

Exod 03-09-14b

We're ready to resume our study this morning, and we pick up in Exodus chapter 16. We have already seen that the children of Israel journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation came to the wilderness of Sin. We saw that this is a reference to thorns, sin, Sinai, and so on.

The afflictions that are represented by thorns, we looked at the thorny crown of Christ in this regard as a symbolic reminder of these things. There is grumbling, there is complaining involved here, and I wanted to read in regard to this, since we've already covered it just a little bit, from one of my favorite Bible commentators, C. H. McIntosh. He was from the Brethren Persuasion back in the 1800s.

He has a set of small books like this called Notes on Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and there are many others. I've got quite a few of them. But the comments that he makes here put it, I think, about as well as it can be put, and rather than trying to paraphrase him, I thought I would just read it.

He talks about the provision that God makes for our necessary needs, the glories, the distinctions, and the honors of this life that were held out to the Lord and that He set aside in order to bear our afflictions on the cross. It says, very different was it with Israel after the flesh. By the way, if anyone has this set or wants to look it up, I'm reading from Notes on Exodus, and this is page 209 or so in that volume, his comments on chapter 16.

Very different it was with Israel after the flesh. No sooner did they feel the pressure of hunger than they murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. They seemed to have actually lost the sense of having been delivered by the hand of Jehovah, for they said, Ye have brought us forth into this wilderness.

And again in chapter 17, the people murmured against Moses and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? Thus did they on every occasion evince a fretful murmuring spirit and prove how little they realized the presence and the hand of their almighty and infinitely gracious Deliverer. Now nothing is more dishonoring to God than the manifestation of a complaining spirit on the part of those that belong to him. The apostle gives it as a special mark of Gentile corruption that, quote, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.

Then follows the practical result of this unthankful spirit, quote, they became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened. Romans 12:1. The heart that ceases to retain a thankful sense of God's goodness will speedily become dark.

You read that again. The heart that ceases to retain a thankful sense of God's goodness will speedily become dark. Thus Israel lost the sense of being in God's hands.

And this led, as might be expected, to still thicker darkness. For we find them further on in their

history, saying, Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children shall be a prey? That's in Numbers 14 and verse 3. Such is the line along which a soul out of communion will travel. It first loses the sense of being in God's hands for good and finally begins to deem itself in his hands for evil.

Melancholy progress this. However, the people being so far the subjects of grace are provided for, and our chapter furnishes the marvelous account of this provision. Quote, Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you.

They, when enveloped in the chilling cloud of their unbelief, had said, Would God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt when we sat by the flesh pots and when we did eat bread to the full. But now the word is bread from heaven. Blessed contrast.

How amazing the difference between the flesh pots, the leeks, onions and garlic of Egypt and this heavenly manna, angels food. The former belonged to earth, the latter to heaven. But then this heavenly food was of necessity a test of Israel's condition.

We don't always think, and this is me talking, we don't always think of God's provision as a test. We think of it as meeting a need and well, it's about time. I was getting short and here it is.

Thank you very much. And yet we have seen already and Macintosh makes the same point. I didn't unfortunately read this till after we had done our previous lessons.

I just read this early this morning, but he makes the same point that we have observed that this is by way of a challenge. It is a test of how Israel will respond to the furthered grace of God, even in the face of their complaining. So it was a necessity, a test of Israel's condition.

This is Macintosh again. As we read that, I may prove them whether they will walk in my law or no. It needed a heart weaned from Egypt's influences to be satisfied with or enjoy bread from heaven.

In point of fact, we know that the people were not satisfied with it, but despised it, pronounced it light food and lusted for flesh. Thus they proved how little their hearts were delivered from Egypt or disposed to walk in God's law. Then he quotes Acts 7:39 in their hearts, they turned back again to Egypt, but instead of getting back thither, they were ultimately carried away beyond Babylon.

Acts 7:43 This is a solemn and salutary lesson for Christians. If those who are redeemed from this present evil world do not walk with God in thankfulness of heart, satisfied with his provision for the redeemed in the wilderness, they are in danger of falling into the snare of Babylonish influences. This is a serious consideration.

This is the point that he makes that I really like. It demands a heavenly taste to feed on bread from heaven. Nature cannot relish such food.

