

Exodus 16:1-36

Introduction

1. As we've learned so far, when Yahweh led Israel out of Egypt toward Canaan, He didn't take them on the shortest and easiest route—that would have been to the North along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea and only a 10-day journey
2. Instead, He led them south into the desert wilderness where they would ultimately spend the next 40 years before entering the land of Canaan
3. Moses recounted Yahweh's purpose for doing this in Deuteronomy 8 (READ)
4. In what we just read, Moses mentioned three specific events Yahweh used to test Israel and they are recorded in Exodus 15-17:
 - a. We covered the first last week in 15:22-27 when Israel grumbled against Yahweh because they were thirsty and had no water
 - b. Today we are going to cover the second event in chapter 16 when Israel grumbled against Yahweh because they were hungry and had no food
 - c. Next week we will cover the third in chapter 17 when Israel grumbled against Yahweh because they were once again without water
5. Our outline for today:
 - a. Yahweh allowed Israel to experience hunger in order to test them (16:1-8)
 - b. Yahweh was gracious and merciful even though Israel failed the test, not once but twice (16:9-30)
 - c. Yahweh had Moses set aside some of the manna to serve as a reminder of how they could trust Him (16:31-36)

A. Yahweh allowed Israel to experience hunger in order to test them (16:1-8)

1. Three months into the Exodus Israel again grumbled against Yahweh (READ 16:1-3):
 - a. Back in chapter 15 Israel grumbled just three days into the journey because they were thirsty
 - b. Here, they were one month into the journey and they grumble again:
 - 1) V. 2 says it was the “**whole congregation**” that grumbled
 - 2) And notice who they were grumbling against...again--“**against Moses and Aaron**”:
 - c. This time they grumbled because they were afraid they would die of hunger:
 - 1) Israel had left Egypt with livestock, both flocks and herds (Exodus 12:37-38):
 - a) They were hungry at this point, and apparently afraid they would ultimately die of hunger in the wilderness even though according to Exodus 17 they still had the livestock
 - b) It may have been that they knew the livestock wasn't sufficient to feed all of Israel—Moses suggested this later in Numbers 11 when he suggested

to God that slaughtering all their flocks and herds, and even gathering all the fish of the sea, wouldn't be enough to feed the 600,000+ men and their families

- 2) Whatever their thinking, their grumbling was over the top:
 - a) They wished they had **“died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt”** (e.g. in the plagues)—the phrase “would that” expresses a wish or desire; most other translations render this as **“if only we had died...”**
 - b) They romanticized their lives back in Egypt as sitting by **“pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full”**—had they forgotten how brutally there were enslaved and how they had cried out to God to deliver them?
 - c) They accused Moses and Aaron of bringing them **“out into this wilderness to put this whole assembly to death with hunger.”**
2. Yahweh's response to their grumbling revealed that He allowed them to experience hunger in order to test them (READ 16:4-5):
 - a. One purpose of the test is found in vs. 4-5 and it was to determine **“whether or not they will walk in My instruction”**:
 - 1) The word **“instruction”** here is the Hebrew word torah, “law”
 - 2) This wasn't just a test to see if Israel would obey the immediate instructions He was about to give, but all His commands which He ultimately gave at Mt. Sinai
 - 3) The test would involve Yahweh providing them with bread along with instructions for exactly how and when they were to gather it:
 - a) Every morning He would **“rain bread from heaven”** but they were only allowed to gather **“a day's portion”** (4)—in other words, they weren't allowed to gather more than they could eat in a day
 - b) They were to do this for the first five days of the week, but on the sixth day they could gather enough for two days and prepare what they brought in (5)
 - b. The second purpose of the test was to remind them that Yahweh was the one who brought them out of Egypt and would provide for their needs (READ 16:6-8):
 - 1) In the evenings they would know **“Yahweh has brought you out of the land of Egypt”** (6)
 - 2) In the mornings they would **“see the glory of Yahweh”** (7)
 - 3) He would do all of this in spite of their grumbling against Him—notice that the LORD and Moses repeat that word four times (7, 8, 9, 12)
3. Takeaway: God's desire is that we learn to trust Him and walk in His ways, and He allows us to be tested in order to accomplish this:
 - a. When Israel came out of Egypt, they had to unlearn relying on the pagan gods of Egypt and learn to trust Yahweh and walk in His ways

- b. In the same way, as Christians we have to unlearn what it means to rely on ourselves and the world, and learn to trust Jesus and walk in His ways
- c. One of the ways God accomplishes this in our life is by allowing us to be tested through trials and temptations
 - 1) As we noted last week in one of our takeaways, James wrote that the testing of our faith produces endurance, and endurance ultimately leads to us being perfect and complete, lacking in nothing
 - 2) Peter wrote that trials are a necessary part of proving our faith so that it might be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus returns
 - 3) And, just as God revealed Himself to Israel through their testing, He does the same for us; Paul wrote that it was precisely because of his trial with his suffering that he came to see and experience the power of God in his own life

