

# Wilderness Training

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Date: 01 March 2020

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now as we continue our progress through this section in Exodus, we saw in chapter 15, towards the end of the song of Moses, how the Lord, after they had come to Manah, where the waters were bitter and they could not drink them, where the people, instead of crying to the Lord and asking him for help, they instead just began to murmur.

And we read that there he made, verse 25 of chapter 15, there he made for them a statute and an ordinance and there he proved them.

And this is part of the Lord's intention, time after time, throughout the wilderness experience, to prove, to test, to teach and to instruct his children so that coming as they were out of centuries of bondage in Egypt, bondage not only of a physical nature whereby they were slaves and poorly treated, but also bondage of a spiritual nature, where they knew nothing of the God of their fathers, where they were in bondage to the pagan idols of Egypt, and for all they knew, these were all the gods that there were. So they were in bondage both spiritual and physical, and of course the spiritual and the physical are often interconnected.

But as the Lord has delivered them physically out of Egypt now, bringing them by means of the plague and through the Red Sea into this wilderness, where there is, in a sense, yes, no distractions, but also there is none of the necessities of life.

They are therefore dependent wholly upon somebody else to provide it. But their inclination now, instead of asking this living God for help, is simply to moan.

[ 1 : 54 ] God intends to prove them, to test them, to exert a little pressure upon their souls, so that that soul, thus pressurized, may respond in one of two ways.

The way of faith, to ask, or the way simply of rebellion, to moan and to murmur. And hitherto, of course, they have a great tendency towards that which is the way of the flesh, the way of nature, to moan, to murmur at what goes wrong, instead of to thank the Lord for what he has given, and to trust that as he hath been, so he shall continue to be.

This is part of the reason for why these obstacles come against them. These inevitable obstacles. If you're going to wander in a wilderness in a desert, there's not going to be food.

There's not going to be water. There's not going to be shelter or protection unless the Lord provides it. One becomes thereby dependent upon the Lord.

And it is necessary to live by his provision, by his protection, day by day. And this they were required to learn. And, of course, they took a while learning.

[ 3 : 08 ] So, we read they took their journey from Elan, where they had spent, where there were 12 wells of water, 3 store and 10 pantries. No doubt very comfortable existence, but they moved on from there.

Now, it is said by commentators that travellers in the desert now, whether in Sinai or elsewhere, routinely take provisions for 40 days. Presumably because the amount of desert at the cross or a sandstorm comes up or something unforeseen happens, you have a bit of a reserve.

So, 40 days was the standard amount of provision you would take with you. Now, remember that, as we see here, the Israelites have been going. This is now the 15th day of the second month.

So, they've had a month since they left Egypt. That's four weeks, roughly 30 days. And then the 15th day of the second month now, so that's halfway through the second month.

In other words, six weeks. So, the provisions, roughly, if they had a normal amount of provisions, would have run out after 40 days. And here they are now, roughly about the, what, 45, 50 sort of day mark.

[ 4 : 18 ] And so, things are running low. Things are getting desperate. They are becoming anxious. So, they turn to mourning. Now, of course, it is natural to be concerned about lack of food.

It's a reasonable concern. Provisions are running out. What is not reasonable now is that when the Lord has provided for them up until now, they, instead of trusting him, start mourning again. So, they're mourning against Moses and Aaron, verse 2. But really, of course, it's against the Lord. And we see that, verses 7 and against that, and verse 8. For all that heareth your murmurings against the Lord, and what are we that you murmur against us?

And again, at the end of verse 8. It is against the Lord that they are murmuring. So, but the Lord intends to prove that. You know, would to God we have died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, when we could eat bread to the full.

Now, of course, this term flesh pots has entered into popular parlance with a far more kind of exciting and racy meaning than it actually has. It doesn't mean anything to do with vice or carnality in that sense.

[ 5 : 29 ] It simply means, literally, the cooking pots in which the chunks of meat were cooked. That's all it means. So, flesh pots is not an exciting term for people of a certain profession or anything like that.

It simply means cooking pots in which the chunks of meat would be prepared and cooked. But, this is their point. Yes, we were slaves. Yes, we were in bondage.

But, at least we had enough to eat. And, here we are now. We are free. Great. But, we are starving to death. So, what's going to be the situation? So, they moved to the Lord.

He has taken us out here to kill this assembly with hunger. Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or no.

In other words, you've got something of a case to say that you're hungry. That's understandable.

That's a fact. But, if I provide for you, would you then turn and obey me?