It will ever yearn after Egypt and therefore it must be kept down. It is our privilege as those who have been baptized unto Christ's death and risen again through the faith of the operation of God to feed upon Christ as the bread of life which came down from heaven. This is our wilderness food, Christ, as ministered by the Holy Ghost through the written word.

While for our spiritual refreshment the Holy Ghost has come down as the precious fruit of the smitten rock, Christ as smitten for us, such is our rare portion in this desert world. Well, I think that's really great and one of the reasons you have to like Macintosh is his clear understanding of that balance that we have seen so many times between the written word and the manifestation and the ministry of God's spirit. Let me just read you one other quick part here.

I know this is lengthy, but I think it's really good. He says this, now it is obvious that in order to enjoy such a portion as this, our hearts must be weaned from everything in this present evil world, from all that would address itself to us as natural men, as men alive in the flesh. A worldly heart, a carnal mind, would neither find Christ in the word nor enjoy him if found.

The manna was so pure and delicate that it could not bear contact with the earth. This is a point he makes that I didn't pick up on, did you note that? The manna was so pure and delicate that it could not bear contact with the earth. It fell upon the dew, see Numbers 11.9, and had to be gathered before the sun was up.

Each one, therefore, had to rise early and seek his daily portion. So it is with the people of God now. The heavenly manna must be gathered fresh every morning.

Yesterday's manna will not do for today, nor today's for tomorrow. We must feed upon Christ every day with fresh energy of the Spirit, else we shall cease to grow. Moreover, we must make Christ our primary object, we must seek him early before other things have had time to take possession of our poor, susceptible hearts.

Many of us, alas, fail in this. We give Christ a secondary place, and the consequence is we are left feeble and barren. The enemy, ever watchful, takes advantage of our excessive spiritual indolence to rob us of the blessedness and strength which flow from feeding upon Christ.

The new life in the believer can only be nourished and sustained by Christ. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. John 6.57 But isn't that a great point? And you remember that the dew fell, the heavy dew fell, and the manna was on top of the dew.

And as the sun rose and the dew evaporated, so did the manna. And there's a picture there of the heavenly bread from God not contacting the earth. It floats on the drops of dew and had to be collected.

It is as though it is the water that keeps that bread. You have the bread and the water. You have the manna floating on top of the dew drops, which keep it separated from the ground, which is great.

You think about this stuff down in the dirt. You wouldn't want to pick your food up out of the dirt. But it floats upon the dew.

And you think about the washing of water and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, and you get the idea that this bread and this water together are that which keeps that bread sanctified and holy and fit for consumption. But it has to be gathered early while the dew is present, because when the sun rises and the dew evaporates, then the manna goes down into the soil and is dissipated and no longer available. So there's a great picture there, and I think C.H. McIntosh does a wonderful job of drawing that over into our experience.

We do need a daily focus on who we are and why we're here. And it is a wonderful habit to form to begin the day in prayer and to begin the day in meditation on God's Word and partaking of those stores of nourishment that God has imparted to us. Well, in Exodus chapter 16, God rains the manna down.

Moses and Aaron tell them about it. It says, You will see the glory of the Lord. He hears your complaints.

You will see that when He gives you meat in the evening and morning bread to the full, you will know that He is the Lord. So the first experiences with manna are recounted there. In verse 15, Moses said to them, This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.

I had Dan play, and he's going to work up, hopefully be able to play the entire thing. This is a hymnal that my great-great-great-grandfather carried back in the mid-1800s called the Sacred Harp, and there's a hymn in here. The words are by Isaac Watts, and it's short.

This won't take long, but the words say, In vain we lavish out our lives to gather empty wind. The choicest blessings earth can yield will starve a hungry mind. Come and the Lord shall feed our souls with more substantial meat, with such as saints in glory love, with such as angels eat.

Those are very dense words. There's a lot of thought in those few short phrases. Let me just read it to you again.

In vain we lavish out our lives to gather empty wind. The choicest blessings earth can yield will starve a hungry mind. Come and the Lord shall feed our souls with more substantial meat, with such as saints in glory love, with such as angels eat.

This is the choice we make every day. Are we going to spend our day pursuing that which we cannot grasp in the hand, which we cannot carry forward into the future, or are we going to let the Lord feed us with more substantial meat, with that that the saints in glory love, with that that the angels themselves, and this manna is called the bread of angels elsewhere in the scripture. So, Moses encourages them in verse 16, let every man take for those who are in his tent.