B. Yahweh was gracious and merciful even though Israel failed the test, not once but twice (16:9-30)

- 1. Moses and Aaron gathered Israel together and informed them of Yahweh's plan to feed them (READ 16:9-12)
- 2. Their first opportunity to pass the test came the next morning (READ 16:14-121):
 - a. In the evening He brought quail for meat, enough to completely cover the camp
 - b. In the morning, when the dew evaporated there was a **"fine flake-like thing"** completely covering the ground; it was **"fine as the frost on the ground"**
 - c. Israel had no idea what it was so Moses informed them it was the **"bread which Yahweh has given you to eat"** (6)
 - d. The test came when Moses communicated Yahweh's commands for gathering the bread:
 - 1) Each man was to gather only what those in his **"tent"** could eat in a day (e.g. those he was responsible for)—this was limited to one omer (2-3 quarts) per person
 - 2) Initially, each man did as instructed, gathering only what they needed (16:18)
 - 3) However, they disregarded Yahweh's command not to leave any until morning (RE-READ 16:19-21)
- 3. Their second opportunity to pass the test came at the end of the week (READ 16:22-30):
 - a. This second opportunity started off much better because it appears most of Israel did exactly what Yahweh had commanded:
 - 1) It was the sixth day, the day before the Sabbath when no work was allowed, so they gathered **"twice as much bread, two omers for each one"**
 - 2) They also baked or boiled enough bread for two days and set aside the excess to eat on the Sabbath
 - 3) Unlike what happened previously when Israel kept the bread overnight, this time it didn't turn foul and no worms showed up and they were able to eat it

- b. However, there were a few who chose to disobey Yahweh's command:
 - 1) Moses had explicitly told them that Yahweh said they were gather the bread six days a week but because the seventh day was the Sabbath there would be none
 - 2) But, some still went out on the Sabbath looking for bread (27)
 - 3) It wasn't until Moses had to reiterate Yahweh's commands and rebuke them that ALL of Israel obeyed and rested on the Sabbath (RE-READ 16: 30)
- 4. It's hard not to see the mercy and grace Yahweh extended to Israel throughout this first month or so in the wilderness:
 - a. They grumbled against him when they thought they were trapped at the Red Sea, but Yahweh rescued them
 - b. They grumbled against Him three days later when they were thirsty, and He gave them water anyway
 - c. They grumbled against Him here when they were hungry, and He gave them quail and manna
 - d. They then disobeyed His instructions twice, but again He was gracious and merciful
- 5. Takeaway: Like He was with Israel, Yahweh is gracious and merciful with us when we "fail the test", and the reason is because His goal is to teach us to trust and obey Him:
 - a. We are going to face trials and testing, and we're not always going to pass the test
 - b. Sometimes we'll grumble; sometimes we won't trust or obey
 - c. But, hopefully we'll learn to grumble less, trust Him more, and walk in His ways
 - d. And, I'm certain that just as He was gracious and merciful with Israel, He is with us, too

C. Yahweh had Moses set aside some of the manna to serve as a reminder of how they could trust Him (READ 16:31-36)

- 1. We learn a little more about the manna Yahweh provided:
 - a. Israel named it "**manna**" which is a form of what they said back in Exodus 16:15: "**What is it?**"
 - b. It was like coriander seeds except white, and it tasted like wafers with honey
 - c. V. 35 tells us that Yahweh provided Israel with this manna for 40 years—from the time they left Egypt until they came to the border of Canaan
- 2. Yahweh had Moses set aside some of the manna as a memorial for future generations:
 - a. One omer was to be placed in a jar and kept with the Testimony before Yahweh

- b. The testimony referred to the two tablets containing the 10 commandments which were stored in the Ark of the Covenant and placed before the Yahweh in the Holy of Holies (first in the tabernacle and then the temple)
 - c. The jar of manna was to be stored in the Ark with the two tablets and later Aaron's rod (Hebrews 9:4)
 - d. The manna was to serve as a reminder for all future generations of Israel of how Yahweh provided for Israel in the wilderness
 - e. It was the evidence of how they could trust Him
- 3. Takeaway: one of the things that fosters trust and obedience, especially through trials and testing, is remembering what the Lord has done for us:
 - a. The OT is filled with examples of memorials designed to remind God's people of what He's done for them:
 - 1) Many of the Old Testament saints like Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua and David setup stone monuments and altars to commemorate things Yahweh had done for them (almost two dozen)
 - 2) Yahweh instructed Israel to establish yearly festivals to remind them of what He did for them in the Exodus: Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Sanctification of the Firstborn
 - 3) Here He commanded Moses to set aside some of the manna to remind future generations of how He provided for Israel in the wilderness
 - 4) Each one of these highlighted not just what Yahweh did, but how they had to trust and obey the LORD
 - b. The same is true for us: remembering what God has done for us during difficult times helps us learn to trust and obey Him:
 - 1) When James wrote that we are to consider it all joy when facing various trials, notice that he said we can do so **"knowing that the testing of our faith produces endurance..."**
 - 2) Many translations render this **"because you know..."** because James calling on his readers to remember what God had done for them in previous trials
 - 3) When we remember what God has done for us previously, it not only fosters joy but helps us learn to trust and obey Him