

A TABLE IN THE WILDERNESS

TEXT: *Numbers 11:23: And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the LORD's Hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether My Word shall come to pass unto thee or not.*

INTRODUCTION

The Children of Israel had wandered in the wilderness for many months. They were tired of eating manna, and were murmuring their discontent as they remembered the food they had to eat in Egypt — the fish, melons, cucumbers, leeks, onions, and garlic. They wanted meat.

Their discontent made even a strong man like Moses grow weary. He told God his burden with the people was too great.



Numbers 11:14: I am not able to bear all this people alone because it is too heavy for me.

God heard His servant and answered. God's strength is always sufficient and made perfect in His children's weakness. The Apostle Paul tells us so in:

2 Corinthians 12:7-9:

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

GOD'S ACTION

- **He divided Moses' responsibility and his possession of the Spirit.**

Seventy men were called out to be elders and officers, sharing the

responsibility that was open Moses, as well as the blessing of the Spirit.

- **He told Moses to inform the people they would eat meat for the next month.**

The people had asked in complaining, doubting, and anger, so the “*anger of the Lord was kindled greatly.*”

- God had led them to freedom.
- God had fed them daily.
- God had given them meat before when they asked.
- There was no reason for their distrust and murmuring.

APPLICATION

If God was displeased by the fussing of the Children of Israel about their diet, how much more is He angered when we complain about our food! When you murmur, God hears it. He hears when your carnal appetite is stronger than your gratitude for blessings received.

When you murmur, God hears it.

Numbers 11:31-32a:

³¹ And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth.

^{32a} And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails:

The People's Action.

- **Greed**

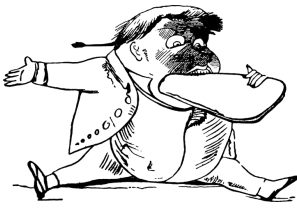
Numbers 11:32b: . . . he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp.

- **Ruled by appetite – not common sense.**

They Overate

Became violently ill

APPLICATION



Gluttony is still very real. Its dangers also are still very real. A recent study by a leading life insurance company (The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company) showed that the male who is 20% overweight has a 43% greater chance of having cerebral hemorrhage. A person who overeats is digging his grave with a fork.

Why did God provide this Food for an Ungrateful, Greedy People?

The psalmist tells us He did it as a testimony to all people, for all time, of His Power to meet our needs:

Psalms 78:3-7:

3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

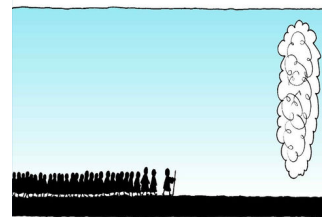
4 We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His Strength, and His wonderful Works that He hath done.

5 For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:

6 That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children:

7 That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the Works of God, but keep His Commandments:

The psalmist goes on to state His wondrous works: how He divided the Red Sea, guiding by them by a cloud and pillar of fire, how He brought forth the water from the rock, and then adds,



Psalms 78:18-19:

18 And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.

19 Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

Psalms 78:21-22

21 Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;

22 Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in His Salvation:

God knew their Need before they Spoke and had provided.

Quail migrate from Syria and Arabia in the autumn. They return in the

spring in huge masses. Exhausted from the long flight over the Red Sea, they drop to the ground or fly very low (about two cubits). As soon as they reach the coast, it's easy to take the birds with the hands or catch them in nets, then kill them with sticks.

Josephus describes this occurrence in Antiquities 111:5. Bedouins even today catch the exhausted quail in spring and autumn, by hand. God knew this migration of His creatures, and had placed Israel in the way of blessing before they even spoke.



Has God Blessed You with a Table in the Wilderness?

What has He done for you?

- Have you been freed from sin's bondage?
- Have you been led to larger things God has planned for you?
- Do you have enough to eat, enough to wear?
- Is it possible to list all your blessings?
- Do you ever take all this for granted as the Children of Israel did the manna?

Have you ever sought a special blessing?

- Some need that was most pressing on you
- Something that seemed as impossible as a "table of quail in the wilderness"
- Have you asked God for it in the Spirit of complaining and distress; or in faith and in loving obedience to Him?

When you have received . . . tell others!

ILLUSTRATION

It has been said that a Christian is one beggar telling another beggar where to get food!

- Tell it in your home.

- Tell it where you work.
- Tell it in the assembly of God's people.

CONCLUSION

If you are in the wilderness needing food, ask God. Ask in a spirit of thankfulness for all your previous blessings, and most of all — in thankfulness for His Son, The Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Ephesians 3:21: Unto Him be Glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen



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