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Quail and Manna from ADONAI

11: 4-9

Quail and manna from ADONAI DIG: Who were the rabble? Were there any believers among them? What was the real reason for their complaining? How does complaining show our lack of trust in God and His purposes? What is the attitude of the Israelites in this chapter compared to Exodus 16? Have you ever complained about God's purpose for your life?

REFLECT: Slowly, the people had become so accustomed to the miracles of ADONAI in their lives that they began to take Him for granted. Does that sound familiar? The Israelites' long journey is so much like ours. Sometimes, too much like ours! Thank the Lord that He knows what is best for us and provides us with all we need to accomplish His purposes.

A second rebellion.



The rabble with them had an intense desire for meat (11:4a). This account appropriately begins with **the rabble** (Hebrew: *'asafsuf*, sometime translated *riffraff*, appears only here in the TaNaKh), an appropriate term for **the Gentiles** who followed **the**

Hebrews out of **Egypt** (see the commentary on **Exodus**, **to see link click [Ca](#) - At the End of the 430 Years, to the Very Day**). This term points to a recurring source of **complaints** and trouble in the camp (see **[Bp](#) - Complaining at Tav'erah**). **Those** who did not know **YHVH** and **His** mercies too easily incited **those** who did know **Him** to rebel against **Him**. But, however **the complaining** began, it soon spread throughout the camp of **Isra'el**. **It only takes a little sin to leaven the whole lump (First Corinthians (5:6-7))**. It is likely that familiar texts on the need for separation from people who do not share biblical faith have their genesis in this account. We can see this in the Torah (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy [Dy](#) - Israelite Distinctiveness**), and also in the B'rit Chadashah (see **Second Corinthians [Bi](#) - Do Not be Unequally Yoked with Unbelievers**). Yet, not all the people termed **rabble** (or who began as **rabble**) were unbelievers! That is, we may expect that many **Gentiles** would have come to faith in **God** in view of **their** daily contact with **Hebrews** who did believe (**Exodus 14:30-31**). Among the non-**Hebrew people** we may presume had come to faith in **Ha'Shem** was the Kushite (African) **wife of Moshe (Numbers 12:1-2)**.

Whatever **their** origin, **the rabble** caused **Moshe** and **the people of Isra'el** a great deal of trouble. A similar group is creating problems for us today. In the parable of **the wheat and the weeds** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ev - The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds**), **Yeshua** taught that whenever **ADONAI** plants **His** true children, **the Adversary** comes along and plants counterfeits. **Satan** is an imitator and an infiltrator (**Jude 4:2; Second Peter 2:1-2**), which explains why **Paul** warned the Church about **some who pretended to be believers** (see the commentary on **Galatians [Ax](#) - False Brothers slipped in to Spy Out our Freedom in Messiah**), are **false ministers** (see the commentary on **Second Corinthians [Bz](#) - Servants of Satan**) and practice **a false Gospel** (see **Galatians [Aj](#) - No Other Gospel**).¹⁸¹

How did **their complaining** lead to rebellion? **They complained** about the lack of **meat**. The **quail** provided in **Exodus 16** had apparently been a one-time treat. But **their complaining** eventually spread to **the Israelites, who started wailing and** joined in and declared: **If only we had meat to eat!** First, we suspect that **meat** wasn't common food of the slaves in Egypt; secondly, it wasn't true that they had no **meat to eat**. **They** had both **flocks and herds**. In **Exodus 12:38** we learn that **a mixed multitude also went up with the Israelites, with a great number of both flocks and herds**. When **they** arrived in the Land forty years later, they still had **flocks and herds** because **Numbers 32:1** tells us that **the descendants of Reuben and the descendants of Gad had vast quantities of livestock**. So, the question remains, what were **they complaining** about?

Then, **they** changed **their** minds and wanted **fish**. **We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost**. Let's see . . . **fish** in the wilderness! It seems that **the riffraff** was so miserable that **they** were just making stuff up to **complain** about. But when **the Israelites** joined in with **the rabble** in **their complaining**, **the Hebrews** forgot the very reason **they** left **Egypt**. **They** were **slaves** only a year ago! **The Egyptians made their lives bitter with hard labor - digging clay, making bricks, all kinds of field work; and in all the toil they were shown no mercy (Exodus 1:14)**. How did **they** go from being **shown no mercy** to **cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic (11:4-5)**? **They** were romanticizing the past because "the-good-old-days" were really "the-bad-old-days." This is where the heart of mankind leads to when **God** is absent, never being grateful for what **they** had. Always wanting more. Just as a circle can never fill a triangle, so that heart of greed is never satisfied.

We need **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** to lead us.

