

# OpenTheo

## Exodus 16:4 - 17:16



### Exodus - Steve Gregg

Exodus 16:4-17:16 tells the story of the Israelites receiving manna from God in the wilderness, highlighting the concept of voluntary sharing and dependency on God's provision. The text also explores the importance of obedience to God's commands and the challenges of living solely on God's provision for 40 years. Sabbath-keeping and the significance of Moses holding his hand up with the rod of God during the battle with the Amalekites are also discussed, with the latter believed to signify a posture of prayer and supplication.

### Transcript

We're picking up the story again at Exodus chapter 16. We only got through the first three verses, really, and we're seeing the second time that the children of Israel murmured against Moses this time. They always attribute the worst, you know, motivation, I guess, to Moses and Aaron, that they brought them out there to kill them and so forth.

And the problem they have right now is they're wondering where the food is going to come from. At the end of chapter 15, they were challenged in the area of adequate drinking water. Now, both food and water would be an ongoing concern day by day in the desert.

It's an ongoing concern anywhere, although we're not as much aware of how much of a concern it is when there's already supply. But if you go out in the desert and you soon realize that water is in short supply, food is in short supply, and the appetite of the crowd is not in short supply, and you're going to have to really deal with some real practical issues. What's interesting about this is that God shows himself to be a God of practical issues.

He provides water, he provides food. He's not just a religious figure. The gods of the heathen never provided anything for the heathen.

They didn't have any power to do so, but God is the one who cares for his people, like a husband cares for his wife or a father cares for his children. And so we'll see the

Israelites have not learned that yet. They have not really seen yet, as they will every day for the rest of their lives, this particular generation anyway, that God can provide food on a daily basis for them.

In verse four, then Yahweh said to Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you and the people should go out and gather a certain quota every day that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. Now, notice how often he wants to find ways to test them. This time he's not going to test.

Well, I guess it is a test of their faith, but it's a test of their obedience. I suppose the test of obedience is the same thing as a test of faith, because the reason people disobey is because they don't trust God. The test in this case is going to be that they're supposed to gather only enough food for one day, only as much as they will eat in one day, even though there's extra food laying around.

And they might be tempted to say, well, I'm going to need food tomorrow, too. So I think I'll take a little extra home. God tells them not to do that, not to keep it overnight.

And so this is going to be a test of their obedience and of their faith. He says it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, at evening, you should know that Yahweh has brought you out of the land of Egypt and in the morning you shall see the glory of Yahweh for he hears your murmuring against the Lord.

But what are we meaning, Moses and Aaron, that you murmur against us? Also, Moses said, this shall be seen when the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and in the morning bread to the full. For the Lord hears your murmurings, which you make against him. And what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord, which is a good thing for them to keep the Israelites mindful of.

It's easy to blame the visible messenger when it's actually God who's the one guiding the messenger. Now, not all preachers can say the same thing Moses said. Some preachers, you know, they would say, well, you can't murmur against the leadership of the church because that's murmuring against the Lord.

Well, if the leadership of the church is as clearly called and directed and prophetically inspired as Moses was, I guess that'd probably be true. Whoever is speaking the word of the Lord to you, if you murmur against them for what they are speaking, then you're murmuring against the Lord. It can't be assumed, however, that every preacher who's ever stood in a pulpit has the same commission from God and the same faithfulness to God and the same revelation from God that Moses had.

It is true that to murmur against Moses was to murmur against God because God was

giving Moses step by step instructions and Moses was simply communicating them. To the degree that a minister does that, then it remains true of that situation as well. But it's even when a minister does communicate the word of God to people, if people don't like the message, they often will murmur against the messenger.

And that's what these people are doing. And Moses is trying to remind them, listen, these are not my decisions. I didn't make myself your leader.

I didn't lead you out here in the wilderness. I mean, it may look like I did, but I myself was following God and you followed me because you believed I was following God. So whatever complaints you have, you can file them with God, not against me.

Then Moses spoke to Aaron, say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, come near before the Lord, for he has heard your murmurings. Now it came to pass as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. Now, that was common.

I mean, they saw the cloud on a regular basis, but apparently the glory of God was blazing in the cloud in such a way that was more visible than it normally would be during daytime. And the Lord spoke to Moses saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel speak to them, saying at twilight you shall eat meat and in the morning you should be filled with bread and you shall know that I am the Lord, your God. So it was that quails came up at the evening and covered the camp and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp and when the layer of dew lifted there on the surface of the wilderness was a small, round substance as fine as frost on the ground.

So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, what is it for? They did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, this is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat. This is the thing which the Lord has commanded.

Let every man gather it according to each one's need. One over for each person, according to the number of persons. Let every man take for those who are in his tent and the children of Israel did so and gathered some more and some less.

So when they measured it by Omer's, he who gathered much had nothing over and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need. Now, let's stop there for a moment because we've read several verses and I want to talk about some of these things.

We see that quail came up in the evening in verse 13. We read nothing more about the quail after that here, but there is another instance, I think, in the book of Numbers that quails come and there's and they become more the focus of that particular story. The people are murmuring against Moses.

There's not enough meat. And so God brings quail and they eat so much of it that they they actually get sick and vomited out. God said he's going to give him so much meat will come up through their noses.

