

October 6, 2013

Lesson 5: Manna



Exodus 16:1-18

The whole congregation of the Israelites set out from Elim; and Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.' So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, 'In the evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your complaining against the Lord. For what are we, that you complain against us?' And Moses said, 'When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the Lord has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the Lord.'

Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, "Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining." ' And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked towards the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. The Lord spoke to Moses and said, 'I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, "At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God." '

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it?' For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, 'It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded: "Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an omer to a person according to the number of persons, all providing for those in their own tents." ' The Israelites did so, some gathering more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed.

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Manna

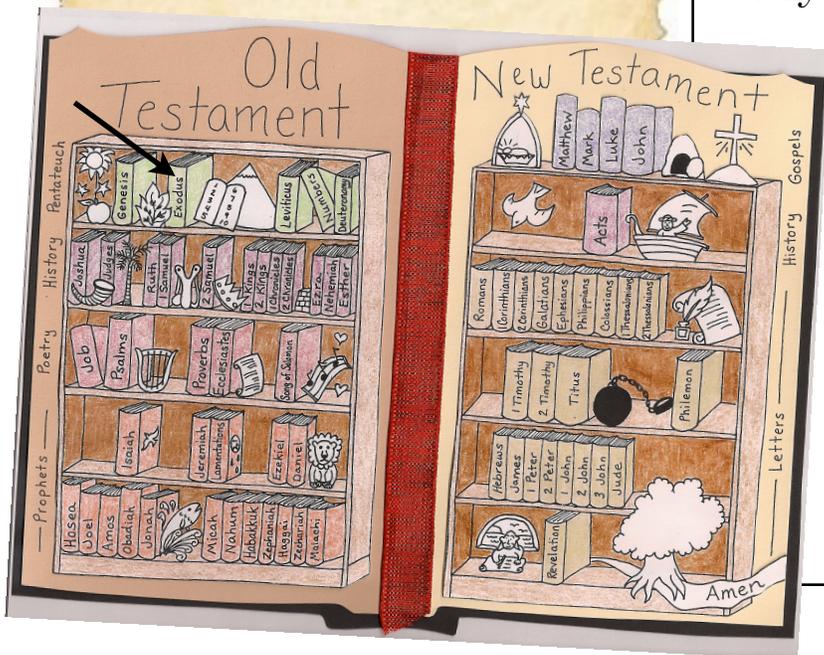
Exodus 16:1-18

“At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord Your God.”

The Big Story Truth: God hears the cries of the people and provides food. God gives all that they need from day to day.

About This Scripture Passage: Oh for the good old days! This story takes place after God (through Moses’ leadership) has freed the people from slavery in Egypt as they are on their way to the good land that God has promised to give them. The collective memory, though, of how the people cried out under the oppression of slavery is short lived. The travelers get hungry and suddenly in their minds Egypt is rosy place of abundance.

What’s interesting about this passage is what they do and they don’t do and what God’s response is. First of all, the people are hungry. But rather than addressing the God of miracles who brought them out of Egypt with this legitimate need for God to do something about it, they complain and curse the day of their liberation. But although God could curse them back as an ungrateful mess of a people not worthy of the promises he has given them, God doesn’t. God instead gives food. The food that God gives though also comes as a “test.” The food will not be able to be hoarded from day to day. The people will only be able to collect and store enough for one day’s use at a time. It won’t save from one day to the next. So the people must daily trust God. The whole journey is by the grace and provision of God, so must be the strength and resources to continue on.



Making the Connection: We pray in the Lord's prayer for "daily bread." We talk in Luther's meanings to the Apostle's Creed about God providing "all we need from day to day." It is so easy to go through life and point only to the hardships or the good that used to be, without seeing what God is providing in this moment. One of the best gifts that we can give our children is to help them recognize the good things in their lives as being gifts from God. For them to know that God is providing for them, caring for them, giving them what they need, sets the stage for them to experience the joy of living in trust of God's provision. When the Holy Spirit opens their eyes to this way that God is present and working in their lives, it also inspires a life lived in thankfulness in response for what God has done. This is more than about learning a story. It's about learning to live the whole of their lives in joyful trust and grateful response.

Where in the World Are We? The Israelites have left Egypt and are on their way to the promised land. While we don't know exactly where they were when this incident happened, some writings indicate that the Israelites received manna in the area between Elim and Rephidim, perhaps along the west side of the Sinai Peninsula.

For Your Reflection:

How do you see God providing for you today? How might you share that with your kids?

How are you responding gratefully for what God has given you? How might you involve your kids in that thankful response?