And this is a reminder that we can share the word with one another, especially with those in our

household. There is a communal meal. There is a sharing of the nourishment here.

So the children of Israel did so and gathered some more and some less. When they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over. He who gathered little had no lack.

God provides exactly as much as we need. Some people said, well, I don't know how long this is going to last. I'd better gather as much as I can.

But when he got back and measured it, there was one omer per person and excess labor and excess gathering didn't result in excess portions. There was exactly enough to meet the need. One omer.

And God said, now you have a responsibility to eat all of your portion. You have one omer there, consume it all. Well, those who did not and left some for the next day, it turned wormy and stank.

And you have a connection, as we noted last time, to the feeding of the 5,000 and the feeding of the 4,000. When God provides bread, it is exactly the right amount. We need to take it.

And just like he said about the communal cup, drink ye all of it. Eat ye all of it. Don't just pick and choose and say, well, I like the soft center and not the hard crust.

He gives us the bread. We eat the whole thing. Now, their bread didn't have a crust, per se.

Theirs is more like soft tortillas or depending on if it was leavened or unleavened. But we need to be susceptible to the whole counsel of God, everything in the word of God, the not so fun passages and the not so easy to take passages, as well as that that is savory to us. Now, we saw the description, we came down to verse 32.

This is the new portion for this morning. This is the thing which the Lord has commanded, fill an omer with it. This is kind of like a court jug.

An omer is a tenth of an ephod, an ephod is kind of a basket full. So you can think of this as sort of a court jug. Fill an omer with it to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.

Moses said to Aaron, you see the chain of command here, delegation, take a pot, put an omer of manna in it and lay it up before the Lord to be kept for your generations. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony to be kept. And the children of Israel ate manna 40 years until they came to an inhabited land.

They ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. Now, you will notice that this particular section sort of removes itself from the present time and looks over the whole next 40 year period. And that's why it talks about laying it up before the testimony.

They don't have the Ark of the Covenant yet, do they? That is what the testimony is. But the

narrator here at this point is sort of pulling back and saying they got the pot and they kept it. And later on, when they had the Ark of the Covenant, it is going to be placed before that.

And they're going to continue to eat this for the next 40 years all the way until they come to the land. This particular comment was made sometime after they went into the land. This is not contemporaneously written.

So the children of Israel are going to eat this for 40 years until they come to an inhabited land. They're going to eat it till they come to the border of the land of Canaan. And there is a change once they get to the land.

And we could wait and cover this when we get to the crossing of Jordan. But the word of God makes mention of it here. So we're going to deal with it here.

What does it mean? Why does it tell us that they ate it for 40 years? Here's a question for you. Why didn't God continue to rain manna on the children of Israel in Canaan? It seemed like a pretty convenient way to provide. Well, let me ask you a different question.

Why do parents not continue to feed their children after they're grown? When they're little, you buy the baby food, you fly the airplane and open wide and in it goes. And you spoon feed them when they cannot feed themselves. Right.

Out in the wilderness, you cannot plant crops and stick around and wait for them to grow and be ready for harvest. You're in a mobile environment. This is the McDonald's, if you will.

This is the fast food. This is the traveling fare for the nomadic life that they will lead for 40 years. When they are established, when they are settled, when they have their own possession, the manna stops.

They go in and they live in the land that has so much better fare. But it is going to be their responsibility to sow the ground, to cultivate the crops, to harvest the crops, to thresh the grain, to gather the wheat into barns, to take the wheat out and grind it into flour, to take the flour and mix it with other ingredients and make bread, cook the bread and partake of the bread. They will have a much greater responsibility for their own sustenance once they reach the land.

What does the land of Canaan represent? Symbolically, spiritually speaking, as we interpret and apply the word of God, we are well familiar with what Egypt represents, what Passover and coming out under the blood means. We know what the passage through the Yom Suf means and we find ourselves now in this 40 year period of testing in the wilderness prior to the nation, actually the second generation in the nation, entering into the land. Traditionally and down through the centuries and in many churches today, the land of Canaan is perceived as a picture of heaven.

