

WILDERNESS LESSONS # 3

September 6, 2015

I. Review

A. Theme Verse

1 Co 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. (1Cor 9:24 - 10:1-13)

B. We are looking at Num 33 (also Ex 12:37 - 19:2)

There are 40 places that they "journey from", and "camp at".

C. Previous places:

Their journey beginning place was Rameses

Day 1 They leave Rameses and camp in Succoth.

Day 2 They journey from Succoth and camp in Etham.

Day 3 They journey from Etham and camp in Hahiroth

D. Third day events:

Israel at the Red Sea

1. The decision of Pharaoh: To follow up Israel and enslave them (Ex 14:1-9).
2. The despair of the people: To give up and return to Egypt (Ex 14:10-12).
3. Declaration of Moses: To look up and see the salvation of God (Ex 14:13-14).
4. The decree of God: To (Moses) to lift up the staff (Ex 14:15-18).

Israel crossed the Red Sea = The weedy sea; (To come to an end)

1. The protection (Ex 14:19-20)
2. The parting (Ex 14:21-22)
3. The perishing (Ex 14:23-31)
4. The praising (Ex 15:1-21)

The Red Sea is a picture of baptism (1 Cor 10:1-2)

Benefits of Baptism - baptism enables us to respond in faith in the following five areas:

1. Power over sin and condemnation (Rom 6:1-11; 8:1; Gal 5:24; Col 2:12-13).
2. Power over the influence of the world (Gal 6:14).
3. Power to live as a "new creation" (Rom 6:4, 10-11; Gal 2:20).
4. Power of a cleansed conscience (1Pt 3:18-21).
5. Power over the devil [demonic influence] (Col 2:9-15).

The lies Israel embraces against God

1. Num 32:15 God will abandon them in the wilderness
2. Ex 14:11 God has brought us out to die in the wilderness (Ex 16:3; 20:4; 21:5)
3. Ex 14:12 it is better to serve the Egyptians than die in the wilderness
4. Dt 9:28 the Lord has brought them out to kill them in the wilderness
5. Num 14:2 would (wish) that we had died in this wilderness!

Consequences (results) of their unbelief and rebellion

1. Num 14:35 they will die in the wilderness (Num 26:65; 27:3; Josh 5:4)
2. Num 14:29 your corpses will fall in the wilderness (Num 14:32, 33);
3. Ps 106:26 God swore that He would make them fall in the wilderness.
4. Num 14:16 this is why God killed them in the wilderness (1Cor 10:5)
5. Heb 3:17 He was angry with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness
6. Ezk 20:17 I did not annihilate them in the wilderness

II. Fourth camp - Israel at Marah (Nu 33:8-9; Ex 15:22-26)

A. The journey

1. The problem (Ex 15:22-24): After traveling three days without finding water, the people discover the oasis at Marah has only bitter and undrinkable water.
2. The purification (Ex 15:25): The Lord tells Moses to throw a tree in the water and it will become clear and cold.
3. The promise (Ex 15:26): His name is Jehovah-Rapha; "I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer."

B. Significance of this event

1. Israel travels 3 days into the wilderness of Etham; or Shur
Nu 33:8-9 - the wilderness of Etham.
Etham = Their strength, their sign

Ex 15:22-26 - the wilderness of Shur.
Shur = Rampart; as a point of observation
2. After 3 days of wilderness travel, Israel camped at Marah
Marah = bitter or bitterness.

Israel's response = they grumbled at Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"

The bitter water becomes sweet after Moses threw a tree into the water;
Even so, the cross of Jesus, applied to the bitter experiences of life, can empower them to become sweet.
3. Here we get the name Jehovah-Rapha - "the LORD your healer".
God forgives all of our sins and heals all sicknesses (Isa 53:4-5; Psa 103:3; Mat 8:17; 1Pt 2:24; Jas 5:14-16).
4. Israel complaining in unbelief (from Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament)
It would be wonderful to linger at the seaside and praise the Lord, but the believer is a pilgrim and must follow God's leading. How strange that God should lead them to a place without water. Yet God must discipline His children so that they may discover their own hearts. When the Jews did see water, they discovered that it was bitter, and immediately they complained to Moses and to God. How wicked the human heart is! We praise God one day for His glorious salvation and then complain to Him the first time we find bitter waters. This experience taught the people of Israel some valuable lessons:
 - A. About life.
Life is a combination of the bitter and the sweet, triumphs and trials. If we are following God, however, we never need fear what comes our way. And after the trial there is often a spiritual "Elim" (v. 27) where God refreshes us. We must accept the bitter waters with the sweet, knowing that God knows what is best for us.
 - B. About themselves.
Life is a great laboratory, and each experience x-rays our hearts to reveal what we really are. The waters of Marah revealed that the Jews were worldly, thinking only of bodily satisfaction; they were walking by sight, expecting to be satisfied by the world; they were ungrateful, complaining to God when trials came their way.