And God was obviously angry at them on that occasion. On this occasion, he didn't seem to be angry. He just I mean, he just made a promise.

You're going to eat meat tonight and you'll have bread in the morning. And so the quails came up, quails migrate across that region from Africa into the Middle East seasonally. I believe it's in the spring that they do so, as I understand, or the early summer, usually the spring.

So this is probably a migration and it would have to be probably millions of birds now because quails have fairly heavy bodies for their wings. They do get tired and they don't fly very high off the ground usually. And especially when they get tired, they sometimes will bump into things and they'll fall on the ground.

They can't get back on the air just because they're too exhausted. If they stay in the air, they can stay in the air. But they they they lose altitude because of their fatigue.

And so these birds have been bumping into the tents and just falling on the ground and kind of wallowing around, unable to get up. And people just pick up the quails and eat them. And so God sent them a lot of protein that night.

And there's although he sent manna every day, we don't read that he sent quails every night. In fact, he didn't because they complained later and he sent them another batch of quails at a later time. But the quails were special and only mentioned briefly here.

The focus here is on the manna, because that became the daily provision for Israel through their wilderness wanderings. And it's described as bread that God gave them from heaven. But really, it's actual substance.

What it was is not really known. There are those who try to give a natural explanation for it, who say, well, there's some kind of pods or some kind of sap or something that comes out of some of the bushes there from the Tamarisk trees, especially that there's either an insect that emits something or there's something comes out of the trees that can be eaten. And they say, maybe this is what it was.

And yet it doesn't fit the description. For one thing, it appeared in the morning, every morning. And then when the sun came up, it kind of evaporated and it couldn't be held overnight without rotting, as we shall see, unless it was a Sabbath.

And then it could be I mean, this is definitely a supernatural kind of a provision. It's not some natural thing. It is bread that God said he reigned from heaven, so it clearly did not come out of the bark of trees.

He said he would reign bread from heaven. And that's where it apparently came from. And they called it manna because when they saw it in verse 15, they said, what is it? And manna means what is it? That's actually the meaning of the word manna.

What is it? So that's what they called it. And Moses said, well, what is it? It's the bread which the Lord has given you to eat. So he said, everyone go out and gather one omer per person.

An omer was a measurement that was. Well, we're told near the end, if you wonder how much an omer is, we were given exact information in verse 36. Now, an omer is a tenth part of an ephod.

So now, you know, you can kind of picture it, right? It's a tenth part of an ephod. That was one of my favorite verses, you know, when when people would say, what's your favorite verse in the Bible? I say, X is 1636. That must be a really profound one.

And the King James is now an omer is a tenth part of an ephod. People wonder how deep meaning was being seen in that. There's no deep meaning.

It's just a measurement. An omer actually is an omer is about two liters, a little more than two quarts. And therefore, it was sufficient to they could apparently grind it and bake it in the bread and it would provide enough bread for one stomach for the day.

And so they were to gather one omer per person in their household. And not more now, what's not really easy to understand. And in verse 17, some gathered more and some gathered less.

So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing over and he who gathered little had no lack. I don't know. There's two ways you could see that.

I think one way is more reasonable than the other. The one way that is less reasonable seems to be that even if a person gathered a whole bunch extra when he got home, there was only only an omer per person. And he had no extra.

And those who didn't gather very much when he got home, there was an omer. They had no lack. But I don't think that's true because the Bible does go on to say that some people tried to keep some over.

So some probably had gathered more than an omer and found to be so. But when it says when they measure it with an omer, those who gathered much had no extra and those who gathered little had no lack. I think what it means is that they actually must have pooled the substance.

They got every morning, everyone gathered as much as they could, and they'd bring it probably to distribution centers where it was it was pooled into a big container of some

sort. And people were measured out a ration of an omer per person in the house. And when the last person had gotten his, the bin was empty so that there wasn't any extra or any too little.

And it didn't matter whether someone had the ability to gather more than someone else. They didn't end up eating more. Everyone ate essentially the same amount.

Now, this, of course, sort of seems like a communistic system, but it provided actually a model for the voluntary economy of the early church. And Paul quotes this verse. Chapter 16, verse 18, in 2 Corinthians 8, 15, where he's actually talking about how the Christians should view their economic responsibilities toward each other.

In 2 Corinthians, chapter eight and chapter nine, those two chapters together, Paul is urging the Corinthians to generously help supply the needs of some Christians in Judah who were facing famine conditions and were poor and the Corinthians were not facing such conditions. So Paul is urging the Corinthians and other Gentile churches to take a collection to be carried to the Jewish Christians. And he said in 2 Corinthians 8, 13, for I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but by an equality that now at this time, your abundance may supply their lack that their abundance also may supply your lack that there may be equality.

As is written, he who gathered much had nothing left over and he who gathered little had no lack, quoting from this story of the manna. And he's indicating that the way that God provided. In the wilderness of the people of Israel, provide the model for how we're supposed to understand God's provision for people in the church.

