

Faithful During Uncertainty

Exodus 16:1-15
SS Lesson for 09/15/2019

Devotional Scripture: 1 Cor 10:1-11

OUTLINE

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Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: Exodus 16:15

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

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Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

A group of botanists traveled to the Alps to search for rare specimens of flowers. At one point they came across a beautiful flower down on a rock ledge that they could not reach. They saw a shepherd boy not far away, so they called him over and offered him some money if he would allow himself to be let down by them with a rope in order to get the flower. The boy wanted very much to earn the money. He looked down at the ledge. Then he looked at the strange men—and he said no. They offered him a little more money, and he was tempted to say yes. Still, he wasn't sure about trusting those strangers. Then all of a sudden his eyes lit up. "Wait here," he told them and ran off. About 10 minutes later he was back with another man. "I will get the flower for you," he told the men, "if you will let my father hold the rope." In times of uncertainty and doubt, when we feel as if we are "at the end of our rope," we need the assurance that someone is holding the rope—or better still, holding us! David expressed his own confidence in the Lord that no matter where he might travel, on earth or in realms beyond the earth, "even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me" (Psalm 139:10).

After the Lord had brought forth the Israelites from 400 years of bondage in Egypt, Moses told the people, "Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place" (Exodus 13:3). That "strength of hand" had been displayed in a series of plagues that provided clear and dramatic evidence that the Lord was superior to any of the gods of the Egyptians (chapters 7-11). But after leaving Egypt, the Israelites forgot the Lord's "strength of hand." When they were camped by the Red Sea and saw Pharaoh and his horsemen and chariots approaching, immediately they panicked. They accused Moses of bringing them out into the wilderness to die (Exodus 14:10-13). Moses spoke words of faith and assurance to the people, "The Lord shall fight for you" (14:14), and then proceeded to back up his words with the miraculous parting of the Red Sea (14:15-18, 21, 22). The Israelites safely crossed on dry land, after which the waters were brought back onto the Egyptians when they tried to give chase (14:23-28). Exodus 14 concludes with the statement that "the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses" (14:31). But that trust was also short-lived. As the people came to the wilderness of Shur, just east of where they had crossed the Red Sea, they traveled for three days and could find no water. When they finally did find water at Marah, they could not drink it because it was bitter. The people once more complained to Moses, whereupon the Lord once more provided for His people's needs (Exodus 15:22-25). As they moved down the western edge of the Sinai Peninsula, the people's travels brought them to a place called Elim, where they came upon an oasis consisting of 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees (Exodus 15:27). The lesson text begins with the people's departure from Elim.

Key Verse: Exodus 16:15

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.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

16:1-12. From the Desert of Shur (15:22) the Israelites one month later (cf. 12:6) entered **the Desert of Sin... between Elim and Sinai**. As the people continued toward Sinai, the Lord provided several things for them, including bread (16:4) and quail (v. 13; cf. vv. 8, 12). As the journey lengthened into weeks the supply of bread (cf. 12:34) must have been depleted, so that the redeemed people again murmured **against Moses** (cf. 15:24). The lack of bread caused the people to forget their horrible plight in Egypt, to think only of the food they had **in Egypt** (cf. Num. 11:5), and to impugn the motives of their leader. As with the people's complaint for water at Marah, **the LORD** immediately responded by giving them **bread from heaven** (which they called "manna"; see Ex. 16:31). The bread came early **in the morning** (vv. 8, 12-13)—

actually during the night (Num. 11:9)—and melted in the heat of the day (Ex. 16:21). Each day the people were to **gather only enough bread for that day**. This meant they would have to trust **the LORD** to bring the food each morning! **On the sixth day they** were to **gather** enough for that day and the next, since the bread would not come on the seventh day (v. 5; cf. v. 26). **Moses and Aaron** rebuked the people for their **grumbling against** them (v. 7) and **the LORD** (v. 8) and reassured them of His provision for their need, which provisions would cause the **community to know that He is the LORD their God** (v. 12).

