

God Provides Manna

Key Verse: “*When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, What is it?*

For they did not know what it was.”

—**Exodus 16:15**,
*New International
Version*

Selected Scripture:
Exodus 16:1-15

WHILE THE ISRAELITES

were in slavery in Egypt, they were oppressed with “forced labor,” and the Egyptians “made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields.” (Exod. 1:11-14, *NIV*) After God miraculously delivered Israel out of Egypt, they “set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin.” God

had a special purpose and object in his leading of natural Israel in the desert wilderness. It was to teach them lessons, if rightly received, which would prepare them to enter the promised land.—Exod. 16:1; Deut. 8:2, *NIV*

“The second month after they had come out of Egypt,” while in the desert, the Israelites grumbled, saying, “If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.”—Exod. 16:1-3, *NIV*

While slaves in Egypt, the Israelites would surely not have been given time to sit around “pots of meat,” nor given “all the food” that they wanted. It appears they quickly became nostalgic for their past life, embellishing it with things which never existed. While it is important to recall and remember God’s promises and providences,

it can be dangerous to yearn for past earthly arrangements and long for the way things “used to be.” Neither should we have excessive admiration for former, but imperfect, people of the world whom we once knew.

Instead, let us be thankful for today, and for God’s daily goodness to us—“Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.” (Phil. 3:13,14, *NIV*) Instead of being nostalgic, let us be confident that God, who has begun a good work in us, will carry it on to completion. (Phil. 1:5,6) Through the Prophet Isaiah, God instructs us to “forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.”—Isa. 43:18,19, *NIV*

Because they lacked faith in God, the Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron. They forgot how his providences had preserved them from the plagues in Egypt and brought them safely through the Red Sea. They were unable to realize that the Lord would not let them starve to death in the wilderness. God told Moses that he “heard the grumbings of the Israelites” and would give them meat to eat in the evening and they would “be filled with bread” in the morning.—Exod. 16:11-12, *NIV*

The next morning, on the ground surrounding the Israelites’ camp, were “thin flakes like frost.” When the Israelites saw it, they asked, “What is it?” Moses answered, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat.” The Israelites called the bread manna. Each morning, everyone was to gather as much as they needed for that day. On the sixth day of the week they were to gather twice as much, because no manna would appear on the Sabbath day.—vss. 13-31, *NIV*

Just as the Israelites would have died in the wilderness if they had not gathered the manna each day, each follower of Christ is dependent upon the Word of God. Only by partaking of it regularly—daily—by reading and studying it, and personally applying it in our daily life, will we become strong in faith and continue the work of our sanctification.—Ps. 119:97-105; John 17:17 ■