

Are You Tired of Manna?

Introduction

There was a time in my life where I had a serious need from the Lord. The clock was ticking, the need remained unmet, I prayed to God, and nothing changed. Then I thought, “Don’t seem like God is going to answer this prayer. I got to do things on my own. Seems like He just led me to where I am today and just left me. I’ll just take care of myself.” I knew God had done a lot for me, but I needed Him to work a certain way right now. I followed Him before, but where was He now?

This lesson is a study of certain events in the history of Israel after Moses led them out of Egypt, the Exodus. Their responses to their crises can teach us the appropriate way to respond to the crises in our lives and how God views our “typical” response. Getting totally consumed by the situation at hand can cause us to miss some of God’s greatest blessings in our lives.

Scriptures Used In This Lesson

Exodus 15:22 – 25

Exodus 16:1 – 5

Exodus 16:11 – 15, 16 – 30, 30 – 35

Exodus 17:1 – 3

Numbers 14

Background

Moses had just led the fledgling nation of Israel out of Egyptian slavery with a great deliverance. Over the previous days, they had witnessed the mighty hand of God with locust, gnats, water turning to blood, and the death angel killing the first born of those whose homes were not covered by the blood of a lamb. They had just witnessed the parting of the Red Sea, where they walked across the sea on dry ground. They had just witnessed the death of the Egyptians who were chasing them. They had witnessed the mighty hand of God in numerous ways. And now they meet their first crisis as a free people.

They were Thirsty - Exodus 15:22 – 25

The Israelites had traveled three days after crossing the Red Sea and they became thirsty. When they came to Marah, they “grumbled” against Moses. The need was real – water for about 3 million people – men, women and children. But their grumbling was more like the response of a people who had *never* seen the miracles of God, as opposed to someone who had just experienced a miracle three days earlier. God moved (again) and 3 million people had water to drink.

Hunger in the Desert - Exodus 16:1 – 5

The second crisis comes when the people became hungry. Notice how they grumbled against Moses and Aaron again.

Verse 3 is very revealing. It tells of the mindset of the people, i.e., how they were thinking. They had preferred to be back in Egypt, as slaves, where they thought they would have plenty to eat. It was only a month before where they were praying to the Lord to deliver them from Egyptian slavery.

God Provides Again - Exodus 16:11 – 15, 16 – 30, 31 – 35

Again, God provided for the need. Not only did He provide quail, He provided manna. Manna comes from a word that means, “What is it?” When the Israelites first saw the manna, they did not know what it was. So that became the name of this daily provision from God.

Verses 16 – 30 tell how God instructed the people to get as much as manna as they needed (not as much as they wanted). If they gathered more than they were supposed to, the manna turned into maggots. The manna was supposed to provide for their daily needs, i.e., what was necessary to sustain them.

Verses 31 – 35 provide a description of the “bread from heaven” and how it sustained them for 40 years. (Note: an omer is about 2 quarts or ½ gallon).

To get a feel for the size of this miracle, let’s do some math. First, let’s assume that an omer of manna weighed about a pound (we don’t know for sure, but we need a starting point). So, each person ate about a pound of manna a day. To feed the nation of Israel required 3 million pounds a day, or 1,500 tons a day. To feed the people for a year, God provided 1,095,000,000 pounds of manna, or 5,475,000 tons/yr. That’s a lot of food. And He did it for 40 years.

Key Point: The Manna was to provide for their daily needs, not wants. It was meant to sustain them until they reached the Promised Land.

*What’s the difference between a need and a want? Should God provide all your wants?
Why or Why not? Should a parent provide all the wants of a child? Why or Why not?*

Mishandling The Next Crisis - Exodus 17:1 – 3

Now after witnessing the miraculous appearance of 3 million pounds of food each day, what did Israel do at the next crisis? Exodus 17:1 – 3 tells us that they complained.

Why did Israel complain? What are your daily blessings? Which ones do you think you miss or don't readily recognize? Why don't we recognize God's daily blessings? How can we change that?

Grumbling Against The Father - Numbers 14

Continually grumbling against God can have some very serious consequences in our lives. When we constantly complain about what we don't have, it develops a mindset, i.e., a way of thinking that can lead us away from God. Here's how?

