

- Israel turns their back on Egypt and Pharaoh and the Red Sea and begins to move eastward
 - Reflecting on their entire time in Egypt and the Exodus, it's truly a remarkable story
 - Surely, God could have accomplished His purposes with less drama and special effects
 - Therefore, the drama had a purpose and was part of God's purposes
 - The manner of God's work was designed to communicate an eternal message
 - The details of the drama were carefully crafted by the Lord to create pictures for coming events
 - For example, we've already noted how the judgments on Egypt and redemption of Israel picture the coming salvation of Israel in the last days of Tribulation
 - And how the Passover pictures Christ
 - And last week we added another picture created by the Red Sea crossing
 - God redeems those in bondage to sin through a call to leave the world and come to the holy mountain of God, that is Zion
 - And along the way to that meeting, we experience a baptism through water
 - These pictures haven't ended
 - Far from it...they are just beginning
 - In fact, they continue until the very end of Deuteronomy
 - The drama of the Exodus and the 40 years of wandering are absolutely stuffed with pictures of later events in God's prophetic plan
 - We will see still more tonight
- The nation is now moving from the seashore of the Gulf of Aqaba to Elim, their first stopping point on the way to Mt Horeb, the mountain of God

Ex. 15:27 Then they came to Elim where there were twelve springs of water and seventy date palms, and they camped there beside the waters.

- The mention of Elim gives us an opportunity to revisit something I taught in the lesson on the Red Sea crossing concerning place names in the Exodus story
 - The exact locations of most of the place names in the Exodus story have been lost to history
 - In a few cases, we have some geographical basis for estimating their location
 - But in many cases the generally accepted sites associated with the Exodus are fiction
 - For example, the locations mentioned after the crossing like Marah and Elim are traditionally placed on Egypt's eastern border with Sinai
 - Mt Sinai itself is either located in extreme northern Sinai or southern Sinai, depending on which traditional view of the crossing location you ascribe to

- The very reason the Sinai Peninsula is called Sinai is because tradition has placed the mountain of Moses there
 - Historically, the entire peninsula was called Paran, not Sinai
 - In other words, the mountain didn't take its name from the peninsula; the peninsula took its name from the mountain
 - And the mountain was assigned this location through guesswork and tradition
 - The point to remember is that as we study through this account, you may decide to consult a map, which is fine
 - But understand that the locations should be taken with a large dose of salt
 - Since I have already expressed my point of view on the location of the Red Sea crossing, then naturally I'm going to locate these places accordingly
 - For example, we learned a couple of lessons ago that Israel crossed into Midian as they left Egypt
 - So naturally, I believe the location of Elim was somewhere directly east of the gulf of Aqaba in Midian
 - Don't be surprised if Bible maps tell you otherwise, but just be aware that there is no archeological evidence to support any location...it is entirely speculation
 - I have based my speculation on my best understanding of scripture
- As Israel walks into the desert, their attention shifts from fear of Pharaoh and his army to more mundane concerns
 - They reach a resting place in the desert where they came for sometime
 - At this point they find twelve springs and seventy date palms
 - The word for Elim is the plural for tamarisk tree, which can be a cedar or palm tree
 - The Israelites name the location for the trees in this area
 - When we hear the numbers 12 and 70, we can't help but notice the Biblical significance
 - Both 12 and 70 are too perfect to be coincidence; it testifies to God's provision
 - Moses led the people to this oasis, which the Lord prepared
 - I assume Moses knew where to find this garden spot, based on his previous years in Midian
 - The precise number of springs and trees communicates that God had prepared Moses for his role as leader
 - Even ensuring Moses knew where to find water in the desert for Israel
 - The message to Israel was simple: the God that rescued you will continue to provide for your needs
 - The very fact that Moses chose to count the trees and springs and report his count in

scripture tells us that the number had significance to Moses

- Both numbers are associated with God ruling through men
- Moses recognized that his leadership was God directed and God had Moses' back
- Israel camps here for about three weeks before setting out again, still traveling to the mountain of Moses

Ex. 16:1 Then they set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt.

