

BIBLE STORY: THE BREAD FROM HEAVEN

Exodus 16:1-15, 31

Central Thoughts

- Faced with the fear of hunger in the wilderness, the children of Israel desired to return to the life and food they enjoyed in Egypt.
- The sinful flesh desires to return to the pleasures of sin and the covetous ways of unbelief.
- The Lord provided manna from heaven to sustain them on their pilgrimage that the children of Israel did not deserve.
- The Lord has given us the Sacrament of the Altar to sustain our faith and life in Christ throughout our earthly pilgrimage.
- The Lord calls us to walk by faith in His promises throughout our life, because He will provide us with every temporal and spiritual blessing that we need.

Discussion Questions

Note: The children of Israel were redeemed from Egyptian slavery by the blood of the Passover Lamb. Their exodus out of Egypt led them through the wilderness of the Sinai Peninsula, across the Red Sea into the wilderness of Midian in route to worship the Lord at Mount Sinai. Their wilderness journey was not easy, but the Lord had redeemed them and promised to sustain them.

What did the children of Israel do soon after they were delivered from the Egyptian army and brought safely through the Red Sea on dry ground?

They began grumbling and complaining to Moses and Aaron.

What did the children of Israel long for?

They wished they had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt where they had an abundance of meat and bread to eat.

What did they accuse Moses of?

They accused Moses of bringing them out into the wilderness to kill them with hunger.

What were they confessing when they accused Moses of wanting to starve them?

That the Lord who had redeemed them could not be trusted to care for them throughout their sojourn in the wilderness.

What did the Lord give to them in response to their complaint?

He gave them bread from heaven to test them, whether they would walk in His law or not.

What does it mean to walk in the Law of the Lord?

It means to trust in Him above all things and to cling to His Word.

What were the terms of His gift of bread from heaven?

They were only to gather enough for each day. Only on Friday were they allowed to gather enough for that day and the Sabbath.

What were they to learn about the Lord's faithfulness in the evening of each day?

That He was faithful to them as the Lord who brought them out of the land of Egypt.

What were they to see each morning?

They would see the glory of the Lord in providing each day's allotment of bread.

What were they to see each evening?

They would see the glory of the Lord in providing quail to eat.

What is at the heart of the glory of the Lord?

His undeserved love and faithfulness to them, even though they had murmured against Him. They received the gift of manna in the mornings and quail in the evenings.

What did the children of Israel ask about this “small round substance” that was “as fine as frost on the ground”?

They asked, “What is it?” (This is the meaning of the word “manna” — “what is it?”)

How did Moses answer their question?

He told them, “This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.”

How did the manna taste?

It was like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

What should the bread from heaven remind us of?

The body of Christ in the Lord’s Supper

To whom did Jesus provide His true body in the bread of the Lord’s Supper?

He gave His body and blood to unworthy sinners whom He calls to trust in Him.

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

How are we so often like the children of Israel?

We often grumble and complain against the Lord, accusing Him of not caring for us.

What does the Lord give to us?

He feeds us with His true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins, life, and salvation, even though we do not deserve it. By the promise of the Lord’s Supper, He calls us to “walk in His ways” and believe in Him.

Meditation on the Bible Story

We are just like the children of Israel. When our life becomes difficult during our earthly pilgrimage, we often accuse the Lord of not caring for us just as the children of Israel murmured against the Lord and complained to Moses. In undeserved love, the Lord provided them with bread from heaven that they did not deserve. In the same way, the Lord gives us not only the gift of daily bread, but also the gift of the Lord’s Supper to sustain us on our earthly pilgrimage. The Lord gave the children of Israel manna from heaven and called them to trust in Him, or “walk in His Law.” Jesus gives us the Lord’s Supper and invites us to trust in His Word and to walk by faith in His promises. As the manna from heaven sustained them in their wilderness wandering, so the Lord’s Supper sustains us with the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. The true bread from heaven, Jesus’ body and blood, strengthens our faith in Him and our love for one another. “Manna”—“What is it?” reminds us of the words of the Catechism. “What is the Sacrament of the Altar? It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.” The Old Testament manna was sweet like honey. The Lord’s Supper is sweet with God’s full and free forgiveness for all our sins.

Prayer on the Bible Story

O Lord, as You provided the grumbling Israelites with manna in the wilderness that they did not deserve, provide us with Your true body and blood in the Lord’s Supper for the forgiveness of our sins. Bring us to repentance for murmuring against You and teach us to trust in Your promises throughout our earthly pilgrimage. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.



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