You know, the whole idea of on Jordan's stormy banks I stand and cast a wistful eye to Canaan's

fair and happy land where my possessions lie. I choose to interpret the words of some hymns differently than the writer or other singers of the hymn may interpret them, because many people think of it as crossing Jordan is death and going to heaven. You have that I'm a poor wayfaring stranger song and it says I'm traveling through this weary land and I'm going over Jordan.

I'm going over home. It's talking about death. And so Canaan was viewed as heaven.

Canaan is not heaven. If you don't remember anything else out of this morning, carry that away with you. Write it in the front of your Bible.

Canaan is not heaven. I don't want to get to Canaan and start having to hack and slash on the Hivites and the Amorites and the Hittites and the Girgashites. I don't want to be getting knocked down and my teeth stove in at A.I. I don't want to be plagued with the presence of all of these heights that have not been driven out of land, have not been utterly destroyed.

Canaan is not heaven. Canaan is the mature phase of our lives as believers. The birth coming out of Egypt.

The youth toddlerhood, the baby food stage. Is the wanderings. God spreads out the field, I've talked before about you look at the films of the Boston Marathon or whatever that they're going to run.

They ran the Boston Marathon while we were on the only family vacation we've ever taken out to the Boston area. They ran the marathon while we were there. We didn't go and see it because we were looking at Lexington and Concord and whatnot.

But it was all over the news. And if you've ever seen those, everybody bunches up at the starting line and begins. The gun is fired and everybody takes off.

There's this massive horde of thousands of people all trying to not trip each other leaving the start line. Well, as the race progresses, you find that the ones who you're interested in, the ones who are contending for the lead and are going to be among the first to finish, they get out ahead of the pack and the field begins to spread. And by the time the first one crosses the finish line, those that were all together at the beginning are spread over miles, literally miles, five, six, seven, eight miles worth of people.

Then you've got people on the way back who are wheeling their wheelchairs and stubbing along on crutches and they want to do it. They're not trying to win. They just want to finish.

Well, that tribulation of the 23.5 miles or whatever it is on a marathon spreads the field and you find out who has the endurance, who has gone through the training, who is the marathoner that is going to finish in the front or who has the stamina just to finish at all. Some people throw up their hands and or throw up their lunch or throw up whatever they're going to throw up and they and they quit. They stop.

They, you know, blow a tire some kind of way. They seize up their leg, cramps up as some bad thing happens and some people don't finish at all. Well, God has said several times now, you're in this wilderness experience to be tested.

And it turns out that nearly everybody in this first group is going to drop in the wilderness. They're not going to enter the land. An entire generation of nearly two million people is going to drop in the wilderness.

And then it is the second generation that goes in. Well, if you total up everybody in Israel from the time of the departure from Egypt to the time of the entrance in the land, you've got, let's say, four million people. You've got the first two million and the second two million.

We'll just round it off. But the totality there is four million. OK, and of those, just conservatively speaking, half of them never even made it across the Jordan.

Caleb and Joshua from the first generation, not even Moses and Aaron, make it across the Jordan into the land. So the odds, when you just look at the totality of the first two generations in Israel, are not that encouraging. But what did the Lord say? Go to the Gospel of Matthew, strive to enter by the narrow gate.

For wide is the way and broad is the gate that leads to destruction. And there's a lot of people on that road. Narrow is the way, straight is the gate that leads to life.

And few there be that find it. A lot of people on the road, not that many get through the gate. A lot of people in the wilderness, not that many entering the land.

A lot of people are going to get into the land, but not that many are going to be truly victorious in the sense of faithfulness to God, blessing from God, and not be slaughtered in battle, distracted by the Canaanites or whatever. There is a fraction, a minority fraction, and that's being generous. There is a minority fraction of the people of God who are going to push through and truly cross the spiritual finish line that Paul talked about when he said, I have fought the good fight.

I have run my race. I have finished the course. I know now there is laid up for me a crown, a wreath, the wreath itself in the ancient world was made of leaves, just a little garland of leaves.

Its intrinsic value was low. It was its symbolic value that counted. When you put the laurel wreath on your head, you are the one that succeeded.

You are the one that persevered. You are the one that ran the race without stepping out of bounds, without disqualifying yourself, without bumping other runners and being disqualified. You fight the good fight.

You run your race with patience and endurance, and you finish the course. This is what's going on here when it talks about them eating manna for 40 years. There is a phase in our spiritual

lives where God does a lot for us.