Now, we found and noticed earlier that Paul in 1 Corinthians 10 speaks about the escape from Egypt and the traveling in the wilderness of the children of Israel as a type of our experience. Remember, he said all of our fathers were baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea and they ate the same spiritual food and they drank the same spiritual water. What he's saying is that these experiences of the children of Israel correspond to our experiences of being baptized and feasting on Christ and the Holy Spirit, the living bread and the living water.

And Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10, 6, these things happen to them as a type of us. So Paul clearly views this whole period of wandering in the wilderness as a time where God was doing things in Israel that have correspondence to what he does spiritually with us. Now, he did set up a system where everybody shared what they gathered.

That was sort of a communistic system, but what it symbolizes is something spiritual for us, for them. It was that way. Now, by the way, God could do that without it being comparable to a modern communistic state.

Why? Because everything belonged to God. He's the one who gave them everything

directly. He sent it from heaven to them and said, you get this much.

Everyone gets the same amount. You can gather as much as you want, but everyone's going to get the same amount because that's what I'm providing. It's my stuff.

I'm distributing it as I wish. See, the difference between that and a modern communist state is the state that does the distributing. It's not their stuff.

They don't have any ownership of it. God could tell anyone he wants to give whatever he wants them to give to someone else. That's his business because it's all his.

And so he could do this in Israel without in any sense providing something like an exact parallel with modern socialist or communistic states or or any way that a modern state would be similar to this, because God isn't running those states. He was running Israel. He was the king.

But he was running Israel's economy this way in the wilderness, as Paul would suggest, as a type for us. That the antitype, our experience, is spiritual, not it's not a governmental economic system. Paul makes it very clear that the Corinthians ought to give something to the poor saints in Jerusalem.

He doesn't tell them how much to give. In fact, he specifically tells them to give as God has prospered them to give according to what their hearts dictate. And therefore, in fact, you can see it in the verses just before the ones we read in 2nd Corinthians.

He says in chapter eight, verse 10, in this I give my advice. It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began. And we're desiring to do a year ago, but now you also must complete the doing of it, that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there may be a completion out of what you have, for if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has and not according to what one does not have.

Now, what he's saying is that you if you're you do this out of a willing heart, you may not have much to give. You may not be able to give as much as someone else. You may not have gathered much and someone else has gathered much, but it's your willingness of heart that God's looking at, not how much you give.

So that it's really a matter of voluntary giving out of a willing heart, and those who have gathered much should consider that they have much more to give and those who've gathered little, obviously less can be required or expected of them. But Paul points out that in the wilderness, it was sort of the same. There were some people who had the ability to gather a lot because they were strong and young and and fast moving.

Others probably old and and slow moving and couldn't gather quite as much. But after everyone had gathered all that they could gather, there was a distribution such that those who gathered a lot didn't have extra because God didn't provide extra for them to

have. If they gathered much, the extra they gathered was for those who gathered too little.

But Paul, I think, is speaking from the assumption that God provides the body of Christ, all that the body of Christ needs. Although, of course, it is conceivable that some members of the body of Christ poured more than is their share so that other members don't seem to have as much as they need. And Paul is saying that the Jewish Christians in Judea don't they can't gather much right now.

There's a famine in their land. You, Corinthians, have gathered plenty, and therefore you should consider that God has given you extra so that you can make up for the deficit of those who can't gather as much right now. And when they can gather more and you can't gather as much, then their surplus will supply for you, he said.

Now, what's interesting about this is that the Corinthians very possibly would never meet any of these Christians in Jerusalem. They were living on the other side of the Mediterranean from them, and they didn't travel as much as we do these days. Some did, but mostly certainly the people they'd be helping would be people they don't even know.

They weren't just helping people in their own church. They're people helping people in a church in another country who were not people they had personal relations with. But they had a concept, the body of Christ, that the body of Christ in this geographical area has more than the body of Christ has in this other geographical area.

And God sees one body worldwide. And as Christians in this area have gathered more, there are Christians in another part of the world that can't gather so much and that the surplus gathered by rich Christians should be shared. But not not with the sense of it being mandatory, not some governmental system that takes it from you against your will and distributes it, but rather out of love.

That's that's what makes the Christian community different. It is something of a communal mentality, but it's entirely voluntary. It's not something that anyone can judge another person about or impose on another person about.

It's a matter of every man's conscience to steward as God gives him. And so Paul sees this arrangement of the distribution of the manna as a picture of kind of God's overall arrangement for supplying enough for all the Christians worldwide. So long as those who gather much recognize that they've been able to gather much so they could assist those who can't gather so much, rather than to say, oh, God bless me.

I'm you know, God wants me to be rich, richer than other people. That's between an individual and God to decide how much God may wish for that. But Paul is saying we should be mindful that those who have extra.



Should be mindful of those of those who can't gather much. There are people in some parts of the world, they no matter how hard they work, they're not going to get much food out of the ground. And Moses said in verse 19, let no one leave any of it until morning.

Notwithstanding, they did not heed Moses, but some of them left part of it until morning. And it was breadworms and stank and Moses was angry with them. So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need.

And when the sun became hot, it melted. Now, why would they keep some till morning? Obviously, they would keep some till morning because they weren't sure whether there'd be more in the morning. Even if they only took an omer home from the distribution, they might say, well, I'm not getting my whole omer today because I'm going to be hungry tomorrow, too.