Ex. 16:2 The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

Ex. 16:3 The sons of Israel said to them, “ Would that we had died by the LORD’S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

- One month from their exodus from Egypt, the nation sets out from Elim and enter the wilderness of Sin, and never has a place been more aptly named
 - It is located between Elim (on the west) and Sinai, that is Mt. Horeb
 - Here we find Israel grumbling again
 - The word grumbling means to murmur, a form of complaining that is done behind the leader’s back
 - This is worse than direct confrontation, since it can lead to organized opposition and insurrection
 - The irony is obvious to us
 - A few days earlier, the Lord had demonstrated by providing 12 springs and 70 shady palms that He would make provision for Israel through the leadership of Moses
 - Now here’s Israel murmuring against Moses’ leadership
 - They see God but forget; they hear His words, but do not believe
 - They say if they have to die, they would have rather died as slaves in Egypt with meat and bread than to die with freedom but nothing to eat
 - The nation is longing for their past life, the life they had prior to God’s redemption of the nation
 - Jesus taught concerning this principle of disciples longing for the former life

Luke 9:57 As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, “I will follow You wherever You go.”

[Luke 9:58](#) And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”

[Luke 9:59](#) And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.”

[Luke 9:60](#) But He said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.”

[Luke 9:61](#) Another also said, “I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.”

[Luke 9:62](#) But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

- Each protest was self-evidently a pathetic excuse hiding a more serious barrier to following Jesus: unbelief
 - Jesus draws a conclusion from these three excuses using the analogy of working the field on a farm
 - Working the plow behind a team of oxen was unpleasant and demanding work
 - It was far easier to stay in the farm house, where the world offered comfort
 - But follow the Lord in His work meant leaving the comforts of that life behind
 - If someone walked to the field, placed his hand on the plow, but longed for the chance to return to the farm house, they were revealing themselves to be posers
 - They may have walked out to the field, but their heart wasn't in the work
 - So it is for this generation of Israel
 - The Lord has freed a nation, but the individual members of that nation are not responding in faith to God's work
 - And their repeated longing for life in Egypt is proof they are not fit for the kingdom of God

[Ex. 16:4](#) Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction.

[Ex. 16:5](#) “On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.”

[Ex. 16:6](#) So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, “At evening you will know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt;

[Ex. 16:7](#) and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, for He hears your grumblings against the LORD; and what are we, that you grumble against us?”

[Ex. 16:8](#) Moses said, “This will happen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and bread to the full in the morning; for the LORD hears your grumblings which you grumble against Him. And what are we? Your grumblings are not against us but against the LORD.”

- In response, the Lord alerts Moses that He will answer their need with a provision that will include a test
 - The Lord will rain bread down from heaven - a miraculous provision for the people
 - This provision will come in a certain way and with special restrictions
 - And by these restrictions God will place a test upon the people
 - Will they follow the Lord's commands and instructions?
 - This is the second time we've heard the Lord mention testing the people
 - When the Lord uses the word test, it carries the same meaning as when we use the word
 - A test is something that determines whether something is true and right
 - We test precious metal to know if it is pure
 - We test students to know if they have the right knowledge
 - We test water to know if it is pure
 - And the Lord tests hearts to show whether they have the faith they claim
 - The test is that the nation can only gather a day's worth of bread each day
 - On the sixth day the nation will gather twice what is needed, and this will last through the seventh day of the week
 - This double provision will eliminate the need to gather on the seventh day
 - So the test is whether Israel has a heart to trust the Lord's word and therefore refrains from gathering on the seventh day?
- The curious thing about the Lord testing man's hearts is that we know the Lord Himself doesn't need these tests in order to know a man's heart
 - The Lord already knows everything about every heart, so why does He bother to devise a test?
 - The answer is that the test isn't for His benefit; it's for the benefit of the people themselves and for us the reader
 - The nation of Israel will see for themselves that they fail the Lord's test while they sojourned in the desert
 - Likewise, later Jews can look back upon these moments and gain a proper perspective on the nature of these people
 - Altogether, this generation of Israel will fail a total of ten tests, and the number ten represents testimony
 - This generation leaves behind a testimony that they were an unbelieving generation
 - After they fail the tenth test, the Lord condemns this generation of Israel to wander in the desert for 40 years until death
 - We can know that the Lord anticipated their disobedience and the resulting period of wandering by the way He provided bread from heaven

- When the nation left Egypt, it had plenty of food to sustain them if they had only needed to stay in the desert for a short time
- They left Egypt with thousands of goats and sheep
 - These herds could have sustained the nation with milk and meat for a long time
 - The nation might have lacked for other food types, but they were in no danger of starving so long as their sojourning was relatively brief
- But because the Lord anticipated the long wandering period, , He provided for a long-term source of food
- This is our evidence that the Lord isn't testing the people for His own sake...He knows where this is going
 - He is testing them to reveal their hearts to you and me

Ex. 16:9 Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, ‘Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your grumbings.’”

