



All they do is squawk, you have to kick them to make them fly!

² And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. (Exodus 16:2)

Truly amazing, isn't it, how soon men can forget the blessings and mercy of God in the face of simple hardships. God has wrought miracle after miracle on behalf of the Children of Israel while in Goshen. He brought terrible and diverse plagues against Egypt and her king, yet not a single bruise to Israel. He brought them with wondrous power through the waters of the Red Sea destroying Pharaoh's army in the process. He has set a Pillar of Fire by night and Cloud by day to both guide and protect Israel in their Wilderness wanderings. Now the provender brought out of Egypt is exhausted and, like babies for whom the bottle has been deprived for seconds, begin to murmur against Moses and Aaron. These two are chosen by God to lead Israel, and God is their direct Counselor; therefore, it is not against these men that the people truly murmur, but against God. Anytime a minister preaches the true and whole Counsel of God, you can be sure that the reproach of the Word will offend some sinner who hears. So they will murmur against the minister, but ultimately, against God Himself. Many timid sinners will then join in to bite at the heels. Soon, the whole congregation is discomfited.

¹ And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. ² And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: ³ And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to 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; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. (Ex 16:1-3)

The route Israel takes, being led by God, is not direct. There is an Egyptian army garrison stationed at the City of Sin which must be avoided, so they circumnavigate this threat. The people are tired, hungry, and thirsty, so they blame God who has already been a treasure of blessings to them. God has never failed these murmurers, yet they are

distrustful of God and His ministers (Moses & Aaron). Why should they (and we) trust God for the provisions of tomorrow? Because He has provided all our needs for today! So now, like the wife of Lot outside Sodom, they cast a longing look back at the fleshpots of Egypt and its provision. Do not sit smugly in your reading chair believing these people to be different from your own weaknesses, for you, too, came at once to God but were plagued with memories of old and appealing sins. You looked back to Egypt (spiritually, sin) and had second thoughts of your conversion to Christ. Often it is the case that men would rather die in oppression than live in liberty.

4 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. 5 And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. (Ex 16:4-5) See how God counsels His chosen ministers! God will always give us a choice between His providential care for us and our own stiff-necked will. We shall see this demonstrated a bit later in this chapter. The instructions are clear: God will rain Manna from heaven. They are to gather their provision each day – not hoarding more than a day’s supply, except on the day preceding the Sabbath at which time they are to gather a double measure. This will force the people to depend upon the daily bread of the Lord – something we today still find a challenge.

6 And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: 7 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? 8 And Moses said, 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: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD. 9 And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings. (Ex 16:6-9) There is order and structure in the ministry of God. Moses was the very spokesman of God and Aaron was Moses’ prophet to spread the Word as Moses received it from Holy Lips. *And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.* (Ex 7:1) Likewise is there a hierarchy of discipline in the New Testament Church, which we may refer to as the episcopal role in the Anglican Church.

One point made clear is that God hears not only our prayers, but also our murmurings. He does not grant mercies based upon murmurings but upon His previous promises of mercy and grace. Prayers, offered in earnest faith, are sweetly received by God – murmurings are not!

So God says, “Not only will I provide you daily bread, but I will begin by providing you flesh for your hunger,” and He does. *10 And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. 11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.* (Ex 16:9-12) Amazing that the Pillar of Cloud was in constant sight of Israel demonstrating the presence of God, yet they had the audacity to murmur. God appeared in the Cloud, but spoke only to Moses’ ears. Very often the laity of the church cannot receive the Word without the human touch and explanation; therefore, God has given us the ministry as expositors of the Word.

13 And it came to pass” (Ex 16:13) just as every promise of God comes to pass. *13 And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the*

dew lay round about the host. (Ex 16:13) Just as God had promised, the quail came up and covered the camp of Israel providing the flesh of which the Lord had promised. And, as well, the very next morning came the Bread of Heaven to cover the camp and thereabouts as the dew.

14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. 15 And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. (Ex 16:14-15) The Children had been told by God, through Moses, that bread would be provided at morning, yet they did not know the bread (Manna) when they saw it. We pray for answers to our problems, God sends an abundant answer, and we often do not know it. The word, Manna, means "What is it?" This is a major question of God, too. If we do not know and recognize who God is, how can we worship Him in Spirit and in Truth? How can we make a profession of faith in Christ if we do not have an intimate knowledge of who Christ is? The cheapened professions sought in large, charismatic denominations are often void of faith for faith is expressed in full knowledge of the Person that it professes to embrace.

The baby Christian needs to be nurtured and taught the Word as a baby needs the milk, and later the meat, of the Gospel to grow healthy spiritual bones and muscles. The catechism serves that need in the Reformed tradition. Jesus asked His disciples a very revealing question: *13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, **Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?** 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, **But whom say ye that I am?** 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*** (Matt 16:13-17)

Friend, who do you say that Jesus, the Son of man, is?

If He is not the Son of the living God, your Savior and Redeemer, and your Lord and King – then something is amiss in your faith. Of course, His character exceeds all of these adjectives, but these are the minimal understandings that the Christian must have of Christ.

Do you have that understanding?