

THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

DATE: November 23, 2014

SUBJECT: THE TRAVELS OF THE CHOSEN CHILDREN OF ISRAEL: God's Provision of Food and Drink

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 15:22-27; 16:1-36; 17:1-7

AIM: To see that God is faithful to supply our daily needs. Therefore, we need not be anxious nor complain and sin against God.

MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM: Matthew 6:31-33 (Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed? For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.); Philippians 4:6, 19 (In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;... And my God will fill your every need according to His riches, in glory, in Christ Jesus.); 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.)

SUGGESTED SONGS: #5 (Grumblers), #6 (His Sheep Am I), #6405 (Bible Story Songs Matthew Vol. 1: Song 23 – Seek First, Seek First); #93 (Jesus Loves the Little Children); #8305 (BSS Moses Vol. 2: Song 5 – Oh, the Wilderness was Scorching); #8306 (BSS Moses Vol. 2: Song 6 – Now We're Leaving Marah); #8308 (BSS Moses Vol. 2: Song 8 – Do All Things Without Murmuring); #8310 (BSS Moses Vol. 2: Song 10 – The People Now in the Wilderness); #8311 (BSS Moses Vol. 2: Song 11 - Manna, Manna is All Around); #8312 (BSS Moses Vol. 2: Song 12 – Bread from Heaven)

BACKGROUND/REVIEW: Last week we saw how the Lord saved the children of Israel from Pharaoh and his armies by bringing them safely through the Red Sea. This week they begin their travel in the wilderness on their way to the good land. (*Note to serving ones:* For this lesson, it may be helpful to bring a map to show where the children of Israel went and to help them visualize the travels.)

CONTENT:

Israel at Marah and Elim (Exodus 15:22-27). Moses moved Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah, there was water, but they could not drink it because the waters of Marah were bitter (Marah means "bitterness"). The people murmured against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Moses cried out to Jehovah, and Jehovah showed him a tree; and Moses cast the tree into the bitter waters, and the waters became sweet! Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; and they encamped there by the waters.

God's Provision of Food (Exodus 16:1-36). Then the children of Israel journeyed from Elim, and came to the wilderness of Sin, which is a place between Elim and Sinai. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness. The children of Israel complained that if they had only died in Egypt, when they sat by the fleshpots (a pot or vessel containing meat), when they ate bread to the full, it would have been better than being in the wilderness starving. They blamed Moses and Aaron and said, "for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole congregation with hunger."

Then Jehovah said to Moses, "I will now rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day... And on the sixth day when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily." God was going to send bread from heaven!

So Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "In the evening you will know that Jehovah has brought you out from the land of Egypt; And in the morning you will see the glory of Jehovah, for He hears your murmurings against Jehovah. And what are we, that you murmur against us?" Moses continued, "*This you will see* when Jehovah gives you flesh to eat in the evening, and bread to the full in the morning; for Jehovah hears your murmurings which you murmur against Him. And what are we? Your murmurings are not against us but against Jehovah." Then Moses told Aaron to tell the people to come near before Jehovah, because He had heard their murmuring. As Aaron spoke to the whole assembly of the children of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and there the glory of Jehovah appeared in the cloud. And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, At twilight you will eat flesh, and in the morning you will be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am Jehovah your God."

That evening quails (a kind of bird) came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. And when the layer of dew lifted, there upon the surface of the wilderness were fine round flakes, fine as the frost on the earth. When the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" Moses told them that this was the bread which Jehovah had given to them to eat. Moses also told them Jehovah's specific instructions about what to do with the bread. The people had to gather it, each one according to his eating; take an omer (a Hebrew unit of dry measurement) a head, according to

the number of persons, each one for those who are in his tent. And that's what they did. Some gathered much and some gathered little, according to his eating. But Moses also told them, "Let no man leave any of it until the morning." But they did not listen to Moses, and some men left part of it until the morning; and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was indignant with them.

The children of Israel gathered it morning by morning, each one according to his eating; and when the sun became hot, it melted. But on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one, because the next day was Sabbath, the day of complete rest. Moses told them there would be no bread provided on Sabbath. On the Sabbath morning, the extra portion that the people gathered did not breed worms nor stink. But some people did not listen. On the seventh day, some of the people still went out to gather, and they found none. And Jehovah said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? See, Jehovah has given you the Sabbath, therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Let each of you stay in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." So the people rested on the seventh day.

So Israel called its name manna, and it was like coriander seed, white; and its taste was like wafers made with honey. The children of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

God's Provision of Drink (Exodus 17:1-7). Then the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin and encamped in Rephidim, as Jehovah commanded. But there was no water to drink. Therefore the people contended with Moses and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why are you contending with me? Why do you test Jehovah?" So the people thirsted there for water, and the people murmured against Moses and said, "For what reason did you bring us up out of Egypt; to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to Jehovah, saying, "What shall I do with this people? A little more, and they will stone me." And Jehovah said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the River, and go. I will be standing before you there upon the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it so that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel and because they tested Jehovah, saying, "Is Jehovah among us, or not?"

APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:

- **We should remember what the Lord has provided for us, and pray when we have a need.** The children of Israel seemed to easily forget what God did, and forget to pray and trust the Lord. Because the Lord was faithful, time and time again, to supply all their needs, the children of Israel should not have been anxious. Likewise, in time of need, we should not be anxious. The Lord knows that we have daily needs. He said, "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we be clothed?'" For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things...." (Matt. 6:31-33). The Lord can fill whatever need we have, just as the Apostle Paul said, "And my God will fill your every need..." (Phil. 4:19a).
- **When we complain to our parents, we are actually complaining against God.** God heard the children of Israel murmuring and complaining against Moses and Aaron. When we murmur and complain against our parents or our teachers, the Lord hears us and is displeased. When we murmur and complain, it means that we are not happy with what the Lord arranged for us. Perhaps we may complain about what our parents provided for our dinner, or complain about the clothes they get for us. We should be thankful for what the Lord provided.
- **We should not be greedy or wasteful.** Moses told the people, as God commanded, to take only according to his eating. But some of the children of Israel took too much and left the bread until the morning. It bred worms and stank, and Moses was upset with them. When we take food on our plate, we should not take so much that we end up wasting and throwing it out.
- **We should listen to instructions carefully.** Moses told the people, as God commanded, to gather twice as much on the sixth day of the week, since the next day was Sabbath and there would be no bread that day. But some people did not listen, and they went out on Sabbath to gather, but found no bread. We need to follow instructions when our teachers tell us to do something for homework, or our parents ask us to take care of a chore. Otherwise, we may end up making a bad mistake.

Adapted from *Bringing Children from Adam to Christ in God's Economy*—Vol. 4, *The Travels of the Chosen Children of Israel*, Lesson 3, and from the Church in New York City's Children's meeting lessons: 11/12/95; 4/5/98, 4/14/02; 11/16/03; 11/22/09