

Lesson 8 – 20 March 2011

God Graciously Provides for Israel

Lesson Scope: [Exodus 15:22-16:36](#)

Lesson Focus

Israel was now journeying into the wilderness from the triumph at the Red Sea. God soon allowed situations to develop that tested their faith. Three days they traveled but found no water. After graciously providing water for them at Marah God promised them that their obedience would bring His blessing and protection.

Apparently, the provisions they brought out of Egypt were depleted (Exodus 16:3). They were not near starvation, yet they could not see adequate resources to supply their needs.

They failed to realize God's loving interest in them. He knew their needs even better than they did, and He had ample provisions in store to meet their needs for the next forty years.

God patiently worked with the young nation of Israel. Although He often tested their faith, He abundantly supplied their needs.

This lesson is a beautiful picture of what God desires and is able to do for His people. Try to imagine feeding and supplying such a great multitude for forty years. God's resources were not nearly exhausted. This same God is providing for us today. He wants us to trust Him for our daily needs and in the tests we face. How quick are we to murmur and complain? God expects more from us since we have His record in the Bible and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

We can make this lesson come alive to us individually by applying it to practical areas today. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Lesson Aim: To portray the richness of God's grace in the midst of a barren world.

Theme Verses: Deuteronomy 32:9-10. For the LORD'S portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness, he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

Lesson Text.

"The Waters Were Made Sweet"

[Exodus 15:22-27](#)

“So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. ²³And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. ²⁴And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? ²⁵And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, *which* when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, ²⁶And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I *am* the LORD that healeth thee.

²⁷And they came to Elim, where *were* twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.”

"Ye Shall Be Filled With Bread"

[Exodus 16:3](#)

“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.”

[Exodus 16:11-21](#)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ¹²I 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. ¹³And 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. ¹⁴And 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. ¹⁵And 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.

¹⁶*This is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man *according to* his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for *them* which *are* in his tents. ¹⁷And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. ¹⁸And when they did mete *it* with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. ¹⁹And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. ²⁰Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. ²¹And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.”

Questions for Study

"The Waters Were Made Sweet"

1. How had God provided for His people on their journey thus far?
2. What was the statute and ordinance God made?
3. List some provisions God has given us.
4. When do we experience times of refreshment?

"Ye Shall Be Filled With Bread"

5. Why did God test His people again'?
6. What is significant about every man gathering according to his eating?
7. How does God provide bread for us?
8. Why do we daily need to come to God for grace?

Analyzing the Passage

The bitter waters (Exodus 15:25) were made sweet by a tree, a type of the cross. God made "a statute and an ordinance" (Exodus 15:25) or a divine law, which is stated in verse 26. He proved them (Exodus

15:25), putting them to the test to show whether they would obey Him. The diseases in Exodus 15:26 probably include the plagues brought upon Egypt. They could also refer to illnesses incurred by sinful living and disobedience to God.

Israel encamped at Elim for approximately one month. Here were twelve wells, one for each tribe, and seventy palm trees.

God provided manna for them, also described in Numbers 1 1:7 9. Each person was allotted an omer or about five pints. They baked it and made cakes of it. It melted when the sun became hot, yet it could be cooked! The manna first fell on the first day of the week, and each following day, for six days. On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much to last for the seventh day or Sabbath. Exodus 16:23 is the first mention in the Scripture of the Sabbath. Forty years later, the manna ceased (Joshua 5:12). Truly "man did eat angels' food" (Psalm 78:25)!

Principles and Applications

"The Waters Were Made Sweet"

1. God provides leaders to direct His people (Exodus 15:22). Moses brought Israel on their way, and today God has set leaders in the church for the good of His people. We need to follow them as they follow Christ. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).
2. God always hears when His people cry to Him for help (Exodus 15:24-25). God hears both complaints and cries for help. How quick are we to murmur and complain when things get difficult? How much better it would be to bring our need to God and allow Him to work in the way that He sees best. God still uses difficult experiences to test His people.
3. God supplies resources to sweeten the bitter experiences in life (Exodus 15:23-25). He provided a tree to sweeten the waters for the Israelites. This pointed forward to the cross of Jesus, which makes all the difference to us. The trials we face can bring glory to Jesus' name. Paul besought the Lord to remove his thorn in the flesh, but it was not God's will. Instead, the Lord told him, "My grace is suffi-

cient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

4. God graciously gives commandments for the well-being of His people (Exodus 15:26). Traveling in such a large group, Israel could soon have experienced rampant disease. God had a remedy for this danger—their explicit obedience to the laws He gave them.

Today, we have the teachings of Scripture to guide us, and the church makes application to those principles. These regulations are for our guidance and blessing. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3).

5. God provides times of ample refreshment for the spiritual pilgrim (Exodus 15:27). Elim was a place of rest and rejuvenation for Israel in preparation for the tests that lay ahead. Life is not all trials, we enjoy times of sunshine also. Our regular church services are times of refreshment. Teaching from God's Word and fellowship with other pilgrims encourages us. Weekend meetings, revival meetings, churchwide meetings, and Bible schools are all times of special refreshment. We receive encouragement as we see many others serving God faithfully.