And I don't know if this is going to happen tomorrow, too. I mean, God seems to be saying it's going to happen, but I have a belief when I see it. Well, that was lack of faith on their part to hold it over.

Because basically they're saying, OK, I've seen that God provides today, but I'm not really sure he's going to provide tomorrow, which is kind of an irrational position to take. But again, we should all be familiar with it. It's human nature.

And when Jesus taught us to pray, he allowed us to pray for food. But he said we should pray, give us this day our daily bread. Now, most of us do our shopping once a week or something like that.

So we obviously buy food for a week at a time or more. And I don't think that's wrong. That's the way our economy works.

It would be a very poor stewardship of our time to run down to the store every day and buy the day's food. I don't think there's any law that Christ is making here that we're only allowed to have at one time the food for a single day on hand. But when it comes to praying for God to provide and of course, most Christians throughout history have not been like us who could just walk down to the supermarket and pick up a week's worth of groceries, stick them in a refrigerator and have them stay fresh.

I mean, most people didn't have that luxury. And so many Christians have had to just trust God day by day for their provision. There have always been Christians who didn't have to do that.

There's always been Christians who had more than others have had. But Jesus is saying that if you if you wanted to ask God to provide for you, ask him for what you need today, not for the week or for the year or for the decade, but for the day, because then you have to come back to him the next day and ask for the food for that day, too. And that's

what Jesus seems to think our prayers should be.

I think it is helpful. I don't think it's mandatory, but I think it's helpful to go through times where you have to come back to God every day for the needs of the day, helpful to your relationship with God. I mean, it keeps you in a state of conscious dependency, which I think is what he wants us to be in.

That's why he does things like give Paul a thorn in the flesh. So he'd have to depend more on God because he can't depend on his own strength so much. And in whatever ways we can depend on God more in that in those ways, God will be seen more intervening in our lives.

George Mueller was famous for what we usually call living by faith in the sense that he just trusted God to provide for him and all the orphans that he was supporting. And it was pretty tight at times. There were times when they really only received their daily bread or sometimes only the bread for a single meal in the morning.

And they'd have to trust him for the next meal's bread to come from somewhere else. And George Mueller had a policy of not letting anyone know what his needs were. Now, he knew that that was not something mandatory, that he knew that Christians are not forbidden to tell people our needs.

But he chose to do that way because he believed that God would keep his promises and that it would keep him dependent on God in a way that he would not be as dependent on God if he was letting people know his needs. And so he practiced that for over 70 years until his death at age 93, I think it was. But when I went into ministry, I was influenced by Mueller in this respect.

I realized that if I was seeing miracles all the time, then I could never feel very far from God. You know, when you see if I had a healing ministry and everywhere I went, God was healing people or doing miracles. You know, the presence of God would be hard to ignore.

You'd have this this vital sense of nearness of God. I was having to see in his supernatural activity. But I don't have that kind of ministry.

I don't have a healing ministry. I don't see miracles like that very often. And it seemed to me that one of the ways to keep God, you know, vitally in my thoughts is to be continually in need of him.

And I think that's the lesson that God was trying to teach Israel here. And the more we need God, the more we will come to him and the more we will see him respond. And the more we see him respond, the more we'll have a sense of an ongoing interactive relationship with a real person, as opposed to really having everything kind of set up for us for the long term and just trying to make ourselves believe that there's a real God out

there somewhere that we don't really have any sense of need for.

But we just it's an article of our faith that there is such a God. Now, it doesn't always have to be in economic circumstances. God will lead different people different ways.

Mueller was led a certain way. I personally feel like I've been led a certain way. I don't think everyone's going to be led that same way, because even if even if people are in very different economic circumstances, God has his ways of making us dependent through sickness and disasters and other things, too.

But the point is that God does have an interest in people having an awareness of their dependency on him. That's what makes our prayers more vital. I think one of the reasons we don't see more serious and faith-filled prayers in the American church than we do is because we don't see an awful lot of crisis in America.

When I moved to Santa Cruz back five years ago or so, I started a Bible study. A friend of mine who was a pastor said I could use his church. I think it was Thursday night.

So we started a Bible study there. And I announced on the radio that every Thursday night we're going to have this Bible study. And if anyone wants to join me in praying for revival, I'm going to go there an hour early to pray with anyone who shows up.

And I announced that every week for a year. There was usually one person who showed up besides me. And we prayed for revival for an hour before the meeting.

But I thought so many Christians say they'd love to see a revival. But when it comes to taking an hour to pray for it, of course, I had to assume that maybe some Christians are praying in other places. They don't have to be right where I am for me to be praying.

I would have liked to see a larger interest because people, a large number of people came to the Bible study, but not very many people came to pray. I had to assume it must not be that they're in crisis when people see it as a crisis. They call out on God when the people are comfortable and secure.

They don't have such an urgency about prayer. I think that's the case with our country in general. We're pretty secure and we're pretty comfortable.

And our prayers, if we don't neglect them all together, are pretty perfunctory. And yet when you're really in desperation and you really sense your need for God, then the prayers have a life to them, a quality to them that they don't at other times. And God wanted to keep Israel on that edge of needing to cry out to God or to trust in God or to look to God every day.

