

How God Provided for the Children of Israel

by Chuck Smith

God's provision for the Israelites in the wilderness serves as a reminder of His faithfulness and provision for His people, and points to Jesus as the ultimate source of spiritual water and life.

Duration: 25:20

Scripture: Exodus 16:13, Psalm 78:20-21, Psalm 78:38-39, Psalm 78:41-42, Psalm 78:52, Psalm 78:54, Psalm 78:56, Galatians 2:20

Topics: "Israel"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith discusses how God provided for the children of Israel during their time in the wilderness. He focuses on the story of Moses striking the rock to bring forth water for the people. Pastor Chuck emphasizes the importance of properly representing God and how our actions can shape others' perception of Him. He also highlights the provision of manna, the bread from heaven, which God commanded the Israelites to gather according to their needs. The sermon emphasizes the lesson of trusting in God's provision and being content with what He provides.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you
With His Spirit and His love
Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that hold you
And His Spirit like a dove
Will descend upon your life
And make you whole
Welcome to The Word for Today, a broadcast ministry of Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently leading us on a verse-by-verse study through the entire Bible. And on today's edition of The Word for Today, we'll once again be looking at how God provided for the children of Israel.

As Pastor Chuck Smith picks up today's lesson in Exodus, chapter 16, verse 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, and when the layer of dew lifted, there was on the surface of the wilderness a small round substance as fine as frost on the ground.

So when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to 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, that every man gather according to each one's need, one omer per each person, according to the number of persons in your family, that every man take for those who are in his tent.

And the children of Israel did so and gathered some more and some less. Some gathered more than others, some less than others. But when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing over.

He who gathered little had no lack. It was God leveled it off. Every man had gathered according to each one's need.

And Moses said, Let no one leave any of it until the morning. Now this was one of the commands. See if they followed or not.

Don't leave any of it over till tomorrow. Don't try and save it until tomorrow. Notwithstanding, they did not heed Moses, but some of them left part of it until the morning.

And it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. So they tried to keep some.

You know, I won't have to go out in the morning. You know, I just keep it tonight. And the thing got wormy and smelled.

So they gathered it every morning. Every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it would melt.

And so it was on the sixth day that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said to them, This is what the Lord has said.

Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. 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 would bake it.

They would beat it into sort of a flour and bake little cakes. Or they would boil it probably into a cereal form. Interesting that this started one month after they left the land of Egypt.

And God provided this for over 40 years until the day that they came into the promised land. Then this supply ceased. And so they laid it up until morning as Moses commanded.

It did not stink nor did the worms come in it. And Moses said, Eat that today for today is the Sabbath to the Lord. Today you will not find it in the field.

Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather and they found none. And the Lord said to Moses, How long do you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for the Lord has given you the Sabbath, therefore he gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place or in his tent.

Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day out of his place or out of the camp actually. And the house of Israel called its name Manna.

Now, there are some Hebrew scholars that say that that means, What is it? Manna, what is it? Other, and the preponderance of Hebrew scholars I should say, say that the word in Hebrew is literally a gift. And so they called this a gift of God rather than what is it? So, it was like white coriander seed and the taste was like little wafers that you would make with honey. So there is a sort of a sweet taste to it.

Then Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord has commanded. Fill an omer with it to be kept for your generations that they may see the bread with which I 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 in an omer of manna in it and lay it up before the Lord to be kept for your generations.

As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony to be kept. And the children of Israel ate manna forty years until they came to an inhabited land. They ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

Now an omer is one tenth of an ephaph, which as I said is about one and a half pints to seven pints according to which scholar you are reading. Now the command here is to take an omer of it and put it in a jar. Later on, when God gave to Moses the command to build the tabernacle, in the holy of holies of the tabernacle there was to be what was called the Ark of the Covenant, a box made of acacia wood overlaid with gold covered by a lid which was called a mercy seat.

And upon the lid there were carved two cherubim. But in this box, later when the tabernacle was constructed, in this box was constructed the Ark of the Covenant to be placed in the holy of holies. They took the two tables of stone upon which God inscribed the law.

They took this jar of manna that Aaron was told to preserve and they took the rod of Aaron that budded to prove that the priesthood was to be with Aaron and they put these three artifacts in the Ark of the Covenant. That is why to me one of the most exciting archaeological discoveries that could ever be made would be for someone to find the Ark of the Covenant. I don't know if I want to be the one to open the lid to look in.