C. About the Lord.

God knows the need because He plans the way. He used the tree (suggesting the cross, 1Pt 2:24) to make the bitter waters sweet. He is Jehovah-Rapha, "The Lord Who Heals."

III. Elim (camp #5)

A. The journey - journeyed from Marah and camped in Elim (Num 33:9-10; Ex 15:27-16:12)

They camped at Elim (Num 33:9-10; Ex 15:27)

The murmuring of the people (Ex 16:1-12)

The provision of quail and manna (Ex 16:13-21)

The institution of the Sabbath (Ex 16:22-30)

The keeping of the memorial manna (Ex 16:31-36)

B. Significance of this event

Elim = the strong robust tree; or the strong stags;

Elim has twelve springs of water;

12 = the number of divine government (Gen 49:28; Ex 24:4; 28:15-21; Lev 24:5; Mt 19:28; Lk 6:13; Rev 12:1; Rev 21-22)

springs of water (s) = symbol of sufferings (Ex 15:23-27; 17:1-6)

Elim has seventy palm trees;

70 = The number of increase [success, prosperity]; (Gen 4:24; 11:26; 46:27; Ex 1:5-7; 15:27; 24:1-9; Num 11:25; Lk 10:1)

palm tree = fruitful[ness] (Ps 92:12; Jer 10:5)

C. The manna is a type of Jesus (from Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament)

This chapter should be read in connection with John 6, for the manna from heaven is a type of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life. It also illustrates the written Word of God on which God's pilgrim people feed from day to day (Matt. 4:4).

1. The Manna Explains Who Jesus Is

The Hebrew word manna means "What is it?" (v 15), the statement of the Jews when they could not explain this new food that God had sent. "Great is the mystery of godliness," writes Paul in 1 Tim 3:16. "God was manifest in the flesh." Consider how the manna pictures Jesus Christ:

A. His humility - It was small (v 14), which speaks of His humility; for He became a baby, and even a servant.

B. His eternal nature - It was round (v 14), which reminds us of the circle, symbol of His eternity; for Jesus Christ is eternal God (Jn 8:53-59).

C. His holiness - It was white (v 31), a reminder of His purity and sinlessness; He is the holy Son of God.

D. His sweetness - It was sweet (v 31). "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps 34:8).

Note in Num 11:4-8 that the "mixed multitude" that went with the Jews did not appreciate the taste of the manna but asked for the "leeks, onions, and garlic" of Egypt. They were not satisfied with simple manna. They "ground it, beat it, and baked it," but then it tasted like "oil" and not like honey. There is a spiritual lesson here for us; we cannot improve upon the simple Word of God (Ps 119:103).

E. His nourishment of us - It was satisfying and strengthening, for the nation lived on manna for nearly forty years. All that we need for spiritual nourishment is Jesus Christ, God's heaven-sent Bread. We are to feast on the Bread that will never leave us hungering.

2. The Manna Illustrates How Jesus Came

A. It came from heaven - It was not imported from Egypt, or manufactured in the wilderness; it was given from heaven, the gift of God's grace. Jesus Christ came down from heaven (Jn 6:33) as the Father's gift to hungry sinners. To say that Christ is "just another man" is to deny the teaching of the whole Bible that He is God's Son sent from heaven.

B. It came at night - The people gathered the manna early each morning, for the manna fell at night. This suggests the darkness of sin in this world when Jesus came. It was night when Jesus was born, for He came to be the Light of the World (Jn 8:12). And it is still night in the hearts of all who have rejected Him (2 Cor 4:1-4).

C. It came on the dew (vs. 13-14) - The dew kept the manna from being defiled by the earth (see Num 11:9). This is a type of the Holy Spirit for when Jesus came to earth, it was through the miracle ministry of the Spirit (Lk 1:34-35). Had Jesus not been born of the virgin, He could never be called "that Holy One."

D. It fell in the wilderness - This world is not a paradise. To the unsaved person, it is a wonderful place, but to the Christian on his pilgrimage to glory the world is but a wilderness. Yet Christ came to this world in love to give men life. What grace!