Ex. 16:10 It came about as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

Ex. 16:11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Ex. 16:12 “I have heard the grumbings of the sons 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.’”

Ex. 16:13 So it came about at evening that the quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp.

Ex. 16:14 When the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground.

Ex. 16:15 When the sons 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, “It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.

Ex. 16:16 “This is what the LORD has commanded, ‘Gather of it every man as much as he should eat; you shall take an omer apiece according to the number of persons each of you has in his tent.’”

Ex. 16:17 The sons of Israel did so, and some gathered much and some little.

Ex. 16:18 When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every man gathered as much as he should eat.

Ex. 16:19 Moses said to them, “Let no man leave any of it until morning.”

Ex. 16:20 But they did not listen to Moses, and some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul; and Moses was angry with them.

Ex. 16:21 They gathered it morning by morning, every man as much as he should eat; but when the sun grew hot, it would melt.

- Notice that Moses is still using Aaron to speak for him to the congregation
 - Moses directs Aaron to call the nation together to see the Lord's response
 - The Lord's glory appears in the cloud and the Lord spoke to Moses with His instructions
 - He promises meat in the evening and bread in the morning
 - The meat would come in the form of quail the nation would catch in the evening when the birds fly
 - And the bread would be a unique, supernatural provision from heaven each morning
 - The bread comes with the dew of the morning and is deposited on the surface of the desert ground
 - Moses takes time to describe it to us, which suggests strongly this is a unique substance unlike anything else found in nature
 - He describes it as a fine, flake-like thing, but the word in Hebrew is used only here in all scripture and is a bit of a mystery
 - It is fine in the sense that is small and delicate
 - Round and about twice the size of a pea
 - If left out in the hot sun, it eventually melted
 - When the nation first set eyes on it, they reacted like a 3-year old shown brussel sprouts
 - They asked "What is it?"
 - The Hebrew words for "What is it?" are "man na"
 - Hence, the nation gives it the name manna
 - Moses answers by telling the nation this is the bread the Lord has provided
 - Notice the Lord always calls it bread
 - In fact, it can be fashioned and boiled or baked, just like any other grain
 - So truly the Lord is providing the nation with a grain that supplies them with the basic ingredient for bread
- It's important we dispel a myth concerning God's provision for Israel in the desert years
 - Israel didn't survive on manna alone
 - At this time they had quail in the evenings
 - They didn't always have quail, later books tell us, but they did at times
 - And they also have their livestock, which produce milk and can supply an occasional roast
 - Furthermore, the nation didn't live in isolation
 - They interact with other cultures during their wanderings
 - For example, in Deut 2 the nation trades with the Edomites while they

wander in Seir

- Through that trade, they enjoy a variety of foods to supplement their diet of quail and manna
 - So if you wondered how someone could live on a single food for 40 years, the answer is that they didn't
 - The Lord was good to provide the nation with a varied diet
 - And He did so despite their grumbling and unbelief
- The gatherings process itself was living proof of the Lord's goodness, wisdom and power
 - God instructs Israel to collect an omer of bread for each person in the household
 - An omer is 2 quarts or about 1.9 liters
 - The allotted amount of bread per person per day was 2 quarts
 - And during the gathering, some seemed to gathered more than others
 - But when the family returned home and measured out an omer for each person, they found that everyone had exactly what they needed
 - Most likely, the one who gathered too much made up for those who gathered too little
 - It all measured out evenly in the end
 - Such precision is testimony of God's handiwork and loving provision
 - Finally, having gathered their daily bread, the nation was told not to hoard it or store it for the next day
 - But in v.20 the nation ignored God's instructions
 - They stored it, or at least they tried to store it
 - If they stored it, it became worm infested and foul
 - It became pointless to store it
 - Understandably, Moses was angry with the nation when he learned of their disobedience
 - Moses knows what's at stake, and his anger is righteous
- The hoarding was a sin, but it wasn't the test God designed for the nation
 - The true test was the seventh day requirement

Ex. 16:22 Now on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, **Ex. 16:23** then he said to them, "This is what the LORD meant: Tomorrow is a sabbath observance, a holy sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning."