[ 6 : 35 ] Would you then be obedient to me? Or, not. I'm proving the people. I'm testing the people with this time of need. And, of course, we know what the answer ends up being.

God does his part. And, they, of course, don't do theirs. But, the point here is, and the point of this chapter, and part of that of the previous chapter, is that throughout it, with the manna, with the quails, with the testing about the Sabbath, the wilderness training continues.

And, God intends to train up his people in the way that they should go. So, instead of a generation of centuries worth of slaves, who have known only darkness and oppression, who are pretty proud and proud and fearful, and cowardly, we might say, By the time they come into the land of Canaan, the promised land, there will be a leaner, fitter, spiritually dependent generation, who have learned the hard way, that dependence upon the Lord brings strength, brings victory, brings provision, so that all the nations of the peoples into the land of Canaan, where they come, are terrified of them.

There is that power of the Spirit in which they finally enter in to the promised land, for which they are not yet ready now. This is the early stage of their instruction.

The wilderness training continues. The lessons are repeated. The lesson at the end of chapter 15, with regard to the water, is repeated now with regard to bread.

[ 8 : 10 ] The objective remains the same. That is, to teach by experience the virtue of trust and faith in the Lord to provide.

I'll say that again. The objective remains the same. To teach by experience the virtue of trust and faith in the Lord to provide.

Now, of course, when God provides something every day, day after day, it doesn't tend to make us grateful, does it? It tends to make us take it for granted. Rather like, say, if a sort of grumpy husband came home from work every day and his wife, every day, had the dinner on the table and everything cooked and everything ready and this one time she didn't have it.

And instead of saying, where's my dinner? Why isn't it there? Which would be ingratitude and just, you know, completely bullshit. But instead of thinking, well, something's wrong here. She normally has this, maybe she's ill or maybe she wasn't able to do it.

Maybe the cooker's broken, maybe something's gone wrong. There must be a reason for this. I have to go and find out why this is so out of character and see if I can help. That would be what a nice person would do.

[ 9 : 22 ] But human nature, impatience, the obvious will say, come on, where is it? Why isn't it there? And this is what the children of Israel are doing. God has provided for them up to now, all the time.

And now they're saying, where's the bread? Where's the food? We might as well have been back in Egypt. And this is the thing. They are to be taught, they are to be trained to become, not like those of fallen human nature, but to become like God, who in his nature and in his being is one filled with love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, all the characteristics of God and of his spirit, that is what they are to become like.

So the wilderness training is to continue. That before they can put their faith into practice, of course, Moses and Aaron must themselves take on board what the Lord has said and then transmit it to the people.

Before they can do it, their leaders first must trust and believe. So we have Moses and Aaron, verse 6, said to all the children of Israel, and even then ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt and in the morning then ye shall see the glory of the Lord for that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord and what are we that ye murmur against us.

This shall be when the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat and in the morning bread to the full for that the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him. So Moses and Aaron have to take it on trust and they can't say, Lord, how will we actually know that you're going to do this?

[11:03] And if we say it and you don't do it, well, they're going to stone us then. You know, what have you got to lose? You're either going to die of starvation if the Lord doesn't do it or the people will stone you.

One way or another, you have to put your trust in the Lord. So they have to do it first. They have to believe and they have to convince the people, we believe what the Lord says.

Just as Paul, remember in his storm-tossed ship there in the Mediterranean, it says, now this is the fourth night since anybody's eaten anything, so come on, eat some food because I believe God that he will deliver us and that every soul on this ship will end up being spared.

And so then they did eat and they trusted and they believed him. I believe God, Paul said, and this is what Moses and Aaron are called upon to do. You see, if we want others to believe in Christ, if we want others to believe that this is a Saviour who actually changes and transforms lives, we have to believe it first.

We can't convince anybody else to believe and trust in someone that we ourselves are not quite sure about. And to believe that he will provide all that we need if we don't actually think that he really will, you know.

[12:15] And so often we are timid about our Saviour, we're timid about the Lord and we ought to actually step out in faith as Moses and Aaron are required here to do.

So they said to all the congregation of Israel, come near before the Lord, for ye have heard your murmurs. And it came to pass as Aaron spake, this is verse 10, unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared, in the cloud.

This is the first thing to notice. The glory of the Lord appeared. This training in the wilderness is not simply about, it's not about the leadership of Moses and Aaron.

