

God Establishes His People

Date: 08.16.2026 | God Provides Bread and Water
Scripture: Exodus 15-17

CENTRAL TRUTHS



PRESCHOOL:

God takes care of His people and gives them what they need.

YOUNGER KIDS (K5-2ND GRADE):

God provided food, water, and help for His people when they trusted Him.

OLDER KIDS (3RD-5TH GRADE):

God faithfully provided for Israel in the wilderness, teaching them to trust Him for their daily needs.

STUDENTS:

As God led Israel through the wilderness, He provided food, water, and victory over their enemies, revealing His faithfulness and teaching His people to depend on Him rather than themselves.

ADULTS:

God graciously provided for Israel's physical and spiritual needs despite their complaints and doubts. Through manna, water from the rock, and victory over Amalek, God demonstrated His covenant faithfulness and taught His people that true life and security are found in trusting His provision and power.

MEMORY VERSE

Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring to you today...The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." Exodus 14:13-14



DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Rebellion. All people interact with the truth and the person of God. Just as the people at Rephidim rebelled against Moses and ultimately against God, so failure to submit to God's will is rebellion. Rebellion can be against the revelation of God in nature, conscience, law, and ultimately the person of Jesus. Rebellion against a holy God is high treason as a traitor to God. - Danny Akin, Theology for the Church, 350.

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

In *Exodus 15*, on the safe side of the Red Sea, the Israelites sang a song of praise in celebration of the Lord's great deliverance. The "Song of Moses," inserted into the narrative of Exodus, is a psalm of praise that commemorates and celebrates God's rescue of the nation through the sea. In this poetic retelling of the historical account from the previous chapter, the people celebrated the Lord's triumph over Pharaoh's army, recognizing that their experience at the Red Sea demonstrated Yahweh's power, rule, and victory over all. This song is similar to other songs and psalms throughout both the Old and New Testaments that celebrate specific events revealing God's character and mighty works.

Following this great celebration, however, the narrative quickly shifts to focus on the people's grumbling and God's gracious provision during Israel's journey from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai (*Exodus 15:22-27; 16:1-12; 17:1-7*). Only three days after crossing the sea, the Israelites entered the wilderness and found no water (*15:22*). The irony is striking: the people had just witnessed the Lord display His unmatched power over the waters of the Red Sea, yet they immediately responded to hardship by grumbling against Moses because they lacked something to drink. Though Israel had seen the Lord's power firsthand, they quickly forgot and failed to trust Him.

With such a large number of people and livestock traveling through the desert, the lack of drinkable water was a serious problem, but it was not something unforeseen by the Lord. God intended to use these events as object lessons and tests for His people (*15:25*). The word "test" here carries the idea of proving or verifying the quality and genuineness of something. Through these difficult circumstances, the Lord was training His people and giving them opportunities to demonstrate and strengthen their faith. The need



for water and food was meant to teach Israel that God Himself would provide for their everyday needs.

When the people finally found water at Marah, it was bitter and undrinkable. Once again, “the people grumbled against Moses, saying, ‘What shall we drink?’” (15:24). Their response mirrored the complaints they had made at the Red Sea in *Exodus 14:10-12*. Israel still did not fully trust that the Lord’s presence with them was sufficient for both their protection and provision. This pattern of grumbling would continue throughout the journey to Sinai (16:2-3; 17:2-3) and would ultimately contribute to this generation being forbidden from entering the Promised Land (*Numbers 14:1-4*).

The signs and wonders in Egypt had already confirmed Moses as the Lord’s chosen leader for Israel, but the people still needed to respond faithfully to what God had revealed to them. In contrast to the people’s unbelief, Moses cried out to the Lord on their behalf, and the Lord graciously provided for them. At Marah, God made a statute and test for the people, demonstrating that if they would diligently listen to the voice of the Lord and obey His commands, He would graciously care for them as their healer (15:25-26). This statute called Israel to pay careful attention to everything God had commanded and would continue to reveal through Moses, the one through whom they would hear the voice of the Lord. God also reminded Israel that He had graciously spared them from the judgments that had fallen upon the Egyptians, and that faithful obedience was the means through which they would continue to experience the blessings of covenant relationship with Him (*Exodus 23:25; Deuteronomy 7:15*).

In *Exodus 16*, after leaving Elim, the Israelites once again complained against Moses and Aaron, this time because they lacked food. Remarkably, this occurred less than a month after they had crossed the Red Sea (16:1). The people even wished they had died in Egypt rather than be delivered into the wilderness, revealing that they still did not fully understand what the Lord’s mighty acts revealed about His character and His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Although the people grumbled against Moses and Aaron, Moses made it clear that their complaint was ultimately against the Lord Himself, and the Lord heard their grumbling (16:7-8).

Even so, God responded with grace. The Lord promised to provide bread from heaven and quail for the people to eat. Yet once again, He explained to Moses that this provision was also a test (16:4). By

giving manna, God was teaching Israel that their lives were to be sustained not merely by physical bread but by dependence on the Lord and obedience to His words. The daily gathering instructions were also intended to shape Israel's understanding of work and rest, patterns that would later be more fully revealed at Mount Sinai through the Sabbath commandment. The people were to gather only enough manna for each day and trust that God would provide the next morning again. In this way, the manna taught Israel to trust in the Lord's faithful provision for something they could not produce themselves (16:22-30).

Moses and Aaron told the people, "At evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because He has heard your grumbling against the Lord" (16:6-7). Just as the plagues had demonstrated to the Egyptians "that I am the Lord," these wilderness provisions were meant to teach Israel the same truth. Their constant complaints revealed that they were still learning to trust and recognize the Lord's sovereignty and care for them.

God also instructed Moses that an omer of manna should be preserved throughout future generations "so that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt" (16:32-34). Once again, the Lord called His people to remember where they had been and what He had graciously brought them out of.