And he didn't let them store up any manna even overnight. He wanted them every day to trust him for a new provision. And while he may not require every Christian

throughout history to live that way, I'm sure his concern remains that we should be aware of our need for him every day.

And there are certain circumstances like this that he may ordain. That will help to keep our sense of total dependency upon him alive. Verse 22, And so it was on the sixth day that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each person, and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.

Then he said to them, This is what Yahweh has said. Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to Yahweh. Bake what you will bake today and boil what you will boil and lay up for yourselves all that remains to be kept until morning.

So they laid it up until morning as Moses commanded, and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. So the substance naturally would rot and have maggots in it if it was kept overnight. But one day a week, it didn't do that.

The day when God actually wanted them to store it up overnight, the stuff didn't rot. And Moses said, Eat that today, for today is the Sabbath to the Lord. Today you will not find it in the field.

Six days you shall gather it. But on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, there will be none. Now, it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none.

And Yahweh said to Moses, How long do you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? Now, it's not that Moses was refusing either. When God said to Moses, How long do you refuse? He's saying this is the oracle to tell the people you say to the people, how long do you refuse? But he spoke it to Moses because Moses is the prophet. Or else it may be that he's kind of equating Moses as the leader of the people.

He's speaking to him as if he is the people. In any case, God was angry that these people went out looking for more men on the seventh day. People, it seems like no matter what instructions God gave, however clear, however simple, there's always some people who just have to test it, have to push it, have to see if they can get away with disobedience.

It says, See, for Yahweh has given you the Sabbath, therefore, he gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place. Let no one go out of his place on the seventh day.

So the people rested on the seventh day and the house of Israel called its name manna. And it was like white coriander seed and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. It doesn't sound bad.

Eventually, of course, eating the same thing every day, the people did get a little tired of it. And eventually they complained about the lack of variety in their diet. But it wasn't an

unpleasant meal.

And apparently it was capable of giving total nutrition to sustain a whole nation on virtually nothing else. They may have scavenged some herbs here and there in the field as they went by. And like I said, they may have hunted a few rabbits.

Well, they couldn't eat rabbits because that was made unlawful in the law that was given. But they may have hunted some birds or whatever around to eat. But they didn't eat much else but manna for the next 40 years.

Now, this was the first time that God even introduced the idea of keeping a Sabbath. It's true that way back in Genesis chapter two, it says that God sanctified the seventh day and made it holy. But it's not until this point that God ever commands anybody to do anything different on the Sabbath day than they did on other days.

He had made it a holy day, but he hadn't given any instructions about it until now. And so the people are told to keep the Sabbath. It's interesting.

This is actually before the Ten Commandments are given. And actually, because of that fact, sometimes it is thought that Sabbath keeping was a practice of people prior to the giving of the law. Well, in this case, it was practiced just prior to the giving of the law, but it's only practiced, as far as you know, among Israel.

And it was practiced because they were Israel. God was going to use Sabbath keeping as a special emblem or sign of his covenant with them. And he makes that clear to them in Exodus 31, which we've looked at on other occasions in other connections.

But in Exodus chapter 31, verse 14, God says to them, you should keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death. For whoever does any work on it, that person should be cut off from the people.

Work should be done for six days. But the seventh is the Sabbath of rest to you. Holy to the Lord.

Whoever does any work on that Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore, the children of Israel should keep the Sabbath to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever.

In six days, the Lord made the heavens and the earth. And on the seventh day, he rested and was refreshed. Now, he says the keeping of the Sabbath is a sign between God and the children of Israel.

And so we find that the first time God commands anyone to keep the Sabbath, it is the children of Israel after he had brought them out of Egypt, after they had become

obligated to be his people, although they had not made a commitment to be his people specifically in word until later on in chapter. Nineteen. But the Sabbath becomes for them the sign of God's covenant with them.

The Old Testament. Verse 32, Then Moses said, This is the thing which Yahweh has commanded. Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread which I have fed you in the wilderness when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.

And Moses said to Aaron, Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it and lay it up before the Lord to be kept for your generations. So they took one omer in a pot and eventually this pot was placed apparently in the Ark of the Covenant. However, at this point, the Ark of the Covenant had not been made.

So they just kept the pot of manna. They laid it up eventually before the Lord. I'm not sure where we're laying it before the Lord meant before there was a tabernacle, but that was soon going to be changed.

By the way, this pot of manna is said in the Septuagint to have been a golden pot. The Masoretic text does not mention it was gold, but the Septuagint translation calls it a golden pot. I mention that because in Hebrews 9, 4, it also refers to the golden pot of manna.

The writer of Hebrews, of course, got his information apparently from the Septuagint. So the Septuagint in this case might preserve the original reading of Exodus, where the Masoretic text might have dropped that part out. At least the writer of Hebrews trusted the Septuagint on this to make it a golden pot.

It's possible the Hebrew text once said that, too. And when the Septuagint translator translated the Hebrew they worked from might have said that. So they translated golden pot in the Septuagint.

But those older manuscripts of the Hebrew have been lost now. So this just is one of those matters that illustrates certain textual issues that have come through transmission of the text through centuries. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid up before the testimony to be kept.