But if someone else would open it I would probably take a look. David's men got in trouble for touching it. But to think that God set these to preserve them as a testimony of his faithfulness to his people.

A witness. God's witness. I was faithful.

I provided them every day with their bread. And what I would really love to see are those two tables of stone where God with his finger wrote the law. That would be dynamite.

Powerful. Now, let's turn to Psalm 78 just to see how deeply this was then embedded into their minds and into their culture. We find the psalmist making reference to this.

Let's start with maybe verse 38. God was full of compassion. He forgave their iniquity.

He did not destroy them. That was when they murmured and so forth. Yes, many a time he turned his anger away, did not stir up his wrath because he remembered they were but flesh or dust.

A breath that passes away and does not come again. How often they provoked him in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert. Yes, again and again they tempted God and limited the Holy One of Israel.

They did not remember his power the day when he redeemed them from the enemy. When he worked his signs in Egypt, his wonders in the field of Zon. Turned their rivers to blood and their streams so they could not drink.

And he talks about all of the plagues. And then he said, verse 52, he made his own people go forth like sheep. He guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

He led them safely so they did not fear the sea, overwhelm their enemies. He brought them to this holy border, the mountain which his right hand had acquired. He also drove out the nations before them, allotted them the inheritance and so forth.

But they tested him, provoked the Most High God, did not keep his covenant and so forth. Let's go back in the same chapter. Verse 17.

They sinned even more against him by rebelling against the Most High in the wilderness. They tested God in their heart by asking for food of their fancy. Yes, they spoke against God.

They said, can God prepare a table in the wilderness? Behold, he struck the rocks so that waters gushed out and streams overflowed. Can he give bread also? Can he provide meat for his people? Therefore the Lord heard this and was furious. So a fire was kindled against Jacob.

The anger also came up against Israel because they did not believe in God nor trust in his salvation. Yet he commanded the clouds above, he opened the doors of heaven, rained down manna on them to eat. He gave them of the bread of heaven.

Men ate angels' food and he sent them food to the full. So he talks then about raining the meat like dust, the feathered fowl like the sand of the seas when God brought the quail. Psalm 105, Psalm 106.

The psalmist again makes mention of God's provision of the manna, the bread from heaven. Jesus in the New Testament declares that he is the bread come down from heaven of which the manna was a type. And he that eats of me, he said, will never hunger and will never die.

Now in chapter 17, all of the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the wilderness of sin according to the commandment of the Lord and they camped in Rephidim. But there was no water for the people to drink. 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 that you have brought us out of the land of Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst? First you're going to starve us to death. Now you're going to kill us with thirst. So Moses cried out to the Lord saying, what shall I do with these people? They're ready to stone me.

And the Lord said to Moses, go on before the people, get out of there and go ahead of them and take with you some of the elders of Israel. So it could be that they were really ready to stone Moses. God says, get out in front of them, go out away from them, take some of the elders with you and take in your hand the rod with which you struck the river and go.

And 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 and 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, which means tempted and Meribah, which means contention or strife because of the contention of the children of Israel and because they tempted the Lord saying, is the Lord among us or not? And so no sooner does God provide the bread daily.

Now they're thinking that God's going to let him die of thirst. Isn't it interesting how quickly we forget what God has done? How quickly we can despair and imagine the worst. Now we're going to die of thirst.

Better off to have died in Egypt. Bring us out here and die of thirst. Horrible way to die.

And as Moses cries to the Lord, the Lord instructs him to go before the people with some of the elders so that they could witness the miracle of God. Take the rod, strike the rock, water would come out. Now, in the New Testament, Paul the apostle in 1 Corinthians 10 tells us that that rock that was with them in the wilderness was Jesus.

That rock was Christ. The rock smitten brought forth water of life to the people. And so the beautiful figure of Jesus smitten on the cross brings forth life to us.

Jesus said, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. Again, one of the last invitations of the Bible is to he that thirsteth, let him come and drink of the water of life freely. That water of life provided for us through Jesus Christ, having been smitten on the cross for our sins.

Now this is down near Egypt in Rephidim. Forty years later, when they're near Kadesh, they're going to come to Moses again and they're going to say, Moses, why did you ever lead us out of Egypt? That we might die of thirst in this wilderness? You haven't brought us into the land. Now we're going to die.