In *Exodus 17*, Israel grumbled against Moses for a third time because of concern over physical provision (15:24-25; 16:2-3; 17:1-3). The people quarreled with Moses and tested the Lord despite having already witnessed the plagues in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and God's miraculous provision of both water and food. Their hardness of heart resembled that of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Yet even in the face of continued unbelief, the Lord remained faithful. In *Exodus 17:6*, God told Moses, "I will stand before you there on the rock." This statement provided a concrete reminder of God's earlier promise to Moses in *Exodus 3:12*: "I will be with you." The Lord's presence, already displayed through the pillar of cloud and fire, was once again demonstrated as Moses obeyed God's command and the Lord miraculously provided water from the rock for His people. Through these events, God continually revealed Himself as the faithful provider, present with His people even when they struggled to trust Him.

TELL THE STORY

Exodus 15 - 17



After the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, God led the people on a journey through the wilderness. The people traveled for three days with nothing to drink. Then they found water but could not drink it because it was bitter. The people grumbled and complained of Moses. Moses asked the Lord for help, and the Lord showed him a tree. Moses threw the tree in the water, and the water miraculously became clean and good to drink.

A few weeks later, God's people were grumbling again. They said, "If only we had died in Egypt! We had all the meat and bread we wanted there, but you brought us out here where we have nothing to eat! We will die of hunger!"

Moses and Aaron gathered all the people and said, "Tonight you will know that the Lord saved you from Egypt, and in the morning you will see the Lord's glory. Tonight the Lord will give you meat to eat, and in the morning you will eat bread until you are full because He has heard your complaints."

That night, quail covered the whole camp, and the Israelites were able to eat meat. In the morning, bread covered the ground like frost, and each person gathered as much as he needed for that day. Moses commanded them to gather as much as each person needed to eat and not to save any of it until the next day. Some people did not listen and tried to keep some bread for the next morning, but the bread spoiled. It smelled bad and had worms in it.

God wanted His people to rest on the seventh day of every week, called the Sabbath. The people were told to gather twice as much bread on the sixth day of the week so that the leftover bread would not spoil. God provided exactly what His people needed to eat each day.

The people complained against Moses and against God, but God still chose to give them the food and water they needed. We are all sinners and are enemies of God, but Christ still chose to die for us so that we might be saved.

REBUILD THE STORY



1. What did the Israelites do after God delivered them through the Red Sea, and what did their song celebrate about the Lord? *(Exodus 15:1-18)*
2. After leaving the Red Sea, what problem did the Israelites face in the wilderness, and how did they respond? *(Exodus 15:22-24)*
3. How did the Lord provide for the Israelites at Marah, and what lesson was He teaching them through this test? *(Exodus 15:25-26)*
4. What was the Israelites' second complaint in the wilderness, and who were they really grumbling against? *(Exodus 16:1-8)*
5. How did the Lord respond to Israel's complaints about food, and what did He provide for them? *(Exodus 16:9-15)*
6. What instructions did God give the Israelites about gathering manna, and what happened when some people disobeyed His commands? *(Exodus 16:16-21)*
7. How were the instructions for gathering manna different on the sixth day, and what was the purpose of those instructions? *(Exodus 16:22-30)*
8. What was Israel's third complaint in the wilderness, and how did the Lord once again provide for His people? *(Exodus 17:1-7)*
9. The Israelites praised God after crossing the Red Sea, yet only a few days later they were grumbling in the wilderness. Why is it often easier to praise God during victories than to trust Him during difficulties?

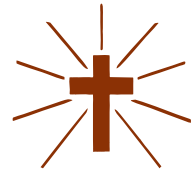
10. God used hunger, thirst, and hardship to “test” His people and teach them to trust Him. How can difficult situations in our own lives strengthen and reveal our faith?

11. The Israelites continually forgot God’s past faithfulness when new problems arose. What are some practical ways believers can remember and trust God’s faithfulness today?

12. God provided bread from heaven and water from the rock for His people in the wilderness. How do these provisions point forward to Jesus and the spiritual provision He gives to believers?

GOSPEL EMPHASIS

God’s deliverance, protection, and provision for the Israelites throughout the wilderness journey reveal His faithfulness, sovereignty, patience, and covenant love for His people. Even when the Israelites grumbled, doubted, and failed to trust Him, the Lord continued to provide them with water to quench their thirst, bread from heaven to satisfy their hunger, guidance through the wilderness, and protection from danger. Their survival depended completely upon God’s gracious provision. These events point forward to the greater salvation and provision found in Jesus Christ. Just as God rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt, Jesus came to rescue sinners from slavery to sin and the judgment we deserve. In the wilderness, God provided water from the rock and manna from heaven to sustain His people physically, but Jesus declared that He is the true “bread of life” and the “living water” who gives eternal life to all who trust in Him (*John 4:10-14; 6:32-35*). While physical water satisfies only temporarily, Jesus alone can satisfy the deepest spiritual thirst of the human heart. Through His death and resurrection, Christ provides forgiveness, spiritual freedom, eternal life, and the sustaining grace believers need each day. Just as Israel was called to trust the Lord daily for provision in the wilderness, believers today are called to trust Christ fully as the One who rescues, sustains, and faithfully leads His people forever.



WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TEACH US ABOUT GOD?

Use the attributes of God list and determine the characteristics of God that we see in today's story. How can knowing these characteristics of God to be true change the way we live in Christ?

PRAYER PROMPTS

Lord, thank you for listening to our grumbles and complaints when we lose sight of your plans for us and your true goodness to us. Thank you for being trustworthy and unwavering. Help us to rely on you and understand your sovereignty in our lives and over all.



THIS WEEK'S BIBLE READING

Exodus 19-23