Before the children of Israel enter the promised land, they're both dead. Moses and Aaron are both dead. This is not about any earthly leader. This is about the Lord and his relationship with his people.

As it happens, all those who are adults at this stage, by the time the children of Israel enter the promised land, all of that generation are dead as well.

[13:20] And yet the church continues. Yet the people of God go on with the unchanging God. The glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.

That's what this is all about. It's about the glory of the Lord and the relationship of his people with them, which will either be a relation of trust and faith and obedience, a living relationship, or else it will be one of rejection and indifference.

So this is the thing that the Lord wants to train and to test his people and to prove them in this way. So anyway, verse 13, came to pass that even the quails, the small birds, came up and covered the camp and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.

Now, the coming of the quails, by which of course they would be able to eat the flesh of the birds, they would have flesh to eat in the evening, this of course comes again in Numbers chapter 11.

And on this occasion here in Exodus, it appears to be a one-off. The regular provision day by day was going to be the manna.

[14:27] But the quails come up on this first occasion, just I suppose to prove that God can do it. But in Numbers chapter 11, you'll see of course that it is for a whole month that they are to be fed upon the flesh of the quails.

Verse 19 of Numbers 11. You shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days, but even a whole month until it come out of your nostrils and it be loathsome unto you, because that ye have despised the Lord which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, why came we forth out of Egypt, in other words, who will give us flesh to eat, in other words. So, the Lord on that occasion gives them quails for a month, but on this occasion it appears to be just a single one evening event. The manna is what this chapter is ultimately pointing to and about. So, as we say, it appears to be a one-off. And then, as it appears on the dew that appears on the ground, when the dew that lay was thrown up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.

Now, not having seen it ourselves, we can't really think or describe it, but it sounds from the description as though the manna that appears on the ground is roughly the size of small hailstones. [15:55] Now, we've all seen plenty of hailstones in the last few weeks. So, if you can imagine the whole ground covered with tiny little hailstones, the manna that is upon the ground, they don't know what it is.

So, they look at it, they wonder what it is. And so, this is what we read. It is manna. Now, this is, of course, remember that the Old Testament is written in Hebrew.

And it's two Hebrew words that we have here. Man hoa. Now, the sound is almost silent. And it's a hoa. It's not a ha, like manna, like we have it now in the anglicized version.

Rather, man hoa. And if you put it together, man hoa. So, it's been anglicized as manna. But it's literally is what it?

Question mark. As you'll see, the is there, what is it? It is manna. It's not what it was. It is manna. What is it?

[16:59] It's literally, when they're saying it is manna, what the literal Hebrew is what bracket is it? What it? Because they didn't know what it was.

It's in italics, which means it's not part of the original. So, what it? Because they didn't know what it. And that's literally how the term comes to be. Manna. It means what it.

So, man hoa. And then, because they didn't know what it was, ma hoa. So, it's just slightly different in Hebrew. One is the questioning, what is it?

Man hoa. And then, because they didn't know what it was, ma hoa. So, the two words there both refer it to essentially an unknown.

It's like an Australian animal, kangaroo. It is said that when the British sailors landed in Australia and saw these creatures bouncing about and said to the Aboriginal natives, what's that particular animal?

[18:00] And allegedly, the person they were speaking to or the people said kangaroo, which, meant, apparently, I don't know. So, that's the name that they ended up having, kangaroo, because they didn't know what it was.

So, manna is, what is it? That's what it essentially means, for they wist not what it was. And Moses said, in answer to their question, this is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.

This is what the Lord has provided for you. And when the children of Israel suffered, he said, this is the bread. This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded. Gathered every man according to his eating, an omer for every man according to the number of your persons.

Take ye every man for them which are in his tents. Now, one of these ancient biblical measures, which it doesn't really help us how much is an omer when we think of a scoop, we think, well, is it a scoopful?

An omer is approximately 2.2 litres. Difficult, again, to visualise. So, we've got a little tub here. And in this little tub is oat flakes.

[19:07] Oat flakes are not exactly the same as the manna would be, but, you know, for size wise, each individual flake probably is, and this is almost exactly 2.2 litres in this tub.

So, this is about an omer's worth, of what the people would gather. They'd be gathering it by hand. They wouldn't have scoops in it, so they're picking it up off the ground, putting it in their vessels, and by the time they've gathered it all up, packed it all down, this is how much they'd have.

2.2 litres. This is an omer of whatever they would get. So, if you want to try and envisage the amount, it's that amount. And gathering all that by hand with your fingers, it's hard work. It's going to take quite a while to do it, but you've got to do it, and you've got to do it while you can, because once the sun is up, it melts, and it disappears.