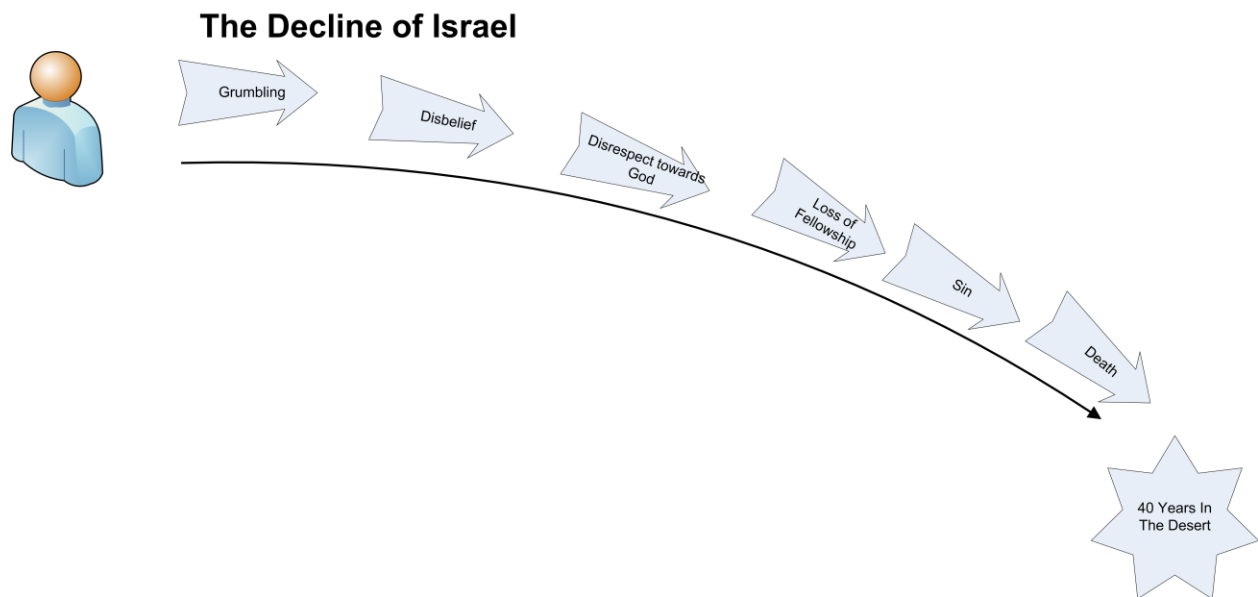
Constant or habitual grumbling → Disbelief

Disbelief → Disrespect for God

Disrespect for God → Loss of Fellowship with God

Loss of Fellowship with God → Sin

The Wages of Sin → Death



The 14th chapter of Numbers is very revealing. Moses had sent out 12 men into the Promised Land to spy the region. After 40 days the spies came back with their report. The group reported that the land was “flowing with milk and honey”, meaning that it was very fruitful and fertile, like God told them. But 10 of the men saw only the bigness of the enemies in the land and the obstacles they would have to conquer. They spread fear among the people. The people became so fearful that the people wanted to kill Moses and Aaron and to go back to Egypt.

Key Point: Rebelling against God's anointed messengers, His instructions, or provisions, is like rebelling against God Himself.

Israel threatened Moses and Aaron directly, but God took it personally. Read Numbers 14:10 – 11. Notice the Lord asked, “How long will these people treat *me* with contempt?” What was behind the grumbling – a lack of faith in God’s ability to handle the situation.

Here is what Israel had witnessed in the previous months:

- Thousands or even millions of first born being slain by the death angel if they were not covered by the blood of a lamb
- Leaving Egypt with riches given to them by the Egyptians (Exodus 12:35 – 36)
- The parting of the Red Sea and walking through the sea on dry ground (Exodus 12:21 – 22)
- The slaying of the Egyptians who were chasing them (Exodus 14:26 – 28)
- God appearing physically before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:20 – 22)
- Million pounds of food appearing every morning (Exodus 16:11 – 15)

After all this and more, the Israelites grumbled and did not trust God in the midst of every crisis. God took it personally.

*Over the past year, can you recount the things you know God did for you? Name some.
Why do you doubt in the midst of your current crisis?*

Key Point: The pillars of fire and cloud never left Israel. In the same way, the Holy Spirit will never leave you.

So how can you keep from insulting God?

1. Remind yourself of what God has done for you. Keep a diary. Update it daily.
2. Fill your mind with God’s Word. Daily reading keeps our “heavenly phone” plugged in. We become more receptive to hear Him, through His Word, other people, prayer, and our circumstances.
3. Confess any hidden sins. We need to have a clean heart and mind when we approach the Lord. We don’t need anything hindering our communication with Him.
4. Know that He is sovereign over every aspect of our lives. He has the ability to change anything, at any time, in any way.
5. At the first sign of trouble, pray. Pray in the same manner as Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:6 – 12)

6. Patiently wait for God's answer. There may be some practical things you can do, like updating your resume if you need a job. But seek clear direction from the Lord and wait patiently for His answer.
7. Be obedient. Once you receive directions from God, do it. Even if it doesn't make sense at the time. Obedience is better than sacrifice (I Samuel 15:22).
8. Always, in good times and bad, give God praise for *Who* He is. His very nature deserves our praise.

Summary

Getting tired of manna is the result of not recognizing the value of what God gives us on a daily basis. Yes, we have needs, serious ones, but we should, in praise, go to the One who will supply all your needs. God takes lack of faith personally. It's an assault on His character. Let's not insult the One who loves us most and spend "40 years in the desert" needlessly.