And the children of Israel ate manna 40 years until they came to an inhabited land. They ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. And it says now an omer is one tenth of an ephah.

Now, when it says they ate until they came to an inhabited land, meaning the promised land, they came. They ate it till they came to the border of Canaan. Many people have said that Moses couldn't have written this because they didn't come into the promised land until after Moses was dead.

And this seems to look in retrospect after they had come into the promised land. That's when they stopped eating manna. Now, it's quite possibly a correct objection, but that doesn't mean that I mean, they use this to sort of counteract the doctrine that Moses is the author of these books.

But as we said, when we had our introduction to the Pentateuch, Moses is the substantial author of the books. But that doesn't mean that no hand has done any editing since the time of Moses. There's nothing in the Bible that says that these books came down without any kind of editing or explanatory notes.

And it's possible that Joshua added this detail in a later copy after the children of Israel had come into the promised land. It's not really the kind of problem that some people want to make it to be. Now, in chapter 17, it says, Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the wilderness of Sinai, according to the commandment of Yahweh and camped in Rephidim.

But there was no water for the people to drink, which, of course, was an ongoing problem. The food would be supplied every morning on the ground, wherever they were. But presumably, water had to come from normal sources and they had to get from one source of water to another in the time it took to use up whatever water they stored up at their previous location.

And so they now are out of water again, and of course, they're going to crumble again, rumble, grumble again. Therefore, the people contended with Moses and said, give us water that we may drink. And Moses said to them, why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord? And the people thirsted there for water, and the people murmured against Moses and said, why is it you have brought us out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst? So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, what shall I do with this people? They're almost ready to stone me.

And the Lord said to Moses, go on before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel also taking your hand, your rod with which you struck the river and go, behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb and you shall strike the rock and water will come out of it that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. So he called the name of the place, Masa and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel and because they tempted the Lord, saying, is the Lord among us or not? Now, Masa means tempted and Meribah means contention.

I got that wrong. I think it's the other way around. It's a Masa means contention and Meribah means tested.

And so they named this two different names. It says that Moses and Aaron took the rod and they went to the rock in Horeb. Now, Horeb is elsewhere used as a synonym for Mount Sinai.

And yet we don't really read that they come to Mount Sinai yet. They get there in chapter 19, verse one. So some have thought Horeb may refer to the mountain range in which Sinai was and that that mountain range may have extended over a period of distance and there was a rock in it that was the one that they struck.

Now, some of you have seen probably pictures on the Internet of a rock that has a split in it that is associated in the location of the Saudi Arabia site of Mount Sinai and that apparently even has evidence of water erosion damage. There's a large rock that has a split right down the middle. And some think that this is actually the rock that Moses struck.

But if I understand, it's actually at Mount Sinai, this rock at the proposed site of Mount Sinai. So maybe Moses and Aaron, maybe they weren't that far from Mount Sinai at this time. And they went on ahead.

He says, go ahead of the people and strike this rock and it'll give you water. Maybe Moses and Aaron made a journey ahead of the people and the rock poured out water. It may have flowed down some distance to where the people were.

I honestly don't know. Another possibility, and this is also a possibility with the next chapter where Jethro visits Moses, would be that some of these stories are told out of their chronological order. One reason I say that about this next story in chapter 18 is that Moses is questioned by his father-in-law of what he is doing sitting at this tent all day long with all these lines of people waiting to see him.

And Moses says, well, the people are coming to have their cases adjudicated. I judge their cases out of the law of God. Well, what law of God? The law of God is given beginning in chapter 20.

What law of God did Moses judge from in chapter 18? Because of this particular difficulty, it has been suggested by some that some of these stories of the wilderness are not told in their chronological order. That they have either accidentally or on purpose been arranged in a different order than chronological. So that this striking of the rock could have been after they came to Mount Sinai, since it says it's a Mount Horeb.

And it's simply recorded here early of its actual time. And likewise, that Moses judging the people would be more likely to take place at Mount Sinai after the law was given than at some point prior to that as they as they were traveling to Mount Sinai. I mean, it doesn't seem like Moses to be spending his whole days judging cases while they were en route to Mount Sinai.

After all, they got there. The last date we were given was in chapter 16, verse 1, which was a month after the exodus. And when they get to Mount Sinai, it's only a month and a half after that.



Did Moses spend his days during that month and a half all day long judging Israel from God's law, which had not yet been given? Or did they spend more of their time traveling? It's hard to say. There probably were some days that Moses could have spent doing this even before they came to Sinai. But there's unanswered questions about this.

Some of these stories, it might be easier just to recognize them as things that happened after they came to Mount Sinai. But for some reason, again, either because of an accidental reshuffling of the pages at some point or for actual editorial purposes that were deliberate, these stories might be told earlier than they actually happened. I can't say.

All I know is there is a bit of a problem to explain there because this rock was at Horeb and yet they weren't yet at Mount Sinai. So one kind of explanation or another has to serve for this. Now, the giving of water out of a rock was done at least twice.

We have record of it happening twice, this time and once it was like 38 years later. And on this occasion, God told Moses to strike the rock and the water would come out of the rock. And on the later occasion, God told Moses to speak to the rock and the water would come out of it.

