



Reverend Dr. Charles L. McNeil, Sr., Senior Pastor  
15 E. Charleston Avenue Lawnside, New Jersey 08045  
[www.gracetemplebaptist.org](http://www.gracetemplebaptist.org)

## A STUDY OF THE WHOLE BIBLE

### THE BOOK OF EXODUS

---

#### JOURNEY TO SINAI (16:1-18:27)

##### Introduction

On the journey from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai, the Israelites repeatedly reveal their lack of faith, yet God continues to show himself faithful by providing for them. After God demonstrates his great power through the plagues and finalizes Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea, these chapters record Israel's travels from the Red Sea to the foot of Mount Sinai. Throughout this section Israel is depicted as faithless and grumbling, yet God still provides for all their needs. He provides for their physical need of sustenance on multiple occasions (Exodus 15:22-17:7) as well as their spiritual need for leadership in the face of both external (17:8-16) and internal (18:1-27) problems. Ultimately, God sustains his people as he brings them to his mountain (18:5) in order to confirm his covenant relationship with them.

##### Gospel Glimpses

**BREAD FROM HEAVEN.** Not long after expressing fear over the approaching Egyptian army and experiencing God's powerful salvation (Exodus 14), the Israelites grumble that they have no food (16:2-3). As he did previously, here again God graciously responds to their concerns and declares that he will "rain bread from heaven for you" (16:4). God provided this heavenly bread—manna—for the entirety of Israel's wilderness wandering to sustain them throughout their travels (16:35). Similarly, when Jesus was faced with 5,000 hungry followers, he also fed them with miraculous bread (John 6:1-14). He then went on to identify himself as the living bread that has come down from heaven (v. 51). Jesus notes that though Israel was sustained by the manna in the wilderness, eventually they all died. However, those who feed upon Jesus, the living bread from heaven, will live forever (v. 58).

**WATER FROM THE ROCK.** Immediately after God provides this bread from heaven, the Israelites quarrel with Moses and complain that they have no water to drink. In response, God tells Moses to strike a rock, out of which water pours for the people to drink (Exodus 17:1-7). Paul sees in this episode a foreshadowing of Jesus' work, saying that all Israel "drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4). Indeed, although the water from this rock quenched Israel's physical thirst, it pointed to the only fount that could quench their spiritual thirst: God himself. Similarly, when passing through Samaria, Jesus told a Samaritan woman that the water from Jacob's well would satisfy her physical thirst for a while, but that the living water he gives results in eternal life, quenching spiritual thirst forever (John 4:10,14).

**SABBATH.** When God instructs Israel how to gather the manna, he tells them to gather two days' worth on the sixth day of the week so they can honor him by resting on the seventh day (Exodus 16:22-30). Although this passage contains the first occurrence of the word "Sabbath" in Scripture (v. 23), the concept is first presented in creation when God rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3). This divine rest in creation is later given as the grounds for Israel to rest from all their labors on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11). In the New Testament, when Jesus is questioned about his actions on the seventh day, he declares that he is "lord of the Sabbath" (Matthew 12:8), and the writer of Hebrews says that those who trust in him enter God's Sabbath rest (Hebrews 4:3-4).

**TESTING.** In these chapters, the theme of testing appears several times. When providing both sweet water and manna, God states that he is testing Israel to see if they will obey his word (Exodus 15:25-26; 16:4). However, rather than responding faithfully to God, Israel immediately quarrels with Moses and puts God to the test (17:2,7). Psalm 95 interprets this latter testing as stemming from Israel's hard heart (Psalm 95:8-9), and the writer of Hebrews uses this Psalm to exhort his readers not to have an "evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).

**SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP.** Jethro advises Moses to select "men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe" to help govern the people (Exodus 18:21). These qualifications for leadership are fundamentally concerned with spiritual maturity rather than personal charisma or dynamic ability. Such spiritual requirements for leadership are later reflected in Israel's law of the king (Deuteronomy 17:14-20) and Paul's instructions for elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). In short, in order to be a good leader of God's people, one must first be a good follower of God himself.

**PROVIDENCE.** A pervading theme throughout these chapters is God's providence. Providence simply refers to God governing his people and providing for their needs. In this section God provides his people with sweet water (Exodus 15:22-27), bread from heaven (16:1-36), and water from the rock (17:1-7). His providence is also evident in Israel's supernatural defeat of Amalek (17:8-16) and in Jethro's encounter with Moses, in which past provision of deliverance is recalled (18:1-12) and future provision of leadership is arranged (18:13-27). Significantly, the first three examples of God's providence come in response to Israel's sinful grumbling (15:24; 16:2-3; 17:3). This highlights the gracious nature of God's providence: he does not provide for his people because they are faithful, but because he is faithful.

**SIN.** This section also emphasizes Israel's sinfulness and rebellion. God's people repeatedly grumble against Moses (15:24; 16:2-3; 17:3), and even twice accuse him of seeking to kill them (16:3; 17:3). In both of these latter instances, the people's rebellion against Moses is interpreted as an affront against God himself (16:7-8; 17:2). Furthermore, Israel's disobedience to God's commands through Moses is mentioned twice in the account of the manna (16:20, 27-29), and their general lack of faith after the Red Sea deliverance stands in sharp contrast to Jethro's praise of God's supreme power based on the same event (18:9-12). These various elements combine to portray Israel as wholly sinful and unworthy recipients of God's favor.