Ex. 16:24 So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered, and it did not become foul nor was there any worm in it.

Ex. 16:25 Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field.

Ex. 16:26 “ Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the sabbath, there will be none.”

- Moses explains that the seventh day of each week was now to be a sabbath for the nation of Israel
 - On the sixth day of each week, the nation would find it possible to gather twice as much bread from the ground
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 - This provision would last the nation for two days
 - Thus it eliminated the need to gather on the seventh day
 - Thereby giving the nation the opportunity to rest from their gathering on the seventh day
 - The test was would be whether the nation would trust the Lord’s word and remain in their homes rather than gather
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 - There would be no bread on the ground, but would the people look anyway?
 - The test was whether their hearts desired to store up treasure in heaven so much that they would trade obedience to God’s word for earthly gain
 - Since they already had enough for the day, would they desire more?
- God’s supply of bread from heaven conveys a beautiful picture of God’s provision for His children
 - First, God will meet our physical needs
 - Scripture tells us that He will meet our needs in a daily way
 - The Lord’s prayer reminds us of God’s heart meet our need for daily bread
 - Jesus taught of how the Lord knows our needs and like lilies in the field or the birds in the trees, He will ensure we have what we need
 - God’s daily provision to Israel came in a similar way
 - Secondly, that supply comes as a daily provision sufficient for our needs...never a lack nor an excess
 - God is faithful in that provision, and we can trust that each day will bring us what we need
 - Finally, when we live in faith to that promise, we relieve ourselves from much of the burden of seeking for our needs
 - When we store beyond our need or strive beyond what’s required, we are beginning to move away from living in faith
 - By our actions we reveal a lack of trust in our heart for God to bring more provision tomorrow

- Why did God institute such a supernatural provision for the nation of Israel? Bread from Heaven seems unnecessarily dramatic
 - As we said earlier, the method was part of the message
 - God was creating a powerful picture He intended to draw from later in history and scripture
 - Bread from Heaven becomes a powerful picture of Christ
 - Bread is a staple of physical life
 - Without daily food, the body eventually dies
 - By sending bread down from Heaven, the Lord established an indelible picture of Christ, the Bread of life, descending from Heaven
 - He is the staple of spiritual life
 - We must eat this spiritual food to survive spiritually
 - Moreover, Jesus gave His flesh to us as a sacrifice to ensure our spiritual life
 - John's Gospel is the quintessential book of scripture that endeavors to explain how OT pictures are fulfilled in Christ
 - Each chapter takes one of the OT pictures and connects them to our Lord's life and words
 - In this case, John 6 is the chapter is devoted to revealing Jesus as the Bread of Life
 - In the beginning of the chapter, Jesus feeds the five thousand with a few loaves of bread and fish
 - Obviously, this miracle impresses the people and leaves many desiring for more of the same
 - After the miracle, Jesus and the disciples go to the other side of the sea of Galilee
 - As He arrives on the other side, the crowd appears to greet them, having traveled all the way around the lake

[John 6:24](#) So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus.

[John 6:25](#) When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You get here?"

[John 6:26](#) Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.

[John 6:27](#) "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."

[John 6:28](#) Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"

[John 6:29](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you

believe in Him whom He has sent.”

[John 6:30](#) So they said to Him, “What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?”

[John 6:31](#) “Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘HE GAVE THEM BREAD OUT OF HEAVEN TO EAT.’”

[John 6:32](#) Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.

[John 6:33](#) “For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.”

[John 6:34](#) Then they said to Him, “Lord, always give us this bread.”

[John 6:35](#) Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.

[John 6:36](#) “But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.