But then, like petulant children, **they** said: **We have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna (11:6)**. After all **their complaining**, **they** didn't want to eat anymore. What was the real issue? **Verse 4** tells us that **the rabble with them had greedy desires**. This was beyond food, which **they** used as an excuse, because **they** could not have been hungry. Like **Eve**, who had all the fruits of the Garden except one, **the riffraff** had convinced **themselves** that **ADONAI** was withholding good things from **them**. So, in the end, **their complaining** was actually telling **God** that **His** provision did not measure up to **their** desires. **A complaining tongue** reveals an ungrateful heart. We are to be like **Paul** when from prison **he** said: **I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances (Phil 4:11)**. **He** understood that everything **he** had was from **God**.¹⁸²

Numerous naturalistic explanations have been given to the account for the provision of **manna** by those who have traveled in the Sinai. Some point to a secretion of the tamarisk tree of small, yellow/white balls that have a sweet taste. Others believe this secretion is not the product of the tree but is the excreta of certain scale insects made on the leaves of these trees during June in some areas of the Sinai. But like **the Flood** (see **Genesis Cj - The Waters Rose and the Ark Floated on the Surface of the Water**), there are no naturally occurring events that fit the plain reading of the text.¹⁸³ The miracle was that **the manna** was found in such giant quantities. **To feed two million people, they would have needed about nine million pounds of manna per day; that equals about forty-five hundred tons per year, or about a million tons annually for forty years**. All very remarkably scheduled every morning! So any natural cause would seem to be quite a stretch.¹⁸⁴

The Spirit of God then defended the **manna** by telling us how marvelous **it** was. **Manna** was the perfect food. Even without the rabbi's descriptive embellishments, there was food provided directly from **heaven**. **It was like coriander seed and looked like resin**. **The people went around gathering it, and then ground it in a hand mill or crushed it in a mortar**. **It was not boring! They could cook it in a pot or make it into loaves**. **And it tasted like something made with olive oil**. In Exodus 16:31 the taste of manna cakes was also compared to **honey**. **When the dew settled on the camp at night, the manna also came down (11:7-9)**. **According to the rabbis, the dew coated the manna, the bottom layer protecting it from the sand while the top layer protected it from being eaten by insects and flies**. **The manna** appeared in the early morning, blown in from **the heavens** during **the night** so that enough could be gathered for the daily consumption. Yet, **the Israelites** had begun to long for foods **they** once knew. In fact, there was nothing wrong with **the manna** except that **it** wasn't **meat, fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic!** Because **manna** was not what **they** desired, **they** rejected **it**, even though **it** was given to them by **God**.¹⁸⁵

Manna as bread from heaven points to the coming of **Jesus as the true bread from heaven, the bread of God, and the living bread that came down from heaven (John 6:32-33 and 51)**, all in a spiritual sense (**John 6:63**). **Yeshua**, as both **the bread of life (John 6:35 and 48)** and the source of the **water of life (Revelation 21:6, 22:1 and 17)**, can therefore say to us: **He who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty (John 6:35)**. However, **Messiah** made a clear distinction between **manna** and **Himself** when he said: **Our forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever (John 6:58)**. We **will live forever** when we believe in **Him (John 6:40)**.¹⁸⁶

Therefore, manna is a type of Messiah: The Sh'khinah **glory** was connected with the giving of the **manna (John 1:14)**; **it came down from heaven (Ephesians 4:10)**, **it was a free gift from God (John 3:16)**, the **manna** was sent to **Isra'el (Matthew 15:24)**, people had to gather their own **manna**, **it was to be a personal experience (John 1:12)**, they were to be fed daily from **it (Psalm 69:19)**; the **manna** was despised by those who were not **God's children (Numbers 11:4-6; Revelation 16:8-11)**, **manna** did not decay on **the Sabbath day (Psalm 16:8-10)**, and **it is now hidden, something you see but you don't understand (Revelation 2:17)**.¹⁸⁷

Dear Heavenly Father, *praise **You** for always being such a gracious giver! **You** gave the gift so that people might have a life full of abundant joy. **I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10c)!** Just as it was a personal experience to*

gather **the manna**, so salvation is a personal experience of being united to **Messiah** faith. **For, if you confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed for salvation (Romans 10:9-10).**

You so graciously choose the path of salvation to be made holy by being in **Messiah**. **He chose us in the Messiah before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love (Ephesian 1:4).** The blood of **Messiah** removes trespasses. **In Him we have redemption through His blood - the removal of trespasses - in keeping with the richness of His grace (Ephesian 1:7).** All who love **You**, **You** promise to make holy by their being in **Messiah**. **Your** desire is to save people from hell, but it is a personal choice, just as gathering **manna** was a personal choice. **Making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Ephesians 1:9-10).**

What an absolutely wonderful gift **You** gave to deliver me from sin's awful penalty of death by **Messiah's** painful death, and then to transfer all of **Messiah's righteousness** to my spiritual bank account so I could come and live with **You** in heaven. **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).**

What a costly and loving gift **You** chose to give, knowing how much pain and shame it would cost **You**! **You** are so worthy of all my love! It may cost me a little to live for **You** in this world, but it is far worth the cost so that we may spend all eternity in heaven with **You**! **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18).** I fix my eyes on pleasing **You** in all we do, say and think. I have an audience of One! Trials and problems will come, but my heart will be fixed on doing **Your** will. **You** are my wonderful and loving **Father**, and the gracious gift-giver of eternal life! In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen