



Handout for week of 7-30-18 John 6: 24-35 & Ex. 16: 2-4, 12-15

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Ex. 16: Ex. 16: And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness; [3](#) and the children of Israel said unto them: 'Would that we had died by the hand of HaShem in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.' [4](#) Then said HaShem unto Moses: 'Behold, I will cause to rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or not.

[5](#) And it shall come to pass on the sixth day that they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.' [6](#) And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel: 'At even, then ye shall know that HaShem hath brought you out from the land of Egypt; [7](#) and in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of HaShem; for that He hath heard your murmurings against HaShem; and what are we, that ye murmur against us?' [8](#) And Moses said: 'This shall be, when HaShem shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that HaShem heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against Him; and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against HaShem.' [9](#) And Moses said unto Aaron: 'Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel: Come near before HaShem; for He hath heard your murmurings.' [10](#) And it came to pass, as Aaron spoke unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of HaShem appeared in the cloud. [11](#) And HaShem spoke unto Moses, saying:

[12](#) I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. Speak unto them, saying: At dusk ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am HaShem your G-d.' [13](#) And it came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew round about the camp. [14](#) And when the layer of dew was gone up, behold upon the face of the wilderness a fine, scale-like thing, fine as the hoar-frost on the ground. [15](#) And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another: 'What is it?' --for they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them: 'It is the bread which HaShem hath given you to eat.

COMMENTARY: The people of Israel have travelled into the wilderness east of the Nile delta. Finding the water undrinkable, they have complained to Moses. God has made the water potable. He has tested their faith: will they accept him by trusting that he will feed and rule them? If they do, he will protect them from the plagues he inflicted on the Egyptians, rather than judging and destroying them.

Now the entire community complains (or grumbles) "against Moses and Aaron": about food. They would prefer to have died in Egypt where they ate plentiful seasoned "bread" (v. 3) rather than now dying of hunger. In complaining to their leaders, the people are, in fact, complaining against God (v. 8), who gives authority to the leaders. In these pre-Sinai (pre-Law) days, God simply grants their request, granting them "bread from heaven" (v. 4), "manna" (v. 31) "in the morning" (v. 7), but he again *tests* them (v. 4): will they obey him in only collecting food sufficient for one day at a time (except "on the sixth day", v. 5, the day before the Sabbath)? In vv. 7-8, Moses and Aaron insist that the *beef* is not with them but with God. Moses, Aaron and the people see God's presence, his "glory ... in the cloud" (v. 10). Further, he gives them "quails" (v. 13) "in the evening".

V. 14 describes manna. It is a honey-like excretion from certain insects which infest tamarisk trees in this area. When it drops from the leaves it becomes almost solid, but in the heat of the day it melts, so it must be collected in the morning. That sufficient was available to feed all is a miracle, a special intervention by God. V. 15 tells us that the name *manna* comes from "'What is it?'," *man hu* in Hebrew: the Israelites ask *what do you call it?*. Quail migrate from northern Europe to Africa and back. A shift in the wind during their long flight over water causes them to land exhausted in Sinai, where they are easily caught. In John 6:31, 49 John sees manna as a type of Eucharist, given freely to sustain life. In Exodus, through food and water, the people are transformed, as they grow from adolescence to adulthood - into being God's people, obedient to him.