- The crowd was an unbelieving crowd
 - They sought for physical food, not spiritual food
 - When Jesus points out their unbelief, they counter by saying they are willing to believe if only they receive a sign
 - Nevermind they had already witnessed the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand
 - The fact they demanded yet more signs proves what Paul taught in 1Cor

[1Cor. 1:22](#) For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;

[1Cor. 1:23](#) but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,

[1Cor. 1:24](#) but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

- These people would never believe in Jesus no matter how many signs they witnessed
 - They weren’t believing because they had not experienced the call of God and the power of God in their hearts
 - Ironically, they point to Moses and the manna as reason for their doubts
 - The reason they mention Moses and manna is to imply that if Jesus wanted them to follow Him, He should be prepared to provide bread on a daily basis
 - Moses gave Israel manna on a regular daily basis, so they require Jesus to continue turning loaves into miraculous meals as a test or condition of their allegiance
 - That’s why in v.34 they ask Jesus to always give them bread
 - In response, Jesus draws their attention to the spiritual meaning of manna, that is it

pictures God's provision of the Messiah, the Bread of life

- In v.32 Jesus says it wasn't Moses who brought the bread, but the Lord
- More over, the Lord wasn't intending to sustain Israel or the world with manna, but Himself
- And those who come to Jesus will not hunger or thirst, spiritually speaking (and ultimately physically in the kingdom)
- So the Lord delivered bread to Israel from heaven to illustrate a higher spiritual message
 - The message is that God is the provider of life, and that life can be made eternal through the provision of Jesus, the bread of life
 - Only those who accept Him will be fed with this bread
 - As Jesus told the crowd

[John 6:47](#) **“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.**

[John 6:48](#) **“I am the bread of life.**

[John 6:49](#) **“Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.**

[John 6:50](#) **“This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.**

[John 6:51](#) **“I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”**

[John 6:52](#) **Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?”**

[John 6:53](#) **So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.**

- Moving back to Exodus 16, we also notice the arrival of a Sabbath ordinance
 - This moment is also the first moment that a sabbath requirement is given to men
 - It comes before the giving of the Law formally at the mountain, but it comes as part of the instructions and ordinances that God delivers to Israel in the desert
 - These ordinances are formally conveyed in the covenant at the mountain
 - But Israel is already now being introduced to God's ordinances in small steps
 - We'll study the Sabbath more in a future lesson
 - But for now it's important to understand that observing a Sabbath day rest was not a requirement for men before this moment
 - And even now that it has arrived, God delivered it only to this group of people: the nation of Israel
- So how did Israel respond to the Lord's test?

Ex. 16:27 It came about on the seventh day that some of the people went out to gather, but they found none.

Ex. 16:28 Then the LORD said to Moses, “How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My instructions?”

Ex. 16:29 “See, the LORD has given you the sabbath; therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.”

Ex. 16:30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

- Unsurprisingly, the nation fails the test of faith
 - They go out the gather on the seventh day anyway
 - Of course they find nothing as Moses told them
 - Consider what kind of heart has God’s provision promised on a daily basis, yet still feels compelled to seek more?
 - The Lord knew their hearts, and by His test, we can see it too
 - The scripture’s testimony concerning this generation of Israel is crystal clear

Heb. 3:7 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says,

“TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,

Heb. 3:8 DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS,

Heb. 3:9 WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED Me BY TESTING Me, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS.

Heb. 3:10 “THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, ‘THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS’;

Heb. 3:11 AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, ‘THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.’”

- Meanwhile, the Lord gives Moses instructions concerning how the nation shall memorialize His faithfulness

Ex. 16:31 The house of Israel named it manna, and it was like coriander seed, white, and its taste was like wafers with honey.

Ex. 16:32 Then Moses said, “This is what the LORD has commanded, ‘Let an omerful of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see the bread that I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.’”

Ex. 16:33 Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar and put an omerful of manna in it, and place it before the LORD to be kept throughout your generations.”

Ex. 16:34 As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the

Testimony, to be kept.

Ex. 16:35 The sons of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

Ex. 16:36 (Now an omer is a tenth of an ephah.)

- Moses gives us another detail describing the nature of this mysterious bread from Heaven
 - It's like a coriander seed, white, with a taste like sweet crackers
 - Knowing it was used for making bread, we can assume it contained all the ingredients needed for making bread
 - Grain, sugar, salt, and perhaps yeast
 - It would have also contained the nutrients needed for healthy living
 - Sounds a lot like beer
 - Then Moses tells the nation to follow God's instructions by placing an omer in a jar and preserving it for generations
 - God prevented the grain in the jar was from spoiling
 - Moses then gives a few interesting details that help us date the writing of this book and all the books of Moses
 - He says that the jar was to be kept before the Testimony
 - The Testimony refers to the tablets of the Law
 - But at this point in the wanderings, the nation has yet to receive the Law
 - Clearly, Moses is writing of this event from a later point in the history of Israel
 - Furthermore, Moses comments that the manna fed Israel for 40 years in the desert
 - This statement means that Moses wrote this book near the end of the nation's time in the desert
 - Notice Moses says the provision continued until they were on the border of Canaan
 - Mose never knew anything past that point, as he died at that time
 - This tells us Moses was writing these books at the very end of his life
- The next chapter presents a similar scenario, only now the concern is water

Ex. 17:1 Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin, according to the command of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink.

Ex. 17:2 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do

you test the LORD?”

Ex. 17:3 But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, “Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”

Ex. 17:4 So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me.”

- They journey in stages, we’re told, until they reach Rephidim, a place with no water supply
 - As we’ll see in v.6, this place is immediately next to the mountain of Horeb
 - In fact, Rephedim is the encampment of Israel around the mountain
 - They will spend the better part of a year living in this location
 - Yet the location has no water supply
 - Once again, we don’t know where this place was exactly
 - Depending on where you believe the nation crossed the sea and where Mt Horeb stands will determine where you place this location
 - As I’ll show in coming weeks, I believe this location sits in the region of a mountain in NW Saudi Arabia, called Jabal al Lawz
- As the nation camps here, a familiar pattern repeats itself
 - The people want for some basic need, they grumble and blame Moses, failing to trust God to provide
 - Moses says they may be grumbling against him, but they are testing the Lord with their unfaithfulness
 - While the Lord may test our hearts, it is sin for us to test the Lord
 - To test the Lord is to ask the Lord to prove Himself, but He does not honor such tests
 - This is different than a Gideon-style test where the intent is to clearly discern God’s will
 - These people knew the Lord’s will to provide, and yet they continued to assume otherwise
 - Again, the people make ridiculous claims of coming death and blame Moses
 - So Moses asks God to save him from the people’s wrath
 - The Lord responds again with a miraculous provision in answer to Moses’ intercession

Ex. 17:5 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go.

Ex. 17:6 “Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall

strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

[Ex. 17:7](#) He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us, or not?”

- Moses is told to strike a rock at the base of Horeb
 - And from that place water poured forth for the people
 - In fact, it pours forth with such force that it creates a small lake in the desert, according to Psalm 78
 - Psalm 78 also tells us about the significance of Massah and Meribah, two more places we can't locate precisely on a map
 - In this place, the people of Israel constantly questioned whether the Lord was truly with them or not
 - How can we not be stunned by this question?
 - They saw unprecedented displays of God's power and goodness, and yet they still find reason to question God's presence
 - I wonder if they asked this question as they stooped down each morning to collect their supernatural provision of bread?
 - It's a powerful proof of the depravity and deadness of an unbelieving heart
 - Only an unbeliever could witness what they witnessed on a daily basis and still ask whether God was with them
 - The psalmist echoes this conclusion:

**[Psa. 78:15](#) He split the rocks in the wilderness
And gave them abundant drink like the ocean depths.**

**[Psa. 78:16](#) He brought forth streams also from the rock
And caused waters to run down like rivers.**

**[Psa. 78:17](#) Yet they still continued to sin against Him,
To rebel against the Most High in the desert.**

**[Psa. 78:18](#) And in their heart they put God to the test
By asking food according to their desire.**

**[Psa. 78:19](#) Then they spoke against God;
They said, “Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?”**

**[Psa. 78:20](#) “Behold, He struck the rock so that waters gushed out,
And streams were overflowing;**

**Can He give bread also?
Will He provide meat for His people?”**

**[Psa. 78:21](#) Therefore the LORD heard and was full of wrath;
And a fire was kindled against Jacob**

**And anger also mounted against Israel,
[Psa. 78:22](#) Because they did not believe in God
And did not trust in His salvation.**

- And again in Psalm 95:

**[Psa. 95:8](#) Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,
[Psa. 95:9](#) “When your fathers tested Me,
They tried Me, though they had seen My work.
[Psa. 95:10](#) “For forty years I loathed that generation,
And said they are a people who err in their heart,
And they do not know My ways.
[Psa. 95:11](#) “Therefore I swore in My anger,
Truly they shall not enter into My rest.”**