Now, of course, there's a message there about gospel opportunity. You know, the food by which the Lord would feed us, the bread of heaven upon which he would feed our souls, you've got to gather it whilst you still can.

[ 20 : 19 ] And picking it up and gathering it, yeah, may be hard work. But what's the alternative? The alternative is that your soul will starve. Your soul may feed itself on other things for a while, but it will not succeed in keeping you alive spiritually.

we have to gather that bread of heaven whilst we still can, because otherwise the opportunity will have gone. The opportunity will pass away.

We have to act while there is the opportunity, because it will pass away. Take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered some more, some less, and when they did meet it with an omer, he had gathered much and nothing over, and he had gathered little and no lack.

And they gathered every man according to his evening. Moses said, let no man leave of it until the morning. Now, the omer is the measure, that's the amount that you take, but you see, of course, some people and everybody think, well, let's get one over on God here, he's provided it today, we'll just be clever, we'll be sensible, we'll keep some extra just in case God doesn't send it in the morning, but what is that if not mistrust, if not lack of faith?

So, some kept it until the morning and it bred worms and stank so they couldn't use it. God intends that we seize not only the opportunity, but that we partake of that which he gives whilst we still can.

[ 21 : 49 ] you see, most people like to think, well, I can put it off, I can put it off for a little while, got my bag on the shelf, I can go back to it whenever I like, I can rake in again all my Sunday school prizes from when I was a child and open the books and look at them then and there'll be time enough.

When I'm old, when I reach a certain age, how do you know you'll be spared to be old? How do you know that when you are old in your own mind, you'll still have that mind?

How do you know you'll have clarity? How do you know you'll have opportunity? How do you know that you won't in fact have become so hardened against the Lord that it will be effectively useless to you?

I've got in one of the wee sheds that I've got in the man's where I sometimes cut wood or whatever. It's a wee pair of sec of carts that I used to cut branches with. And I went to go and make use of them the other day.

And yet, they could still be used at a pinch. But the fact was they'd been sitting there so long in the cold and in the damp that I'd really pry them open to try and get them to work and force them open and close because they were rusted into position.

[ 23 : 02 ] There was nothing wrong with the instrument itself. It had just gone unused and uncared for so long that it no longer really served the purpose for which it was designed.

And the things that we think we can keep for as long as we like and then just expect them to be fine. Then expect them just to be to service us as though they would have done in the spring of our day and in the days of our youth and when we first have the opportunity.

They breed worms and stink. They become rusted over. You don't know that you have any promise of tomorrow. Moses was loved for them. Of course he was.

An opportunity that had been missed. An opportunity of obedience. The children of Israel had been told what to do and they thought they knew better. And the lessons go on.

The learning the hard way. Now of course there are those who will say yes but of course it says it's coming from heaven but really it's not because there is a resinous gum of this particular name manna in the desert in that particular area you know in Sinai and it's distilled in the desert region from the tamarisk tree this little evergreen shrub or small tree that grows in the desert and in sandy places and this resinous gum is greatly valued by the Arab natives and it is preserved carefully by those who gather it.

[ 24 : 31 ] It is collected early in the morning and it melts under the heat of the sun and then it congeals again by the cool of the night air. It tastes apparently as sweet as honey and of course we see verse 31 there the taste of it was like wafers made with honey and by some distinguished

travelers and scholars it has been presumed to be you know from its lightish appearance and from these characteristics and the place and timing of its gathering and so on it has been presumed to be the substance on which the Israelites were fed.

Now if that were the case then that would make this to be a provision of nature and not of grace. And so of course higher critics and liberals will seize on that and say well that's what it was. It was just a naturally occurring plant or resinous gum and they fed upon it and that's how they survived. It wasn't God. It wasn't people pouring down, it wasn't God pouring down this branch from heaven.

It was this natural resinous gum and they just ate this. Well apart from the fact that this resinous gum is a medicine and not a food, whatever its particular takes, it is, it's not something which admits of being boiled, seethed as it says there in verse 23 or baked.

You can't do that with it. Not if you keep it because it breed worms and stink. Not is there any way in which provision could miraculously stop on the seventh day and then start again on the eighth day. [ 26 : 06 ] All of these things would be known about. This would be, if it's a naturally occurring plant resin, it would have been known about by desert dwellers. And the children of Israel had dwelt in the desert in the days before they came into Egypt yet.

