

Brother Hua Qi's Daily Bible Study (Unedited by the speaker, for personal study only)
Numbers 11:7–15

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it is time for our Bible reading again. We will continue reading Numbers chapter 11. Today, we are reading verses 7 through 15.

The mixed multitude among the Israelites yielded to intense craving and prompted the Israelites to weep aloud, reminiscing about their time in Egypt where they could eat fish freely at no cost, along with an abundance of produce like cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. This stood in stark contrast to their present situation, where they could only gather manna daily in the wilderness. Manna was a miracle of God's grace, first recorded in Exodus 16:13–35. It was God's ordained food for the Israelites in the wilderness, meant to be gathered according to His appointed way.

The specific instructions for gathering are detailed in Exodus 16 and I will briefly mention here: every morning, each person was to gather according to their appetite, and it had to be consumed that day without leaving any over until the next morning. Any surplus kept overnight bred worms and turned foul. On the sixth day, they were to gather a double portion; on the Sabbath, there would be no manna because they were to rest before God, and the manna gathered on the sixth day would not spoil. Through manna, God adjusted the palate of the Israelites and transformed their daily life. The following verses, from verse 7 to verse 9, briefly describe what manna was.

Verse 7: “Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium.”

First, manna was like coriander seed—a seed full of life, capable of providing the supply of life. It was also like bdellium, clear, translucent, full, and round. Using two

simple metaphors, the Bible fully describes what manna was and what function it served. From a New Testament perspective, Jesus clearly tells us in John chapter 6 that manna represents every word that proceeds from the mouth of Christ; these words are seeds of life that bring the supply of life when received and eaten.

The words of Christ are indeed full of truth, well-ordered, and rigorously logical—more than enough for a lifetime of study and contemplation. Yet Jesus said, “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” Ultimately, the Lord Jesus desires that we receive His words in the spirit, bringing the supply of life so that our life may grow and we may live out a lifestyle that corresponds with His word. The ultimate goal of studying God’s word is to practice it; therefore, the proper path is to naturally live a life pleasing to God through the growth of divine life.

Verse 8: “The people went about and gathered it, ground it on millstones or beat it in the mortar, cooked it in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil.”

Every morning, the children of Israel rose to gather manna. They had to walk around the camp and gather sufficient portions family by family, caring for the needs of their entire household. This also reminds New Testament saints to labor in the Word of God every morning, gathering ample spiritual food for their families.

Whether grinding it on millstones or beating it in a mortar, boiling it in pots, or making cakes of it, manna required preparation. It could be ground into fine flour using millstones, or pounded into small granules with a mortar and pestle, mixed with water into dough, and either boiled piece by piece in a pot or rolled out and baked in a pan, becoming a delicious and easily digestible food that fully satisfied the entire family.

This reminds New Testament saints to learn how to handle God’s word to help younger believers enjoy its spiritual supply. As Paul stated in 2 Timothy 2:15, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” The truths in Paul’s epistles are often

profound and challenging, which can be daunting for new believers. We must rightly divide the word of God, helping young believers grow in life through the nourishment of the Word. The taste of manna was like pastry prepared with fresh oil; oil typifies the Holy Spirit, illustrating that God's word carries spiritual freshness and nourishment, bringing comfort and joy to our souls.

Verse 9: "And when the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna fell on it."

In the wilderness, the temperature variance between day and night was vast. At night, especially before dawn when the temperature was lowest, moisture in the air condensed into dew upon the camp of Israel, and the manna descended along with the dew. The morning dew appeared every day, signifying the daily grace God bestows upon us, and accompanied by that grace was the miracle of the manna.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must truly treasure this daily grace and never despise it simply because it seems ordinary. Along with this grace comes the supply of life; the growth of divine life depends on receiving the daily supply of God's word within His grace. An occasional revival conference may stir our excitement and zeal, but after the revival passes, it is often followed by a long period of lethargy. One cannot achieve healthy growth through bingeing; therefore, we must cultivate the daily habit of Bible reading. Daily grace arrives like dew to refresh and nurture us. If we consistently gather the manna and invest time and energy to prepare fine, palatable spiritual nourishment, we will not only be fed ourselves, but we will also supply the needs of younger believers in our spiritual family.

Verse 10: "Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the Lord was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased."

This verse connects directly to verses 4 through 6. Incited by the mixed multitude, the Israelites wept at the doorways of their tents, reminiscing about the foods of

Egypt that were rich and stimulating to the palate, unlike the plain and simple manna. Because of the Israelites' weeping, the anger of the Lord was greatly aroused. When people receive God's grace yet fail to cherish it or give thanks, weeping loudly over the lost pleasures of the world, it provokes God's wrath, and Moses was displeased as well. Moses was a man who understood God's ways: he was displeased with the people's ingratitude, and at the same time, he was troubled that God had placed the heavy responsibility of leading the Israelites upon him, prompting him to complain directly to God.

There is a significant difference between Moses and the Israelites: whenever the Israelites suffered, they complained to one another, stirring up corporate weeping; whenever Moses suffered, he brought his complaints directly to God. God is fully able to bear our complaints, and in the midst of them, He makes a way out for us.