Moses, however, on the second occasion decided that he would do something a little different than what God said and he would do what he did on this occasion. He struck the rock again. And that was the mistake that Moses made that led him to be led God to keep him from going into the promised land himself.

It was a very serious offense, though we probably can hardly understand why it would be considering all of the offenses that the Israelites had performed that Moses did not participate in where Moses was innocent. It seems like his own offense is a rather small matter to receive such a severe judgment. But apparently this matter of the rock giving water was a very important matter.

Like many other things in the wilderness, it was a type and a shadow of something important, and therefore Moses was not at liberty to change it, to do something different. Like he was not allowed to innovate on the tabernacle, he was supposed to make it exactly according to the way it was shown to him on the Mount. Why? Because it was a pattern of heavenly things.

Moses may not have known or appreciated at that time the degree to which the things God was doing in the wilderness for the children were all patterns of heavenly things, including this water coming from the rock on these two occasions. Certainly, Paul sees that to be the case over in 1 Corinthians 10, to which I referred earlier, where he's describing the time that the Israelites spent in the wilderness as a type of our Christian experience. Notice in 1 Corinthians 10, he said, beginning at verse one, Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud and

passed through the sea.

All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food. He means manna. Which was not really spiritual food, it was physical food, but Paul is making a spiritual application of it.

The spiritual food, the manna they ate was a type of Christ who is spiritual food for us and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them and that rock was Christ. Now, you know, the rabbis actually had a tradition and some people think Paul believed it, that that rock followed them around. That this rock that they got water from on this occasion followed them around through the desert and therefore it was the same rock that in another location gave them water at a later date and that rock followed them in their wanderings.

And that's a strange, a strange thing to try to picture. How a rock would be following them around and the rabbis actually taught that, but Paul may have been accommodating the rabbinic view in saying that, but it's not necessary to assume that Paul really believed that the rock was following them around because he's spiritualizing this anyway, the rock he's talking about is Christ, the rock that followed them was Christ. Now, they drink water from a rock, but he's called it spiritual water and the rock that it came from was Christ.

Paul is, of course, alluding to the story that we're reading here, but he's making an entirely different claim about it. I think what he's saying is these people did drink literal water from a literal rock, but really what they were doing was receiving that which prefigures. What we drink, we drink living water from Christ, our rock.

And I don't think Paul is so much saying that they really were drinking living water. This water that came from them from the rock was not spiritual water. It was real water.

The rock that he struck was not really Christ, but what Paul is saying is they represent Christ. Just like when Jesus took the bread, said this bread is my body and this cup is my blood. He means this bread represents my body.

This cup represents my blood. And so also the rock represents Christ. The water represents the spiritual water.

That there's in a sense, by way of type, they are drinking spiritual water as we do. But the point here is that to get that water from the rock, Moses had to strike the rock, and he did so with God's commandment. It's only when Christ was stricken that he yielded the living water.

Remember, it says in John chapter 7, verse 39, the Holy Spirit, which was the living water Jesus spoke about on that occasion. He spoke this about the Holy Spirit who was not yet given because Christ was not yet glorified. That is, Christ had not yet been crucified and

resurrected.

Christ had to be smitten, stricken in order to produce the benefits of salvation that we experience today. And the Holy Spirit, who is the water that we drink. However, the second time they needed water, God simply told Moses to speak to the rock, which suggests that the rock doesn't have to be stricken twice.

The water is available upon asking now. Jesus doesn't ever have to suffer again so that later generations can be given the Holy Spirit. He's stricken once and that's enough.

It's just a matter of asking now. It's just a matter of speaking and asking for that. So Jesus said, if you earthly fathers know how to give good gifts to your children when they ask you, how much more will your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? So the rock was a picture of Christ, as Paul says.

And the water that came from the rock is salvation or the Holy Spirit, and which is given now at simply our request. Not, I mean, Christ doesn't have to be stricken every time. One time is enough.

And that's why it was wrong for Moses to strike the rock the second time. It messed up the image. It messed up the message.

It miscommunicated something. Now, rather quickly here, if we could. Verse eight, now, Amalek, that's the Amalekites, came and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

The Amalekites, I believe, were descended from Esau. They were a branch of the Edomites, but we would call them just Arab raiders that wandered around actually in the Negev of Israel and also in the Sinai Peninsula. And so it would be inevitable that Israel should at some point come into contact with these people over a period of years of wandering.

This contact apparently happened early rather than late. And the Amalekites, perhaps seeing the Israelites as competition for the sparse provisions in that region, decided to harass them, maybe hope to extinguish them and exterminate them. But they did attack them.

We don't know if they're just trying to drive them out of the area, which they consider to be their turf, or if they really just wanted to wipe them out. In any case, Israel was not really... They weren't there to fight. They were just to pass through and therefore to be attacked.

This is an unprovoked attack. And it says, Moses said to Joshua, choose us some men to go out and fight Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.

So Joshua did, as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron and Hur went up on the top of the hill. Now, we've heard nothing about Hur before this.

Jewish tradition associates him with Miriam. The prevailing view is that Hur was Miriam's husband. I don't know where the Jews get this idea because it's not stated in scripture.