And Moses was angry. And he went in before God and he said, God, I can't take it anymore. I've had it up to here with these people.

I'm through. Can't stand it for 40 years, this constant complaining and murmuring I've had. God said, Moses, go out and speak to the rock that it might bring forth water for the people.

They are indeed thirsty. And Moses went out angry. This time it was before all of the congregation of Israel.

Before it was just before the elders that he smote the rock. This time before all of the congregation of Israel, angry with him, yelling at them, calling them a bunch of hypocrites. How long am I going to have to put up with you, you complainers, hypocrites? Must I smite this rock again and give you water? And he took his rod and he smote the rock.

And the water came pouring forth and the people drank. And God said, Moses, come here, son. Did I tell you to smite the rock? Didn't I tell you just speak to the rock? Do you realize, Moses, what you've done? You failed to represent me before the people.

You were a poor representation. In fact, you didn't represent me. You represented me wrong.

You represented me as angry and upset and all with those people. I'm not angry and upset with them, but they think I am because that's the way you represented me. You failed to represent me, Moses, before the people.

And therefore, I've got some bad news, Moses. I can't let you lead them into the promised land. Moses said, God, you've got to be kidding.

Man, I've taken all this guff for 40 years and I can't lead them in? God says, no, Moses. Lord, now that isn't fair. You ought to let me lead.

God says, don't talk to me about it anymore. It's settled. You can't do it.

Because you failed to represent me. Oh, what is an awesome thing here. That God holds us responsible to properly represent him.

You see, many people are getting their entire concept of God and of Christianity from what they see in your lives. You in reality are living epistles known and read of all men. There are many, many people who never pick up a Bible to read it.

To understand about God, but they'll read you like a book. They're watching your reaction. They're watching you especially.

Not when things are going well. They're watching you when things are tough. When their chips are down.

They want to see how you respond and how you react then. Because you are God's representative. I don't wonder how many times as Moses we failed to properly represent God.

Now, there was a double evil here in the smiting of the rock. Because of the typology and that rock is Jesus. Once the rock was smitten, once Jesus was crucified.

He never need to be smitten again in order to bring life, salvation. He died once and for all. And all that is necessary now is to speak to the rock and the water of life will flow freely to you.

You don't have to smite the rock. He has been smitten once. That's all that's necessary.

Now by faith, just ask. And the water of life will flow freely to each of you. And Moses destroyed this whole beautiful symbolism that God was creating with the rock and the water flowing for.

By smiting the rock the second time, he destroyed the beautiful symbology that God was creating. Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. Amalek was one of the descendants of Esau.

They were part of the Edomites. And Amalek in scripture, interestingly enough as we move along, will become a type of your flesh. And notice that God says you're going to have problems with this from generation to generation.

It's a battle that never is over. The battle with the flesh. And Amalek becomes a type of the flesh.

God has only one sentence for your flesh and that's crucify it. Mortify the deeds of the flesh by the spirit. Give no place to the flesh to live after it.

Reckon the old man to be dead, crucified with Christ. That's God's order for the flesh. We'll return with more of our verse-by-verse study through the book of Exodus in our next lesson.

As Pastor Chuck Smith continues to look at the preserving hand of God. And we do hope you'll make plans to join us. But right now I'd like to remind you that if you missed any part of today's message Or perhaps you'd like to order a copy for that special friend or loved one.

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We'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry. With your prayers and financial support. And be sure to join us again next time.

As Pastor Chuck Smith continues his verse by verse study through the book of Exodus. That's right here on the next edition of the word for today. Now once again here's Pastor Chuck Smith.

May the Lord be with you and help you now this week. As you walk with him. May his love and his spirit sustain you.

And may you in turn. Find a renewed relationship with him. As God works in your life.

Bringing you to that total commitment of your all. To him and to the things of the spirit. In Jesus name.

Undoubtedly one of the most glaring signs that our society is in trouble. Is the breakdown of the family unit. Marriages just aren't making it today.

And kids are suffering as they watch the breakup of their homes. Those marriages still holding together are often plagued by conflict and turmoil. Making the home a battleground instead of a refuge.

That's why the word for today would like to present. Pastor Chuck Smith's Marriage and Family MP3. Where Pastor Chuck discusses basic biblical principles to keep a family's love alive.

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