"Ye Shall Be Filled With Bread"

6. God allows humanly insurmountable situations so He can manifest His miraculous power (Exodus 16:12). He brought Israel through a wilderness to show them that He is well able to sustain them. He fed them where no food was available. Jesus also fed a multitude in the desert with only five loaves and two fishes. More than five thousand men had enough and to spare. God still delights in using His power for our blessing.

7. God provides for both the spiritual and the physical needs of His people (Exodus 10:15). He gave bread from heaven to feed and sustain their bodies. Jesus gives us the bread of life so that we may have eternal life. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51)

8. Man needs to appropriate God's gracious provisions (Exodus 16:16-18). The manna fell, but the people needed to gather it. God

gives us health, energy, and daily work; it is our duty to be diligent in fulfilling diligently our responsibilities. God also provides the resources for our spiritual health, growth, and victory, but we will not enjoy those blessings unless we do our part.

9. God provides for individual needs (Exodus 16:17-18). Some families needed more, and some needed less, but there was enough manna for all. "But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: as it is written. He that had gathered much had nothing over: and he that had gathered little had no lack" (2 Corinthians 8:14-15). God provides grace according to each one's need.

10. Man needs to daily refresh his supply of God's grace (Exodus 16:21). The Israelites could not lay up for another day except for the Sabbath. Each night they went to sleep without any bread in their tents or in their camp, trusting that, on the morrow, God would again meet their daily need. Each morning God sent a fresh and free supply.

We need daily nourishment from God's Word. We cannot feast on it one day and expect that inspiration to last several days. God does not allow us to store up grace in some sort of spiritual bank account; He provides what we need as each situation arises.

Important Teachings

1. God provides leaders to direct His people (Exodus 15:22).
2. God always hears when His people cry to Him for help (Exodus 15:24-25).
3. God supplies resources to sweeten the bitter experiences in life (Exodus 15:23-25).
4. God graciously gives commandments for the well-being of His people (Exodus 15:26).
5. God provides times of ample refreshment for the spiritual pilgrim (Exodus 15:27).
6. God allows humanly insurmountable situations so He can manifest His miraculous power (Exodus 16:12).
7. God provides for both the spiritual and the physical needs of His people (Exodus 16:15).

8. Man needs to appropriate God's gracious provisions (Exodus 16:16-18).
9. God provides for individual needs (Exodus 16:17-18).
10. Man needs to daily refresh His supply of God's grace (Exodus 16:21).

Answers to Questions

1. How had God provided for His people on their journey thus far?

God had provided Moses to be Israel's leader. He had led them with the pillar of cloud and fire. He had delivered them from the Egyptians at the Red Sea. He gave them the means to sweeten the water at March. If they would obey Him, He promised to protect them. He provided a place for them to camp and refresh themselves.

2. What was the statute and ordinance God made?

If Israel would listen to God and do His commandments, He would keep them from the diseases He had brought upon the Egyptians. God's blessing was conditional upon Israel's obedience. God had not yet given the Law, but He promised to be their God (see Jeremiah 7:22-23).

3. List some provisions God has given us.

God has given leaders to the church. Jesus has opened up the way of access to the Father. On the day of Pentecost, God sent the Holy Spirit to indwell the believer. We have God's complete revelation in His Word. We have the regulations and direction of the church to aid us.

4. When do we experience times of refreshment?

Our daily devotional times should prepare us to face the day. The fellowship and teaching we receive when we gather to worship refresh us. Special meetings such as weekend meetings, revival meetings, and churchwide meetings are times of refreshment. Bible schools provide intense Bible study and fellowship.

5. Why did God test His people again?

Would they trust Him to provide for them? It was another opportunity to see if they would respond in faith. God wanted to show that He was able to provide abundantly for them. He delights in showing His power to us and in meeting our needs beyond our expectations.

6. What is significant about every man gathering according to his

eating?

Every man needed to do his part in utilizing what God had provided. God has provisions to meet each one's needs. Some households needed more and others needed less. God's resources are unlimited; He has sufficient grace for every need.

7. How does God provide bread for us?

He sends the sunshine and the rain to give us our daily bread. He sent Jesus, the Bread of Life, to meet the needs of the world. We have the complete and inspired Word of God to feast upon. We have many spiritual resources to nourish and sustain us.

8. Why do we daily need to come to God for grace?

The tests and temptations of life are new each day. Our vessels leak and we are forgetful. God gives grace to meet each test as it comes; we cannot stockpile God's grace. He wants us to come to Him daily with our needs. God desires to relate to us as a father relates to his children.

Summarizing the Lesson

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim thro' this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy pow'rful hand;
Bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing waters flow;
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar,
Lead me all my journey thro',
Strong Deliv'rer, be Thou still my strength and shield.

I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Bear me thro' the swelling current,
Land me safe on Canaan's side;
Songs of praises I will ever give to Thee.

William Williams

Research Guide

1. Read John 6 for Jesus' discourse on the bread of life.
2. Read Psalm 78 for a summary of God's provision for and patience with Israel.
3. Research manna in a Bible dictionary.