God. It is not enough just to know that He provided manna and quail. Instead, we need to learn from the appearance of the quail that God controls and sustains the natural world. We need to learn from the provision of the manna that everything we need to sustain life on this earth is ultimately a gift from God, the Creator. We need to learn from the presence of the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that God is omnipresent. We do not see a physical manifestation today the way the Israelites saw the cloud in

the wilderness, but we can know that God is always present in our lives.

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

Purpose

This lesson teaches us that God is the provider and sustainer of both physical and spiritual life.

Planning Your Presentation

Arrange for two of your students to present a skit for the start of the class. Have one student be a worker at a fast-food chain while the other student portrays his or her shift manager. The first student should prepare a long list of complaints about the working conditions and then present them to the shift manager. The shift manager will respond by explaining that the rules have all been instituted by the boss and there is really nothing he or she can do about it.

When the skit is over, invite the class to discuss what happened. Did it do any good to complain? Was there another way the situation could have been handled? Was the first student really criticizing the shift manager, or was the criticism aimed at the boss? Would the student have said the same things if the boss had been listening instead of the shift manager? Explain that while there are things we should speak up about, such as dangerous working conditions or a coworker committing serious fraud, these situations tend to be rare, and there is a right way to voice concerns. Meanwhile, complaining is not rare and too often is not done in the right spirit.

Use the skit to introduce the biblical scene in this lesson. Invite the students to list some specific ways the Israelites were murmuring against Moses and Aaron. Ask them to think

about how those complaints might have been framed differently if the people had been face to face with God, telling Him their problems.

Ask your students to name some other familiar Bible stories, such as David and Goliath, Noah and the ark, and Daniel in the lions' den. Challenge them to describe how each of the stories they name teaches us something specific about God.

Work together as a class to prepare a list of prayer requests consisting entirely of spiritual needs. Specifically exclude any requests for healing, material provision, or any of the things we so often find on prayer lists for ourselves or others. This should especially not become a time to gossip or spread stories about others. Help students to see how seldom we actually pray about the things that concern God the most. Encourage them to consider their own spiritual needs and the spiritual needs of others, but in the right spirit. Suggest specific ways in which they can pray for those spiritual needs.

Visual Aid

God's gracious physical provision is intended to teach us to trust and obey Him.