16:13-20. That very **evening** God miraculously provided **quail** in response to the people's request for meat (v. 3; cf. Num. 11:31-32, which refers to a different occasion; Pss. 78:27-28; 105:40). In the fall this small game bird, similar to pheasant and grouse, migrates south from Palestine and Arabia to Central Africa, and in the spring it returns. Egyptian art depicts people catching the birds in hand nets.

The bread (cf. Ex. 16:4, 12) came with the **dew**. When the dew was gone, **thin flakes** were on the desert. Never having seen this before, the people asked, **What is it?** (See v. 31.) Because it was sent from heaven the Psalmist Asaph referred to it as “the bread of angels” (Ps. 78:25). God told them to **take an omer** (about two quarts; see the chart “Biblical Weights and Measures” before the Book of Gen.) **for each person... in his tent**, which **the Israelites** obediently **did** (Ex. 16:17). However, some of them, failing to obey the next instruction, **kept some of it till morning**. Because of their lack of faith God caused their bread to spoil.

16:21-30. This is the Bible's first mention of the Sabbath. After His six-day work of Creation God rested on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2-3). The Hebrew words “seventh” and “rested” are similar. Later God's command for the Israelites to rest on the Sabbath became part of the Decalogue (Ex. 20:8-11). Following the Lord's orders (16:4) most of the people **gathered** only enough bread for each day, and **twice** the amount **on the sixth day** because **the seventh day** was to be **a day of rest** (v. 23; cf. v. 26), **a holy Sabbath to the LORD** (cf. v. 26). No bread would be given on that day, but part of the bread of the sixth day was to be baked or boiled to preserve it for **the seventh day**. Disregarding God's instruction (v. 23) **some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather** the bread. Lack of faith in God's Word is disobedience. **The LORD** in His displeasure asked them, **How long will you refuse to keep My commands and My instructions?**

16:31-36. The people... called the bread manna (*mān hū'*, “what is it?” cf. v. 15). It was in thin flakes (v. 14), **white like coriander seed** (an herb), looked like resin (Num. 11:7, perhaps meaning it was light-colored and/or sticky), and it **tasted like honey wafers**. It also had the taste of “something made with olive oil” (Num. 11:8). Some writers have suggested that the manna was a sweet-tasting excretion left by insects on the twigs of tamarisk trees in June and July. However, manna was provided year-round, on the ground, and the tamarisk excretion does not spoil within 24 hours. Then God told **Moses** to keep **an omer of manna**, about two quarts (or **1/10 of an ephah**, Ex. 16:36), in **a jar** as a reminder of God's goodness for future **generations**. The manna was to be placed **in front of the Testimony** (v. 34). “The Testimony” refers to the two tablets of the Law (25:16; 31:18; 32:15; 34:29) which were in “the ark [of the covenant] of the Testimony” (25:16, 21) in the most holy place. The Hebrew word (and the corresponding Akk. word) for “Testimony” may have been a technical term to designate covenant stipulations. For a discussion of whether the manna was kept in the ark, as Hebrews 9:4 suggests, or in front of it see 2 Chronicles 5:10. **The LORD** continued to supply manna **until** the nation **came to Gilgal**, where they began to eat the products of the land (Josh. 5:12). The manna in the ark was a perpetual reminder of God's loyalty to His people in supplying their needs. Jesus, referring to the Israelites' manna (John 6:31, 49, 58), called Himself “the true [spiritual] Bread from heaven” (John 6:32), “the Bread of God... from heaven” (John 6:33), “the Bread of life” (John 6:35, 48), and “the Living Bread... from heaven” (John 6:51). Everyone who believes in Him, He said, would have eternal life (John 6:33, 51, 58).

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Israelites' Grumbings (Exodus 16:1-3)

1 And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt.

2 Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

3 And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Grumbings about man's timing (1-2)

Because man's timing is limited, but God does things at the proper time (Eccl 8:6)

6 For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter, though a man's misery weighs heavily upon him.

Because man's timing is not unlimited like God's (2 Peter 3:8)

8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

Because man's timing is not God's timing (Isa 55:8-9)

8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Because man's timing cannot redeem the time like God (Eph 5:15-16)

15 Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Grumbings about hunger (3)

Grumbling because of lack of trust in God (Luke 12:23-24)

23 Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24 Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!

