

Manna and Quail

Michael Allen

I've always wondered how the Children of Israel dealt with eating the same things day in and day out as they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. How many men jokingly asked their wives, "What's for dinner tonight?" How many recipes were exchanged as people tried to create subtle variations in their never changing diet? These things may or may not have happened, but we do know that eventually they tired from the constancy of their diet (**Numbers 11**). Writers outside of this time period referred to manna in a different light, calling it "the bread of heaven" and "angel's food" (**Psalm 78:24-25**).

Whether or not this was fully appreciated at the time, we know that God sustained a large group of people in an inhospitable wilderness. In reality, they did not have the resources to sustain them even for a brief period of time, let alone 40 years (**Deuteronomy 8:15-16**). During their time in the wilderness, they were constantly supplied with food and water, clothing that didn't wear out, and we are even told that their feet did not swell up from all of the walking that they did (**Nehemiah 9:20-21**). God sustained them with everything that they needed to survive, until it was time to cross over the Jordan River into the Promised Land (**Exodus 16:35, Joshua 5:12**).

Jesus ties these events to our circumstances today in **John 6** when He spoke to the people at Capernaum about the events surrounding the feeding of the five thousand and the wandering in the wilderness. In **verse 35**, He tells them, "*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*" He further connects this in **Matthew 4:4** when tempted by Satan when He quotes the words of Moses in **Deuteronomy 8:1-5**, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*" These parallels are easy for us to see as we wander around in the sometimes inhospitable wilderness that we live in today. It is also a place we would not be able to navigate without direct assistance from God, let alone survive spiritually. Each and every day, the perils of temptation surround us at every turn and threaten not only to lead us astray, but also work to occupy our thoughts and to take captive all of our free time.

God has given us all that we need so that no peril of the spiritual wilderness would be too much for us. (**1 Corinthians 10:13**). And all that He provided has been designed to sustain us until such time as we cross the spiritual Jordan River. As we enter into God's Promised Land, our needs for spiritual manna and quail will transition to a way that we can receive God's word directly (**Revelation 7:13-17, Revelation 22:1-5**). The challenge facing each and every one of us is the same as those who wandered in the wilderness. As we live our day-to-day lives, we need to always make sure that we don't complain about our circumstances. All that we have in the world was given to us by God. Sometimes it may feel like we are wandering, but God has always had a plan for us, and He has given us directions through His word. The challenge then for us is to appreciate His blessings, follow His directions, and keep moving forward. A wonderful land of promise awaits us.

NixaChurchofChrist@gmail.com