None of them said, oh yeah, it's this natural resin, it's gone with a piece of tamarisk tree. Of course we recognize it. No, they didn't have a clue what it was. Manhoa, what is it?

We don't understand. We don't recognize it. We've never seen it before in our lives. Now the likelihood is, of course, that this which has been found in the desert in the centuries, in the millennia, since the time of the Exodus, has been given this name by the local natives, mindful of the story, in the same way as if you encounter a dark brown or a black sheep, you say, oh yeah, that's a Jacob sheep.

It's like somebody coming up, oh look, Jacob sheep, that's what it's called. So that's what he had when he was looking after that. It's nothing to do with the Lord making some of them dark and some of them light and enriching them that way.

It was just a naturally occurring phenomenon because we call it Jacob sheep. That's where the name Jacob comes from. No, it's not. this is something which has been discovered and named since the days of the children of Israel.

[ 27 : 29 ] It's not something that was that which fed them then. God says explicitly that he is going to feed them with bread from heaven. Verse 4, I will rain bread from heaven.

Psalm 78, verses 22 to 25, because they believed not in God and trusted not in his salvation. though he had commanded the clouds from above and opened the doors of heaven and had rained down manna upon them to eat and had given them of the corn of heaven, man did he angels food and he sent them meat to the full.

This is a work of God. And the so-called manna which is discovered in the desert is a naturally occurring thing is not the same thing. It is not, certainly not that which could have fed 1.2 million people in this kind of quantity.

Some of course say, oh yes it is, it's just the miracle is the multiplication, like the loaves and fishes. Except that's not what God says. God in his word says that he brings it down from heaven day by day.

It virtually follows them through the wilderness. Because when God does his miracles, he does them because they are necessary. You won't find Jesus in the New Testament healing people that aren't sick, opening the eyes of people that are not blind, healing people who are not lame.

[ 28 : 58 ] You won't find him doing miracles just for the sake of wowing people. He does miracles because they are necessary. And when the children of Israel come into the promised land, remember that this chapter, chapter 16, is recording the first recorded instance of when the manna appears.

The last recorded instance of when the manna appears is actually in the promised land itself. Joshua chapter 5, verse 10. And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month, even in the plains of Jericho.

And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn on the cell same day.

And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land. Neither had the children of Israel manna any more, but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

Why did it cease? Because they no longer had need of it. Miracles continue whilst there is need of them.

[ 30 : 14 ] Church, elders and ministers and other Christians aren't really necessarily in a position now to go around simply laying hands on people and miraculously healing them of whatever medical condition they might have.

Because we have doctors and nurses and hospitals and all the kind of medicines that we can need. That particular medical isn't needed now.

Jesus did miracles when and where they were needed. The manna came while it was needed.

When it was no longer needed, it ceased. Because the lesson had been learned.

The provision had been made. And so the manna ceased. It's meant to be a miracle. And then we find this incident that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much and on the seventh day it doesn't fall.

Why? Because God desires to teach them about the sanctity of his holy day of rest, the Sabbath day. And notice that it is Moses who describes it, verse 23, as the holy Sabbath.

[ 31 : 20 ] That which is set apart for this purpose. So they don't have to go out and gather the fruit on that day because God has already provided twice as much the day before so that they can rest.

And they think, well, wait a minute, where is this coming from? Because the Ten Commandments haven't been given yet. The Ten Commandments don't get given until chapter 20. So where is this about the Sabbath coming from?

Well, clearly, just as in the time of the Reformation, the church, as it became Reformed, couldn't trust all the centuries of accumulated tradition and layers of man-made invention.

So they had to go back to the source. They had to go back to what did the Apostolic Church do?

What did the New Testament Church do? How should a God-honoring church look if we're going to clear away all the layers and centuries of medieval dark ages and the man-made traditions and laws and accumulated rules?

What is a God-honoring New Testament church meant to look like? So they went back to the Bible. They went back to the source, to the New Testament church and they looked at what God in the Holy Scriptures had revealed.

[ 32 : 41 ] And that's what they built the Reformed Church on. That's what the Reformation was about. They went back to basics, back to the source. And this is what God is encouraging his children to do, to go back to the source, the source of which we find in Genesis chapter 2 verses 2 and 3, where we read that when he completed the work of creation, God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made, and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

And if God rested on that day, God desires that man should be like him. that is what he is seeking to do with his training, with his teaching in the wilderness, with the laws that he gives, and ultimately with the gospel and the spirit of Christ.