But actually, some Jews believe that he was Miriam's son, either her husband or her son. It may be reasonable. We see there's a lot of nepotism in the leadership here.

Moses and his brother and his sister. There should be a role for her sister's husband somewhere. So maybe he got to go up there and hold Moses' hands up in the air.

But the idea that Hur is really associated with Miriam is strictly a rabbinic tradition. The Bible does not confirm it. And we're not told elsewhere, you know, why he's selected for this particular responsibility.

But Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. So it was when Moses held up his hand, probably with the rod of God in his hand, because he said he's going to have in verse 9, he says, I'll stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand. When Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed.

And when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. So he had to keep his hands in the air because as long as his hands were up, there was power on the side of Israel to win. But of course, a man's hands get tired when they're up there.

And so when he let his hand down, he'd notice, oh, the battle's turning against us. So he'd have to put his hand back up again. But Moses' hands became heavy.

So they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other side. Now, I don't know whether Moses had both of his hands up at the same time.

So he needed someone to support a hand on each side. Or if he just alternated hands because of the need to, his hands would get numb being up in the air. So it may be that he just alternated his hands.

He had one guy on each side to help support the hand on that side. And so his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Then Yahweh said to Moses, write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua. That I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar and called its name Jehovah Nisi.

This is Jehovah Nisi, Yahweh Nisi, which means the Lord, my banner. For he said, because the Lord has sworn the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to

generation. Now, the Amalekites later were attacked at God's instigation by King Saul at a later date.

And God told Saul to wipe out all the Amalekites, which Saul did not do. He did most of the job, but not the complete job. Interestingly enough, when Saul finally died, it was an Amalekite that reported Saul's death to David.

There shouldn't have been any Amalekites to report that to David because Saul was supposed to wipe them all out. And that was in order to fulfill this particular curse that God had placed on the Amalekites, that they had attacked his people unprovoked, treacherously, and therefore they would bear their judgment someday under God. He would have ongoing animosity between them until the time that he came to wipe them out with King Saul.

There's some question about the significance of Moses raising his hand, because the raising of the hand with the rod in it could be just, you know, something that was like a man standing waving the flag to the Israelites to see and to be encouraged. You know, it's the inspiration. Our leader is up there holding high the rod of God that represents our deliverance from Egypt and so forth, and therefore it could have meant to be an inspiration to the people.

Although the raising of the hand in Scripture usually has to do with prayer and supplication, though usually that's the raising of both hands rather than one hand. And this is specifically said to be he held up his hand. And but maybe eventually he was holding both hands.

It's hard to know exactly what the emblem of his raising his hand really signified. If it was a posture of supplication or prayer, then this suggests that prayer plays an important role in warfare and spiritualized. It would be our spiritual warfare.

Certainly, prayer is spiritual warfare, and it is prayer that seems to defeat the enemy. Remember, Jesus said about that one demon that the disciples couldn't cast out. He said, this kind doesn't come out except by prayer and fasting.

So prayer is an instrument of war. It brings the power of God into the battle and makes the battle of the Lord's rather than ours. And so whatever it may have meant.

It appears that Moses was, in a sense, connecting with God. Petitioning God, either with his holding his rod up to God or maybe both hands in prayer at times. I don't know.

The idea, though, is that God was being invoked and it was God who clearly was intervening when the hands were up. God was giving Israel a victory when the hands were down. God did not, which may be if we understand the lifting of the hands as representing prayer.

It may be an illustration of what Jesus said in Luke 18, one where he said. Men are always to pray and not lose heart or not think the King James says that we need to continue in prayer until the battle is complete. It would be perhaps the way that the lesson we should take from this.

Now, there is something here a little difficult to interpret, and that's verse 16, because there's apparently a strangeness in the translation here because it's translated in verse 16, because the Lord has sworn the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. At least a portion of that, and I'm not sure how much of it should be translated differently than that. And you'll see there's in the New King James, there's a note in the margin.

There should be in other translations to their founded in the New American Standard and so on. And the commentators mentioned that somehow the Hebrew is more literally read this way. A hand is upon the throne of the Lord.

Now, I'm not really sure which words. In verse 16, as we have it. Are translated differently than that.

I mean, I'm not sure how many how much of that verse is supposed to say a hand is against the throne of the Lord or is upon the throne of the Lord. And even that statement, if it were translated that way, a hand is upon the throne of the Lord. What does that mean? Some people think it's a reference to the hand of Amalek coming against God's people, God's kingdom, God's throne, as it were.

And therefore, that's why he has war against Amalek, because the hand of Amalek has come against God's very kingdom. But others feel it's reference to Moses's hand, that Moses's hand that was in the air was upon the throne of the Lord, as if it's to say that Moses, by raising his hand, was connecting with God's throne and through his intercession, through his supplication, drawing power from the throne of God down to the people of God. It's very unclear.

And I have to say, I only pointed out to you because it's there. I don't really know what it means. And I'm not sure we can be positive or anyone can be positive what it means.

It's ambiguous. But I mentioned it because that is a translational issue that comes up in that last verse of the chapter. And that's the last verse we'll be able to take before we break.

So let's break now. We'll come back to chapter 18.