

LIFE'S WILDERNESS SHORTAGES AND GOD
Part IX: Learning To Be Content With What God Provides
(Numbers 11, 21)

I. Introduction

- A. God provides for our daily needs, a fact we can witness all the time as we recall God's provisions for meeting our material, emotional, mental and spiritual needs in accord with His grace, cf. Philippians 4:19.
- B. However, due to the lure of our worldly lusts of the flesh, the eyes and the pride of this life (1 John 2:15-16), we can struggle with *discontent* over even God's provisions like Hebrews 13:5 NIV instructs when it tells us to "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have . . .!"
- C. This lesson comes to us from Scripture passages on Israel's wilderness wanderings as follows:

II. Learning To Be Content With What God Provides, Numbers 11, 21.

- A. When God initially supplied manna from heaven for Israel, He granted them a special gift of quail, a real delicacy in their day, Exodus 16:3-4, 12-13; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., ftn. to Exodus 16:13.
- B. This provision revealed two truths about God's provisions for Israel: (1) He has the **ability** to provide what His people **LIKE** (the delicacy in the form of the quail), but (2) He gives what is **GOOD** for them as to diet and spiritual walk before Him, and that is *often* a more **ordinary** item (such as the manna).
- C. However, lust among the people led to sinful failure regarding God's provision of the manna as follows:
 - 1. The people failed in their lust to appreciate the manna, lusting for a diet of more exquisite foods:
 - a. Some Semitic people and Egyptians, the "mixed multitude" who had left Egypt with Israel (Ibid., ftn. to Ex. 12:38) began to long for the diet of meat cooked with leeks, onions and garlic and the melons and fresh garden produce they had known back in Egypt, Numbers 11:4-5. This lust sparked an attitude problem, so they all began to complain about the manna, Numbers 11:4b, 6!
 - b. God was angered by the complaint, and Moses was so exasperated with the complainers that he asked God to do something to stop their chiding lest he die, Numbers 11:10-15!
 - c. To expose the problem of lust that had led to this complaint, God decided to give the people so much of what they desired that they would be repulsed by it all, Numbers 11:18-20!
 - d. God then sent quail in by way of a strong wind for 2 days until every person had accumulated at least 100 bushels of quail, Numbers 11:31-32; Ibid., ftn. to 11:32.
 - e. As the people started to eat the quail in their lust, God's wrath poured forth upon them, and He killed those who had deeply lusted for the meat with a very great plague, Numbers 11:33.
 - 2. The people again sinned regarding the manna when they became fatigued by the rigors of their journey:
 - a. In need of taking a long, circuitous route around hostile Edom, the people of Israel became irritable and repeated their complaint about the manna they "loathed", Numbers 21:4-5 with 20:14-22.
 - b. Since this was the second time they complained about the manna, and they had not learned from the first lesson to be thankful for its miraculous provision, God wasted no time in severely judging the people; He sent terrifying, painful and deadly serpents that bit and killed some of the people, 21:6.
 - c. Only when they repented did God supply healing from the serpent bites: God had Moses make a brass serpent and lift it up on a pole for people to view in faith and be healed, Numbers 21:7-9.

Lesson: (1) God is **ABLE** to provide **ALL** we **DESIRE**, **BUT** (2) He provides what we **NEED**, which **MAY BE LESS** than what we **DESIRE** so we can **CONTINUE** a **HOLY** walk with Him in victory over our **LUSTS**! (3) Thus, we must be **CONTENT** with what He **HAS** provided, or (4) He will let **TRIALS** arise to **REMIND** us of our **NEED** to **BE CONTENT**! (5) We must be careful in times of **STRESS** not to lose sight of God's goodness in providing for us, for then we are vulnerable to yielding to false lusts!

Application: (1) We must **FOCUS** on **PLEASING GOD** and **NOT** get caught up in **LUSTING** for what He can **PROVIDE**! (2) **IF** God **FAITHFULLY** provides what we need to do His will, we are to be content with it! (3) If we face hardships (Israel's circuitous routes) that lead to mental, emotional, spiritual or physical fatigue, we must **BE CAREFUL** to **KEEP** respecting God and doing His will, for **THEN** we are most vulnerable to the **LUSTS** of the world that lure us to see those needs immediately met! We must let **GOD** meet those needs when and how **HE** considers it appropriate, Matt. 4:1-4, 11.