Verses 11–12: “So Moses said to the Lord, ‘Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them, that You should say to me, “Carry them in your bosom, as a guardian carries a nursing child,” to the land which You swore to give to their fathers?’”

Moses complained to God, asking why He was afflicting His servant and why he had not found favor in His sight, having had the overwhelming burden of leading the Israelites placed upon him. Moses was caught between God and the people of Israel. The Israelites complained and wept loudly over their hardships in the wilderness, which provoked God's anger. Caught in the middle and at a loss for what to do, Moses questioned God about why the responsibility of leading Israel was entrusted to him.

The Israelites were not conceived or brought forth by him, nor were they his personal responsibility, yet God asked Moses to carry them in his bosom like a foster father holding a nursing infant. Through Moses' complaint, we see that the Israelites were like nursing infants who never seemed to grow up; whenever they met difficulties, they only knew how to complain, leaving Moses at his wit's end.

Dear brothers and sisters, look at our churches today: are there saints who have been saved for twenty or thirty years, yet still behave like nursing infants? Unable to bear responsibility, endure difficulties, or withstand trials, they make serving saints hesitant to speak firmly, leaving them only able to pray for God's mercy. Moses spoke very candidly here, directly asking God if he was expected to carry these immature Israelites all the way to the Promised Land of Canaan sworn to their fathers. This was truly a heavy burden.

Verses 13–14: “Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat.’ I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me.”

The situation at hand was that the Israelites craved meat; lacking meat, they wept before Moses, demanding that he provide it for them. Moses then asked God where he could possibly obtain meat for this congregation of two million Israelites. It was an impossible task. The responsibility of managing these people was far too great for him to bear alone.

Dear brothers and sisters, being a leader is not easy: when the people demand meat, a way must be found to feed them. Driven to his limit, Moses had no choice but to come before God and pour out his complaint. Here we see that the Israelites were like nursing infants who refused to grow up, while Moses himself was not yet fully mature and seasoned. Perhaps this was precisely why God led the Israelites through the wilderness: they needed to be tested so that their faith, having been refined, would become more precious than gold tested by fire; and Moses also needed to be perfected in his leadership ministry.

Our service in the church today involves leading the saints through the wilderness of this world. God's purpose is likewise to perfect all of us so that we may come up from the wilderness, as described in Song of Solomon 3:6–8: “Who is this coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchant's fragrant powders? Behold, it is Solomon's couch, with sixty

valiant men around it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war. Every man has his sword on his thigh because of fear in the night.”

Faithful serving saints must pay a price so that they can ascend from the wilderness like pillars of smoke, full of the sweet fragrance of Christ, coordinating alongside the sixty valiant warriors in the church to guard against the fear of the night, allowing the Lord to find rest in the church. Therefore, we must treasure every opportunity for growth in the wilderness.

Verse 15: “If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now—if I have found favor in Your sight—and do not let me see my wretchedness!”

Moses had his moments of weakness as well. He felt that the burden of leadership and managing the Israelites was simply too difficult and heavy to bear, and he wanted to give up, asking God to take his life immediately so that he would not see his own failure, wretchedness, and humiliation. He felt utterly powerless to shepherd these people who wailed for meat. Not only was God's wrath burning, but Moses felt his own anger flaring up; knowing that his anger would get out of hand—unlike God whose anger is tempered with restraint—he preferred to die.

In fact, Moses was not the only one; in the Old Testament, we see several other prophets who fell into similar situations. The prophet Elijah stood faithfully for God, confronted and defeated the prophets of Baal in total victory, but after learning that Queen Jezebel sought to kill him, he fled south for his life. In 1 Kings 19:4, “But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, ‘It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!’” The prophet Jonah became angry with God because God had mercy on Israel’s enemies; when Jonah warned the people of Nineveh, the entire city repented in sackcloth and ashes, which provoked Jonah’s anger toward God. In Jonah 4:8, “And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah’s head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, ‘It is better for me

to die than to live!” Both Elijah and Jonah desired death because God’s sovereign arrangements did not align with their own expectations.

Dear brothers and sisters, if our ministry encounters a bottleneck and feels unbearable, we must come before God to pour out our feelings of dissatisfaction and what we perceive to be unreasonable. Our God is great enough to embrace all our complaints, and more importantly, to open a way out for us. Moses, Elijah, and Jonah all walked through these trials and received fresh strength. When we feel hopeless and without a way forward, God will lead us to see and experience His mighty power, just as Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 4:8–11: “We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.”

Let us pray together: Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for leading us through the Book of Numbers and showing us how Your faithful servant Moses brought his struggles and complaints before You when facing hardship. We confess that, like Moses, we often feel our circumstances are overwhelming and beyond our ability to overcome. Moses’ experience reminds us to bring all our emotions and burdens before You, for You are our only way out in every situation. When we are brought to the place of death, Your resurrection life will operate within us to help us overcome every deadening condition.

Experiencing hardships in the wilderness is a necessary lesson for us to learn. Grant us spiritual companions, like the sixty valiant warriors, who can coordinate together as we journey through the wilderness. Bless our church to experience You making a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, and to come up out of the wilderness bearing the sweet fragrance of Christ. Bless our church life to be filled with Your presence and the supply of Your Word. In the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.