E. It came to a rebellious people (vs. 1-3) - What poor memories Israel had! They had been away from the bondage of Egypt only six weeks and had already forgotten God's many mercies. They murmured against Moses and against God (see 15:22-27), and they longed for the fleshly diet of the old life; yet God in His grace and mercy supplied them with bread. Verse 4 could well have read, "I will rain fire and brimstone upon those ungrateful sinners!" But, no, God proved His love toward them by raining bread upon them. See Rom 5:6-8. Someone has calculated that to supply six pints (an omer) of manna each for two million people daily would have required four freight trains of sixty cars each. How generous God is to us!

F. It fell right where they were - How easily accessible the manna was to the Jews! They did not have to climb a mountain or cross a deep river; the manna came where they were (see Rom 10:6-8). Jesus Christ is not far away from sinners. They can come to Him at any time.

3. The Manna Shows What We Must Do with Jesus Christ

A. We must feel the need - There is a spiritual hunger within that can be satisfied only by Christ (Jn 6:35). It was when the Prodigal Son said, "I perish with hunger" that he decided to go back to the father and seek forgiveness (Lk 15:17-18). Much of the unrest and sin in the world today is the result of unsatisfied spiritual hunger. People are living on substitutes and rejecting the nourishment that God freely provides (Isa 55:1-3).

B. We must humble ourselves - The manna did not fall on the tables or on the trees but on the ground, and the people had to stoop to pick it up. Many sinners will not humble themselves. They will not bend! They will not repent and turn to the Savior!

C. We must take for ourselves - The hungry Jews were not fed by looking at the manna, admiring it, or watching others eat it; they had to pick it up and eat it themselves. Christ must be received inwardly by faith if the sinner is to be saved. This is what Christ meant in Jn 6:51-58 by "eating His flesh and drinking His blood." Jn 6:63 makes it clear that Christ was not speaking about literal flesh and blood, and Jn 6:68 tells us that it was His Word that He was referring to. When we receive the Word inwardly, we are feeding on Christ, the Living Word.

D. We must do it early (v 21) - "Seek the Lord while He may be found!" is the warning of Isa 55:6 (NKJV). The manna disappeared when the sun became hot, and this suggests that the day of judgment will arrive when it will be too late to turn to Christ (Mal. 4). It also suggests that, as believers, we must get our spiritual nourishment from the Word early in the day as we meditate on it and pray.

E. We must continue to feed on Him - Once we receive Christ as Savior, we are saved eternally (Jn 10:27–29). It is important, however, that we feed on Christ to have the strength for our pilgrim journey, just as the Jews fed on the Passover lamb (Ex 12:11). How do believers feed on Christ? By reading, studying, and meditating on His Word. God invites each of us to get up early in the day and gather from the Word the precious manna to nourish our souls. We cannot hoard God's truth for another day (vv. 16–21); we must gather fresh food for each new day. Too many Christians mark their Bibles and fill their notebooks with outlines, yet never really feed on Christ.

4. Note: that the spiritual manna (Christ) accomplishes more than did the physical manna that God sent to the Jews.

The OT manna sustained physical life, but Christ gives spiritual life to all who receive Him. The OT manna was for the Jews only, but Christ offers Himself to the whole world (John 6:51). It did not cost Moses anything to secure the manna for Israel, but to make Himself available to the world, Christ had to die on the cross. How sad it is that most of the people in the world walk on Christ as if he were unused manna on the ground, rather than stooping to receive Him that they might live.

The daily gathering of the manna was God's test of Israel's obedience (v. 4), and it is still God's test for His people. Those Christians that begin their day with the Bible, gathering spiritual food, are the ones God can trust and use. Alas, many Christians still hunger for the carnal diet of the world! (v. 3) And many expect the pastor or the Sunday School teacher to gather the manna for them and "spoon-feed" them. The test of our spiritual walk is this: do I think enough of Christ and His Word to start my day gathering manna?

Joshua 5:10–12 tells us that the manna ceased when the Jews entered Canaan at Gilgal, and that they ate the "old corn of the land." The manna came down from heaven, speaking of Christ in His incarnation and crucifixion. The corn grew up out of a place of burial and death, and speaks of Christ in His resurrection and heavenly ministry. To enter Canaan means to enter into our heavenly inheritance in Christ (Eph. 1:3), and this means laying hold of the blessing we have in His resurrection, ascension, and heavenly priesthood. Too many saints "know Christ according to the flesh" (2 Cor. 5:16, NKJV) in His earthly life and ministry and have never graduated into His heavenly priestly ministry. When they do take that step, they are "eating the old corn of the land"—feeding on His resurrection power.

References used in this study:

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