He hands us things. He spoon feeds us. He nurtures us as we nurture our own children.

But it is an awful thing to see these people who have this particular disease. It's rare, but they don't grow up. They get older and older, but they still have a child's body.

And it's a deformity. It's a strangeness. It's a congenital bad thing that happens to these few people.

And you see them on the strange thing shows on television. But that's not what we hope for our children. We don't want our children to remain children and always be in the high chair.

Our goal is to nurture them so that they will grow and become independent, self-sustaining and functional. That's God's will for us. And there comes a time when he says, I'm not going to drop manna on your head anymore.

I expect you to cross Jordan. I expect you to enter into the mature phase where you sow your seed. You cultivate your crops.

You reap your harvest. You thresh your grain. You gather your wheat into the barn.

You pull it out and grind it. You make flour. You make the dough.

You put it in the oven. You bake it. You pull it out and you make your own meals.

I will bless you with the wherewithal. What is the criteria? What is the mechanism for charity for the widows and orphans in Israel? Behold, when thou bakest thy bread, thou shalt take the tenth of every loaf or the tenth part of every batch and set it on thy windowsill for the widows and orphans to come and collect the bread. Is that what it says? What does it say? Leave the corners of your field available.

Don't reap them. Leave the wheat on the stock. What does this mean? Think about charity in Israel.

At any given point, God could have said after you've harvested or after you've stored or after you've made your flour, they could have given the harvested grain to them and say, you thresh it yourself. But they didn't. They said, well, after you threshed it, give them the threshed grain so they can make their own.

No. Well, after you've collected the grain and you've ground it and you've made flour, give the flour to them. Doesn't say that.

Well, after you've taken the flour and mixed it and made dough, give them some dough to bake for themselves. No. After you've made the bread, give them some of the completed bread.

No. Back at the very beginning, the earliest point where they can do for themselves, God says

after you've sowed the seed, which they don't have any seed to sow and some plants have grown, leave them some of the plants, leave the corners of the field ungleaned and let them do as much for themselves as they possibly can. They will go.

Wait a minute. They're a widow and orphan. What about the little ones? God says, look, leave the standing wheat for them to come in.

They do their own harvesting. They do their own threshing. They do their own storing.

They do their own grinding. They do their own mixing. They do their own baking.

This is the picture of charity in Israel for the orphans and for the widows. New Testament says, but him who does not work, not eat. We are to do as much for ourselves as we possibly can.

This is the biblical picture. And this is the picture that we have here at the end of Exodus 16. They eat the manna for 40 years until they come to an inhabited land.

Why is it called an inhabited land? This is a land with the potential for growing crops. This is where they're going to settle. This is where they can do for themselves.

And as soon as they are in a position to do for themselves, God says, do for yourself, not going to rain the manna down every morning. I did that for you when you could not grow crops, when you could not cultivate livestock enough to sustain yourself. I gave you the staple.

I gave you the staff of life, the bread from heaven. But you should now in your maturity, be able to take what I have given you and do for yourself. So there's a shift.

But what does this mean for us? We go through our observation, interpretation, application mode. What does it mean? We cannot always expect our spiritual life to remain on the same footing. Most of us have gone from church to church over the years.

We didn't start out in one church and stay there all our lives. Why? It isn't that there was anything necessarily wrong with any previous church that we have been in or any previous source of spiritual nourishment. But when you're a kindergartner, you go to kindergarten.

When you're an intermediate student, you go to an intermediate school. When you're an adult, you go to an adult school. I personally think that our church and our fellowship is a more advanced school.

And it's one of the reasons I think we will always remain small, because there are many spiritual kindergartens in Dallas. There are many places where you can go. And I'm not saying that in a negative sense.

It's needful. All of us had to start and learn the basics of faith in Christ, learn the basics of our salvation, the basics of God's plan and purpose, the basic things in the Word of God, the fundamentals, all of us. And we start our growth at that point.

This is not the best fellowship, in my opinion, for someone who just got saved, because we are seeking to push the envelope of our understanding in the Word of God. And it's confusing if you have no frame of reference and if you haven't had a chance to metabolize and understand and learn through experience basic things. It doesn't mean that it can't happen here, but I think God chooses special ones who get fed from the adult table rather than getting their Gerber baby food in the high chair.