**Glossary of Terms**

*Samaritan: A person from Samaria, which was populated with people who were part Jew and part Gentile.*

**Please answer the following questions:**

**Exodus Chapter 16**

1. The opening verses of the manna episode (Ex. 16:1–5) contain elements of sin, grace, and law. Identify each of these elements in these verses. Of the latter two, which comes first, grace or law? Why is this significant?
2. Where is the Desert of Sin, according to verse one and when did the Israelites arrive there? (Exodus 16:1)
3. Who did the community grumble against? (Exodus 16:2)
4. How did the Israelites remember their lives in Egypt? (Exodus 16:3)
5. Why had Moses brought them to the desert? (Exodus 16:3)
6. What was to rain from heaven? (Exodus 16:4)
7. What was God using the bread for? (Exodus 16:4)
8. Twice in Exodus 16:6–8, Moses interprets the people's grumbling against him and Aaron as grumbling against God. What does this suggest about the nature of Moses' leadership over Israel? How does this then inform our understanding of the people's actions in 16:19-20?
9. What was the Lord giving the Israelites and when? (Exodus 16:8)
10. Where was the glory of the Lord seen? (Exodus 16:10)

11. What came in the evening and covered the camp? (Exodus 16:13)
12. Describe the coming of the bread? (Exodus 16:13-14)
13. How much bread were the people to gather? (Exodus 16:16)
14. In Exodus 16:16-26, God gives the people instructions for how to gather the manna. They are to gather just enough for each day's consumption, and enough on the sixth day for two days' consumption. According to Moses' later interpretation of this in Deuteronomy 8:2-3, what were these instructions supposed to teach Israel?
15. Although some gathered much and some little, how much did each have? (Exodus 16:18)
16. What happened to the bread that was kept until morning? (Exodus 16:20)
17. What happened to the bread when the sun was hot? (Exodus 16:21)
18. How could the food be prepared for the Sabbath? (Exodus 16:23)
19. What happened to those who went to gather on the Sabbath? (Exodus 16:27)
20. What were the people to do on the Sabbath? (Exodus 16:29)
21. What was the bread called? What did it look and taste like? (Exodus 16:31)
22. How much manna was to be kept and for how long and why? (Exodus 16:32)
23. Where was the omer of manna put? (Exodus 16:34)

24. How long did the Israelites eat manna? (Exodus 16:35)

25. How much was an omer, according to this verse? (Exodus 16:36)

## **Exodus Chapter 17**

1. At first glance, Exodus 17:1-7 seems to be about Israel grumbling for water again. However, verse 7 suggests that a deeper sin problem is the issue here. What is this problem? What are we to learn from this?
2. Where did the people camp and could find no water? (Exodus 17:1)
3. When they quarreled with Moses, what did he say they were doing? (Exodus 17:2)
4. What did Moses say the people were ready to do? (Exodus 17:4)
5. Where was Moses to go? What and who were to go with him? (Exodus 17:5)
6. Israel's battle against Amalek contains the last appearance of the "staff of God" (17:9), which was the instrument used to bring the plagues against Egypt, to part the Red Sea (14:16), and to bring water from the rock (17:5). What do these prior uses of the staff suggest about the nature of the battle that ensues?
7. What was Moses to do to the rock? (Exodus 17:6)
8. What did Moses name that place and why? (Exodus 17:7)
9. Who attacked the Israelites and where? (Exodus 17:8)

10. At the Red Sea, God fought Egypt for Israel (14:14). At Rephidim, however, God fights Amalek through Israel (17:8-16). What might these two types of physical warfare illustrate for us concerning God's role and our role in the spiritual battles we face today?
11. Joshua was to go fight, where was Moses going? What does Moses call his staff? (Exodus 17:9)
12. Who went to the hill with Moses? How was the battle 'controlled'? (Exodus 17:10,11)
13. What happened when Moses' arms grew tired? (Exodus 17:12)
14. How long did the battle last? Who won? (Exodus 17:12-13)
15. Where was this event to be written and why? Why was Joshua to hear this? What did Moses call the altar he built? (Exodus 17:14,15)

## **Exodus Chapter 18**

1. The last time Jethro and Zipporah were mentioned was in chapter 4, just before Moses returned to Egypt to begin the exodus (Ex. 4:18,25). Why might the writer emphasize their presence here at the beginning of chapter 18?
2. Who heard of what God had done for Moses and Israel? (Exodus 18:1)
3. The narratives of Exodus 15:22-17:7 portray Israel as generally faithless, despite being delivered by God from Egypt. What is ironic about the response of Jethro—who is reintroduced in 18:1 as “the priest of Midian”—to this same event (Exodus 18:8-12)?

4. Where had Moses sent his wife and sons? (Exodus 18:2)
5. What were the names of Moses sons? What did they mean? Where did Jethro meet Moses, according to verse five? (Exodus 18:3-5)
6. What did Moses tell Jethro in verse eight? (Exodus 13:8)
7. What was Jethro's reaction, according to this verse? (Exodus 18:9)
8. What did Jethro know now, according to verse eleven? (Exodus 18:11)
9. What did Jethro offer in verse twelve? Who ate with Jethro here? (Exodus 18:12)
10. What was Moses serving as to the people? (Exodus 18:13)
11. How long a day did Moses judge? (Exodus 18:13)
12. In Exodus 18:13-22, Jethro gives Moses advice for how to assign leadership responsibilities over Israel. According to verse 23, what ultimately undergirds the success of Moses' leadership strategy? What does this imply for leaders of God's people today?
13. What kind of judging was Moses doing? (Exodus 18:15)
14. Why did Jethro think what Moses was doing, was not good? (Exodus 18:18)
15. What did Jethro say Moses job (or position) should be? (Exodus 18:19)
16. What was Jethro's plan for judging? (Exodus 18:20-21)



17. What qualifications should the men selected to judges have? (Exodus 18:21)

18. Who would judge difficult cases, simple cases? (Exodus 18:22)

19. What would this system accomplish? (Exodus 18:23)

20. Where did Moses send Jethro, according to this verse? (Exodus 18:27)