To enable us to become as he is. Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. God rested that day.

So if God of creation rested on that day, he desires his children likewise to have rest on that day.

this is a creation ordinance. It is not merely about the Ten Commandments because this is prior to the giving of the Ten Commandments. This is God calling his people back to creation, back to the pristine days before the fall when God had given this ordinance and wanted his children that he created to be in relationship and fellowship with them to be like him, to do as he did.

To follow is not only teaching but example. And so that's what the Sabbath is about here. That God wants his children to be like him.

[ 34 : 38 ] Of course you still get those. Verse 27. And some of the people on the seventh day to gather and they found none. And the Lord said to Moses, how long refuse you to keep my commandments and my lots?

Now you'll notice that the command to gather twice as much, that this is what was given first and then the rules and then verse 22, the leaders come and say, well we've done it now, we gather twice as much, what do we do with this now?

And that's when Moses says, this is that which the Lord said, tomorrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath unto the Lord. Bake what you bake, seed what you see, and lay it up till the morning, they lay it up till the morning, and it did not stick.

And it didn't bring once. Why? A miracle of God's grace. God has saying that he will provide. God is saying that he will give all that is needful, obey his voice, and he will provide.

Whether it be with food, whether it be with food, whether it is to enable you to obey his commands, he will provide all that we need.

[ 35 : 42 ] This is the message of the wilderness. God intends to prove, to instruct, to teach his people. God provides, God preserves, from God in heaven comes all that is needed for the body and the soul.

This is the thing that he wants to learn. Coming down from heaven is all that we need for the body and for the soul. So likewise we read Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 3, he humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

Where have we had that before? We hear it of course in the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness where the devil tempts him to command these stones that they may become bread.

Jesus quotes this very verse from Deuteronomy, says man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. The soul and the body together will be fed by God if we are prepared to obey him.

And we read then when he resists the devil, verse 11 of Matthew chapter 4, then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him.

[ 37 : 07 ] We don't know how they ministered unto him. We don't know whether like with the children of Israel and the wilderness, man did eat angels food, he did fed him miraculously with man. The point doesn't matter, the point is that Jesus resisted the devil perfectly, and as a result of resisting, he had his reward afterwards.

There was abundance afterwards once he had demonstrated that faithfulness. God does not want to kill our joy. He does not want to prevent us from enjoying every good and perfect gift that he gives.

But he does want us to obey. And when we are ready to obey, he will bless with abundance all that may have been denied to us before in the time of our testing.

In Luke chapter 4, in that testing of Jesus in the wilderness, we read verse 13, when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season. For a season.

Then he would come back. And Jesus returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee. And there went out a fame of him throughout all the rich and grand devout.

[ 38 : 17 ] Having resisted the devil, having done that which the Israelites couldn't do, having done that which Adam and Eve could not do, having done that which none of us have been able to do, resist the devil successfully, time and again forever, he became unimaginably powerful in the spirit.

Jesus returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee. And there went out a fame of him throughout all the region round about. It is this winning of the victories over the devil that makes us stronger and stronger and stronger.

I'm trying to think of a worldly example in it. The only one that keeps coming to my head, if you'll forgive me, is if you think of a card game. If people were, for example, gambling, and you get your winnings, and each time you get a round in your ways, you're gathering in more and more of the chips and so on.

Each time you win, your stack of chips is getting higher. Each time you win, your resources are increasing. Each time your opponents are getting weaker, and you are getting richer and stronger. That's what it's like. Every time you win a hand against the devil, every time you win a time of temptation, every time you obey the Lord, instead of going your own way, you become stronger.

[ 39 : 38 ] You become more powerful in the spirit. Jesus returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee because he had successfully resisted the devil. You see, in the end, it always comes back to Jesus.

Whether it's the wilderness and the manna and the resisting of the devil, it all comes back to Jesus. Whether it's the Holy Sabbath, which is the Lord's day, which points us to the day of the Lord, and the last judgment, it is always, ultimately about Jesus.

The obedience, the victory, the Lord's day, the day of the Lord, the testing in the wilderness. The Lord desires his children to become like them.

It is a hard lesson. It is an ongoing training. And this is why he brings them into the wilderness of Sinai. This may be why you may find yourself for all I know in the wilderness, just out. The Lord is seeking to prove you, to test you, to bring you into more perfect relationship with himself. He wants you to be like him, that you may become the children of God.  
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