And it takes an individual that God has blessed with the ability to catch up quickly. And I think all of us in this assembly, the reason we are here and not elsewhere, is not that this is a superior assembly or that there's something magical or special here, but we are of a certain kind. We are at a certain place and God has brought us together here to learn and to grow.

And it is totally God's will for other people to be where they are and learning and growing where they are from the pastor or teacher that they're learning from. It is not a matter of quality. It isn't a matter of superiority or inferiority.

It is a matter of God meeting the needs of his children and his people in his way and in his time. And we've had changes in our fellowship and our congregation here over the years. People have come and people have gone.

And it is all in the sovereign plan and purpose and will of God. We are where we are for a reason. God had the people of Israel in the wilderness for 40 years and he fed them with manna, but they don't eat manna ever after.

There comes a time when they cross into a new phase, a new stage, and we do the same. And it is important for us to understand that you cannot say, well, where's my high chair and where's my baby food? If you are healthy and if you grow, we need more substantial meat. We need that which the saints in glory love and that which which angels eat.

So we move forward, we grow, we become more spiritually self-sustaining. And this is the expectation. God is looking for the standard of a mature man.

Read Ephesians chapter four, till we all grow up to the standard, to the stature of a mature man, interlinked and fellowshiping in that which every joint supplies. OK, chapter 17, then all the children of Israel set out on their journey from the wilderness of Thorns according to the commandment of the Lord. They were in that desert until God's time for them to leave.

They were in that wilderness until the glory cloud picked up and began to move. People looked over and said, well, the Lord's on the move. Let's pack up and follow him.

Jesus is going to make a similar statement. My sheep hear my voice. They follow me.

If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me according to the commandment of the Lord. And they can't in Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore, the people contended with Moses and said, give us water that we may

drink.

Now, it has become almost a truism that we as believers encounter no water situations that we encounter. We water is is the other part, you know, bread and water. You can live on that.

They're getting the bread every morning, but they've run out of water. Rephidim, by the way, means resting places. They were in the wilderness of Thorns, you notice that God has this cycle of stress and relief, stress and relief, testing, cessation of testing, testing, resting, sort of the testing, resting cycle.

So now they're at Rephidim, which means resting places. Places to stay, and so they've got a place to stay, but they've got nothing to drink. Give us water that we may drink.

And they are contending with Moses. Now, in spiritual terms, this is arguing with the human messenger instead of the Lord God. And this is ever Israel's problem.

They want a scapegoat. They want someone to blame. Moses is the they don't want to go shake their fist at the glory cloud, do they? They don't want to go stalking out there toward the pillar of fire some evening and say, hey, you pillar of fire, where's my water? I've got children crying with thirst.

They don't dare. They find Moses and they want to bang on Moses and contend with him. Moses says, why do you contend with me? Why do you test the Lord? God was patient when you cried out for meat and he gave you meat.

He was patient when you cried out for bread and he gave you bread. Now you don't rest and wait for his provision. You don't sit and say, though he slay me yet, will I trust him? As soon as you run short of something, you're contending.

Why do you test the Lord? The people thirsted there for water and the people complained against Moses and said, why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst? Well. We're going to have to stop here for this morning, but. Think about it, do we fall into this trap? Do we assume that God has somehow dead ended us in his plan, that he sort of failed to scope the whole thing out? Why have you brought me to this place where I'm in need? And we rail and we want to find somebody to yell at.

Moses says, why are you contending with me? If you've got an issue, go out there and talk to that cloud, see what he has to say. Better yet, calm yourself. Rest in the Lord, be of good cheer.

He hasn't brought you out here to die. If you're in the place of maturity, if you're in the place, if you've crossed the Jordan and you're in the land, maybe it's time to be plowing. Maybe it's time to be harvesting.

Maybe it's time to be threshing and storing and grinding. Maybe you've come to an expectation that there's going to be manna on the ground when, in fact. You have crossed over and God

has said, I'm taking your training wheels off and you're going to peddle this thing on your own.

All of us are accountable not to one another, but to the Lord. Each of us has to make that judgment for ourselves. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the privilege of studying your word. Thank you for your tender care and your tender mercy toward us. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will give us a clear perception of where we stand before you and enable us to apply your word and live in a way that's pleasing in your sight.

We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.