

Ex. 16:1 And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which *is* between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.

Ex. 16:2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

Ex. 16:3 And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, *and* when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

When they left Elim, they headed to the Desert of Sin and got there a month and a half after leaving Egypt. Again, the people grumbled; they didn't have enough food and were going to starve. They would rather have died in the land of Egypt with full stomachs. To hear them tell it, there was always more than enough food in Egypt. (Frankly, I think their memory was beginning to play a few tricks on them.)

Ex. 16:4 Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

Ex. 16:5 And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare *that* which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

Again the LORD decides to test the people as to their obedience. He tells Moses that He will rain down bread from heaven for them. They are to gather each day enough for that day only. On the sixth day they are to gather twice as much in preparation for the seventh day, the Sabbath.

Ex. 16:6 And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt:

Ex. 16:7 And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what *are* we, that ye murmur against us?

Ex. 16:8 And Moses said, *This shall be*, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what *are* we? your murmurings *are* not against us, but against the LORD.

So Moses and Aaron go out to tell the people and emphasize that this will be another affirmation that it is the LORD who delivered them from Egypt. They also remind them that when they grumble, it is against the LORD because He is the One in control. It doesn't do any good to grumble against him and Aaron; they are just God's servants. God has heard their grumbling and is going to send His glory for them to see the next morning. I think this is another visual reminder of Who is in charge. Then Moses tells them that they will also be given flesh to eat in the evening along with the bread in the morning. They will have plenty to eat.

Ex. 16:9 And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings.

Ex. 16:10 And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto 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.

So Moses tells Aaron to gather the people to come before the LORD. He did and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud as they looked toward the desert.

Ex. 16:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Ex. 16:12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD your God.

So the Lord speaks to Moses in response to the complaining of the Israelites—He’s heard all of it. (Just like He hears us, even when we aren’t speaking or complaining out loud. He knows our thoughts!)

Ezek. 11:5 And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, *every one of them*.

He tells Moses to tell the “children” of Israel (because in light of all they have witnessed, they are still acting like children) that they will eat meat in the evening and be filled with bread in the morning. It will be provided in such a way that they have to recognize it as provision from the “LORD your God.”

Ex. 16:13 And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.

Ex. 16:14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness *there lay* a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.

Ex. 16:15 And when the children of Israel saw *it*, they said one to another, *It is manna*: for they wist not what it *was*. And Moses said unto them, *This is* the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

Ex. 16:16 *This is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, *according to* the number of your persons; take ye every man for *them* which *are* in his tents.

That evening the camp was covered with quails for meat and in the morning after the dew melted, they found small round things that looked like frost left on the ground. They called it manna, which means “a whatness, what is it”; they didn’t know what it was. Then Moses tells them that this is the bread the Lord promised to give them. Then he told them that the LORD had commanded that they gather an omer for every person. This would be a plenty for every person’s appetite.

Ex. 16:17 And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less.

Ex. 16:18 And when they did mete *it* with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.

As usual, there were some who followed instructions and some who didn’t, but whether they had gathered too little or too much, there was enough for each person to have plenty to eat.

Ex. 16:19 And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning.

Ex. 16:20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them.

Then the people were instructed not to save any of it until the next morning. Again, they were some that did not obey. The ones who disobeyed got up the next morning to stinking leftovers full of worms. This made Moses angry.

Ex. 16:21 And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

Ex. 16:22 And it came to pass, *that* on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one *man*: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.

Ex. 16:23 And he said unto them, *This is that* which the LORD hath said, To morrow *is* the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake *that* which ye will bake *to day*, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

So each morning the people gathered what was needed and then the sun melted away the rest. (I think God was teaching them and us that He is sufficient day to day. When we choose to disobey, we end up making a stinking mess. We should learn to be satisfied with His provision in His timing.)

On the sixth day they were to gather two omers per person. It seems they did this first through their own initiative since the leaders felt the need to come and report to Moses. Moses confirmed that this was correct in preparation for the Sabbath, the day of rest. They were to bake or boil whatever was needed and save as needed to the next day. The LORD would preserve it since there would be no manna provided on the morning of the Sabbath. (I thought it was interesting that these people who seem so immature in many ways showed some maturity, forethought and common sense in this instance. They understood God's commandment regarding the Sabbath and decided to make preparation before actually being instructed. Only Moses had been instructed concerning this previously. God does not get unhappy with us for exercising our minds and making decisions based on the life principles He has established for us. The key is acting within His established parameters.)

Ex. 16:24 And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein.

Ex. 16:25 And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day *is* a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field.

Ex. 16:26 Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, *which is* the sabbath, in it there shall be none.

So the people who were obedient did as they were instructed, and the bread was good the next morning. Moses told them to eat the leftovers since they would not find any food to gather in the fields because the seventh day is a Sabbath (a rest) unto the LORD.

Ex. 16:27 And it came to pass, *that* there went out *some* of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.

Ex. 16:28 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?

Again, as usual, there are some who just don't listen; and when they went out the next morning to get their bread, there was none. Like any parent, the Lord wonders how many times He is going to have to say something before all His children listen!

Ex. 16:29 See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.

Ex. 16:30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

The LORD had given them the Sabbath. It was a gift, a day of rest, a day to meditate on their God and their blessings. God provided enough bread for two days on the sixth day because this Sabbath was pleasing to Him and good for the people. So the people rested on the Sabbath.

Ex. 16:31 And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it *was* like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it *was* like wafers *made* with honey.

Ex. 16:32 And Moses said, This *is* the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt.

Ex. 16:33 And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.

Ex. 16:34 As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept.

Here we are told that the manna was like white coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey. Then the LORD told Moses who told Aaron to take a pot and gather an omer of manna to save for future generations as a reminder of God's provision for His people in the wilderness after leaving Egypt. Aaron gathered it and put it with the Testimony.

(I first assumed this to mean the Ark of the Covenant and the ten commandments, but the ark hasn't been made and they haven't been given yet. As I think back over through the Genesis account and Exodus to this point, it is clear to me that there were already established laws and principles that were accepted as from the Lord. This would even affect my thoughts earlier re the Sabbath. Probably most of what we call the "ten commandments" were already identified as guiding principles for right living. The fact that God purposed to summarize the law into the ten commands written by His own finger is just another example of His great love for and understanding of us humans; we function more successfully when directions are clear, simple and to the point. He does everything in His power to help us be successful short of making us robots. Maybe the Testimony referred to here is a compilation of the writings of Moses to this point, which includes the guidelines for Passover, etc.)

The key is that they obeyed, and the people recognized the Testimony as a significant identifier.

Ex. 16:35 And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

Ex. 16:36 Now an omer is the tenth *part* of an ephah.

Then we are told that the people ate manna for forty years, until they came to the "promised land," Canaan. An omer is a tenth of an ephah, or about 2 quarts.