

## Contemporary bread?

Someone has said:

“Money can buy you a house, but not a home; money can buy you an education, but not wisdom; money can buy you a bed, but not restful sleep; money can buy you influence, but not respect; it can buy you medicine, but not health; a spouse, but not love; quiet, but not tranquility.”

Q.10 To the contemporary Western mind, how might money be a provide a suitable parallel to “manna” or bread?

Q.11 What satisfies for eternity?

Q.12 How can we live in a way in our contemporary setting that demonstrates dependence on God for the essentials of life? For eternal life?

Q.13 What are the things you grumble about not having enough of?

Q.14 2 Peter 1:3 states that God has given the follower of Christ all that is needed for “life and godliness”. The “Lord’s Prayer” (Luke 11:3) recommends that we ask for what we need each day from God. How can we put this into practice in the “real” world of budgets, supermarkets, freezers, fast food,, etc. in order to demonstrate and practice dependence on the Lord as a first principle of faith?

Q.15 How do Jesus’ words in John 6 influence your understanding of participating in The Lord’s Supper (Holy Communion)?



## #6 Got What You Need

## Exodus 16

*Exod 16:35*

*The Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan.*

**The God of Freedom**

## Recap

A significant point has been reached in our studies– Israel has been freed from its oppression in Egypt (Exod. 13:17-14:31). At last their response has been praise and thanksgiving (Exod. 15). In the following chapters Israel is to learn what they have been freed *to*. They have learned that their freedom and salvation depend upon God in the exceptional episodes of the exodus itself. Now they must learn about dependence on the Lord for life itself.



## Warm Up

Q.1 Consider the highest rating programs on TV in your district at present. What do these programs indicate to you about the dominant interests in your society?

## What’s Next

Chapter 16 of Exodus begins the transition from Egypt to the Promised Land. No doubt your answers to Q.1 involves things people can see, touch, taste, eat, drink, play, wear, and more. Such things easily become gods of our time. However, some of them represent essentials for life: food, drink, clothing and shelter. In the next part of Exodus, the Israelites will be tested—their dependence on God for life’s essentials will be tested. In the process we learn something about God and something about human nature.



TRIVIA ANSWER  
In Bethlehem, whose name means the  
“house of bread”.

## Getting into the Text Exodus 16:1-35

Our passage for study is set in a section of Exodus where the Israelites have begun their desert journeying hoping to reach the Promised Land and are tested regarding their dependence on God:



- in response to thirst (Exod. 15:22-27; 17:1-7)
- in response to hunger (Exod. 16)
- in response to challenges (Exod. 17:8-18:27)

**READ** chapter 16

Q.2 What problem does Israel face?

Q.3 How do the people respond?

Q.4 How does God respond?

### EXERCISE:

Ask Questions 2 through 4 (above) for the following passages:

- Exodus 15:22-27; Exodus 17:1-7
- Exodus 17:8-16; Exodus 18

Q.5 In Philippians 3:19 Paul states that for certain enemies of the Gospel “their god is their stomach”. How true is this adage for the Israelites in Exodus 16?

Q.6 In Exodus 34:6-8 God is said to be merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. How is this demonstrated in chapter 16? Other parts of the book of Exodus?

Q.7 What does the recurring pattern of whinging and grumbling from the Israelites suggest to you about human nature? (READ Psalm 78:15-55 for a commentary)

## Jesus- the bread of life John 6:35-58

After describing the miraculous provision of food for five thousand people by Jesus, John preserves for us words of Jesus that clearly are linked to our study in the Exodus. Like the Exodus community, the crowd attending Jesus’ picnic was hungry for food that didn’t last. The account of food provided by God through Moses when the Israelites were in the desert for 40 years would have been, for all Jews present in the crowds following Jesus, a foundational story. The food perished at the end of each day. The lesson to be learned was about desiring food that lasts, but they did not understand.

St. Augustine of Hippo observed that every single person has a God-shaped vacuum in the soul. We can attempt to fill that cavity with a host of other things, but finally nothing satiates thirst for our redemption and our hunger for significance except Jesus and His gospel.



*Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.*

John 6:35

READ John 6:36-52

Q.8 What references to you see to the Exodus desert experiences? What is emphasized by Jesus?

READ John 6:53-58

(For those worried about the literal problems of the teaching, no self-respecting religious Jew of the 1st Century would have mistaken this for a call to cannibalism! The Old Testament law prohibited the eating of anything with the blood still present in it.)

Q.9 How does John 6:40 help the reader to make sense of verses 53-57? What is Jesus suggesting about himself in relation to the lessons we’ve learned from the Exodus events?

TRIVIA QUESTION  
Where was Jesus of Nazareth born?  
(see p.4 for answer)