Grumbling because of not realizing the power of God (2 Kings 4:2-7)

2 Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?" "Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a little oil." 3 Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. 4 Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side." 5 She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. 6 When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one." But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing. 7 She went and told the man of God, and he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left."

Grumbling because of not having enough food (1 Kings 17:12-15)

12 "As surely as the Lord your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread — only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it — and die." 13 Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 14 For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land.'" 15 She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family.

Grumbling because of not having enough for everyone (John 6:9-13)

9 "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" 10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. 11 Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. 12 When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." 13 So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

God's Response (Exodus 16:4-12)

4 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.

5 And 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."

6 Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "At evening you shall know that the Lord has brought you out of the land of Egypt.

7 And in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord; for He hears your complaints against the Lord. But what are we, that you complain against us?"

8 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 complaints which you make against Him. And what are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the Lord."

9 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 complaints.'"

10 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.

11 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

12 "I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'"

Response of God's testing (4-5)

Testing to refine (Ps 66:10)

10 For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver.

Testing to prove faith genuine (1 Peter 1:7)

7 These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Testing aids in receiving God's inheritance (Heb 11:8)

8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

Testing to know what's in the heart (Deut 8:2)

2 Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.

Response of God's timing (6-8)

God's timing does things when the time has fully come (Gal 4:4)

4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,

God's timing is always at the right time (Rom 5:6)

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

God's timing always has a chosen remnant (Rom 11:5)

5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.

God's timing is according to His good pleasure (Eph 1:8-10)

8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment — to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

Response of God's Glory (9-10)

A glory that is over all the earth (Ps 108:5)

5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and let your glory be over all the earth.

A glory that should be revered (Ps 102:15)

15 The nations will fear the name of the Lord, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory.

A glory that existed before the world began (John 17:5)

5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

A glory that the heavens declare (Ps 19:1-4)

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. 2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. 3 There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,

Response of God's proof of Lordship (11-12)

God is Lord because He reveals mysteries (Dan 2:45-47)

45 This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands — a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy." 46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. 47 The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

God is Lord because He has the power to make things happen (Ps 46:10)

10 "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

God is Lord because He is the creator (Ps 100:3)

3 Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

God is Lord because God is revealed by Jesus (Matt 11:27)

27 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

God is Lord to make Himself known (John 8:19)

19 Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."

God's Faithful Provisions (Exodus 16:13-15)

13 So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp.

14 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.

15 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.

Provision of food in the form of quail (13)

Provision of food from the God who owns everything (Ps 50:10-15)

10 for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. 11 I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. 12 If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. 13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? 14 Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, 15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

Provision of food through the power and pleasure of God (Jer 27:5)

5 With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please.

Provision of food from the One who supplies all needs (2 Cor 9:10-11)

10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Provision of food that comes from the hands of God (1 Chron 29:12-14)

12 Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. 13 Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. 14 "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

Provision of bread in the form of mana (14-15)

Mana to humble His people (Deut 8:3)

3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Mana from heaven (Neh 9:15)

15 In their hunger you gave them bread from heaven and in their thirst you brought them water from the rock; you told them to go in and take possession of the land you had sworn with uplifted hand to give them.

Mana as earthly bread, but there was to come true bread (John 6:31-32)

31 Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.

Mana that was preserved in the Ark (Heb 9:4)

4 which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

Growling Stomachs and Grumbling Saints

A month passed between the time Israel departed from Egypt to the time when the nation reached the Wilderness of Sin.¹⁶⁶ Water had already been a problem (cf. 15:22-26), and now they had run out of food.¹⁶⁷ Their growling stomachs soon produced grumbling lips. The whole assembly grumbled against Moses and Aaron (16:2). They said they would rather have died in Egypt than to have been brought out into the desert to starve to death (16:3).

Characteristics of Israel's Grumbling

Before we consider God's response to the grumbings of His people, it may be worthwhile to point out some of the characteristics of Israel's grumbling in this incident. Very likely, we will find that grumbling was not only a problem then, but that it is also a problem in our lives as well.

(1) Grumbling is a problem with pain or problems. Grumbling almost never occurs when we are experiencing pleasure, but nearly always when we are in pain. In our passage, there is a definite relationship between the Israelites' growling stomachs and their grumbling lips. We grumble because we do not like the pain or the discomfort of the situation we are in. We grumble because we think that we should experience pleasure rather than pain, affluence and ease rather than adversity and deprivation.

(2) Grumbling is a problem of perception. Grumbling results from a difference between the way we perceive things to be and the way we think they should be. The problem is that when we grumble our perception of how things are is distorted. Grumbling invariably distorts the facts. In our text, Israel greatly exaggerated the benefits of Egypt. They said they "sat" (v. 3) by their flesh pots, and that they ate "all they wanted" of a great variety of foods and meat. This is, quite frankly, hard to believe. If the Egyptians made them gather their own straw and were attempting to kill boy babies, why would they be concerned to feed the Israelites so well? Also, their perception of their own imminent danger of starvation was greatly exaggerated. They believed that their hunger was starvation. No one had yet starved; at best, a few had begun to feel hunger. Worst of all, perhaps, they accused Moses of leading them into the wilderness in order to kill them. Their perception of Moses' motivation was entirely distorted. Finally, Israel's perception of God's care and compassion is minimized to grotesque proportions. They failed to perceive the loving hand of a sovereign God in their sufferings.

(3) Grumbling is a problem of submission. The Israelites grumbled against their leaders, Moses and Aaron. The people had forgotten that it was God who was leading them, not only by Moses, but also by the cloud which was before them (cf. Exod. 13:21-22; 16:10). Ultimately, then, Israel's grumbling was a protest against God's leadership, as Moses pointed out (16:7-8).

(4) Grumbling is a sin of the tongue, which is closely related to disobedience. Grumbling occurs when we can't control our situation. Disobedience occurs when we have an option and we choose to do other than that which God has commanded.

(5) Grumbling is a communicable disease. We are told in verse 2 that, "the whole community grumbled ..." I would suggest that the grumbling of a handful of people spread into the epidemic plague of the grumbling of the whole congregation. Grumbling is not only a malady of the mouth, it is a malady which is spread by the mouth.

(6) Grumbling is the result of a failure in our faith. Grumbling is a sin, but it is a symptomatic sin. It reveals a lack of faith, for the grumbler does not see that good hand of God, refuses to accept the adversity, and sees

disaster rather than blessing as the outcome of their circumstances. In fact we can go farther and say that grumbling is allowing our present circumstances to nullify our confidence in God's purposes and promises.

God's Response to Israel's Grumbling

Knowing that Israel's grumbling was the result of her lack of faith, God responded to it in a way which I would not expect. Later on, the grumbling of the Israelites resulted in some painful chastisement. The difference between God's response to Israel's grumbings here in Exodus 16 and His more severe dealings in Numbers 11 is explained, I believe, by the difference in time spent with God in the wilderness. Here, the Israelites have spent but one month following God, and are relatively immature in their faith. Later on, God's Law has been given, and His faithfulness to Israel has been repeatedly demonstrated.

Consequently, God responded gently and graciously to the grumbings of the Israelites. Rather than to rebuke them for their complaining, He did two things, both of which were intended to demonstrate His presence with His people in their affliction and adversity. **First, He revealed His glory to the Israelites by some special manifestation of Himself in the cloud by which He had been leading them (16:10). Second, God provided His people with quail¹⁶⁸ and with manna (16:11-14).**

The Nature of God's Provision of Manna

As usual, there are many who attempt to demonstrate that the manna which was provided for the Israelites was not miraculous at all.¹⁶⁹ This is very difficult to believe in the light of what the text tells us about the manna which God provided for His people.

(1) The manna which God provided appears to be very nutritious, as would be required for desert rations. Israel was given nourishment and energy for the rigorous task of desert travel. It may not have had the most exciting flavor, or at least the Israelites eventually tired of it, asking for something more spicy (cf. Numbers 11:4-9).

(2) The manna which God provided could be prepared in different ways. It could be baked or boiled (v. 23).

(3) The manna was not necessarily the only item which constituted Israel's diet.¹⁷⁰

(4) The manna was provided in abundance, so much so that limits had to be placed on how much was gathered (cf. vss. 13-21).

(5) The manna was miraculously provided. It was "rained down from heaven" (v. 4). It was like nothing the Israelites had ever seen before (v. 15). It appeared every morning, except on the Sabbath. At the end of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness it ceased falling (Joshua 5:12).

(6) The manna appeared in the morning and disappeared in the heat of the day.

(7) The manna would not keep, except over the Sabbath.

(8) Some of the manna was miraculously preserved, as a memorial of God's provision for future generations (vss. 31-36).¹⁷¹

God's Regulations Regarding Manna

When God provided the Israelites with this "bread from heaven" (16:4), He also gave instructions as to how this bread was to be gathered and used. These instructions were intended to test the Israelites as well as to teach them obedience and increase their faith. We will therefore review these instructions briefly and then consider their role in promoting Israel's faith.

(1) Israel was to gather only what was required for that day (v. 16).

(2) It would appear that every Israelite was required to gather manna for his own needs (v. 16).

(3) Manna was to be gathered daily, and only enough for that day was to be gathered. Any excess from that day was to be disposed of at the end of the day (v. 19). In other words, manna could not be stored up or hoarded.

(4) Israel was to gather twice as much on the sixth day, and to gather none on the Sabbath (vss. 23-26).

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/9-boot-camp-and-c-rations-exodus-16>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

As the children of Israel entered a desolate territory following their exodus from Egypt, they became insecure about their food supply. Despite their collective discontent and grumbling, the Lord provided unmistakable visual aids to show that He would supply for their needs. He had not “let go of the rope”—or of them. In truth, humanity has always lived in uncertain times. Every generation has viewed its times as unsettled or perilous in one way or another. One has only to read from the words of a passage like Psalm 74 to get a sense of the author's personal anguish and frustration with God over why He does not act more quickly to rescue His people from the desperate times that surround them: “O God, why hast thou cast us off forever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?” (Psalm 74:1). “O God,” he pleads, “how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name forever?” (74:10). The psalmist's times were very uncertain! Our times are no different; there is an abundance of turmoil in so many areas of life. We frequently express our anxiety over uncertainty much as the Israelites did: through murmurings against leadership, from the local to the national level. The response to living in such times is to return to the truth that is the focus of today's lesson title: God remains faithful, even during times of uncertainty. His promises remain true; His Word provides the assurance that we need—that when human hands are weak and untrustworthy, God's hands remain strong. The aforementioned psalmist, who was so distraught by the chaos around him, came back to this truth himself: “For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth” (74:12). David acknowledged, “My times are in thy hand” (Psalm 31:15). So are ours.

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

A Discontented Congregation - A month after the Hebrew children left Egypt, the multitude found themselves in the Wilderness of Sin, a dry, lifeless area between Elim and Mt. Sinai. While in this area the people intensified their grumbling and murmuring against Moses and Aaron. They complained about no food and water out in the desert. Did Moses bring them to the desert to starve? Just a few weeks earlier the people had danced and sang praises to the Lord for their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. How quickly their praise turned to mistrust and opposition! Instead of punishing or disciplining them, God decided to prove Himself again as their provider.

God's Response and Provision - Jehovah chose to answer the agonizing cries of His people by graciously allowing them to see His cloud guiding them, then He rained down food from heaven in a unique way. Each morning, right outside their tents, each family found something like small seeds, white, and tasting sweet like honey covering the entire ground. When the people first observed it, they called it manna meaning, what is it? Then, in the evening God fed the people quail, a special bird considered a delicacy in Egypt. After several days of manna, the people found various creative ways to prepare it. They ground it up, beat it, cooked it in pans, or made cakes. It tasted like a pastry prepared with oil. God graciously provided during the time the Israelites questioned and doubted His ability to provide for them in the wilderness. They spoke of returning to their former life in Egypt. They criticized and protested Moses and Aaron, their visible leaders. Behind all that anger was their lack of trust in almighty God.

God Is Always Faithful - Honestly, all God's children, at one time or another, fail the "Will I trust God to provide for my needs?" test. When dry seasons come, life seems like a desert. We wonder if God will come through for us. Those who have been on this Christian journey through the desert say with assurance, "The Lord will make a way somehow." He always does.