

Exodus 16:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in Egypt—This stunning statement reveals the depth of unbelief: preferring death under judgment to life under testing. The 'flesh pots' (סִיר הַבָּשָׂר, sir habasar) represent security in bondage versus freedom with uncertainty. Israel's selective memory erased 400 years of suffering, remembering only meals while forgetting the whips. This same spirit appears when believers long for former enslavement to sin rather than endure sanctification's difficulties. Their accusation that Moses brought them out 'to kill this whole assembly with hunger' inverts reality—God delivered them to give life.

Historical Context

Egypt's agricultural abundance from the Nile provided reliable food for slaves. The wilderness had no such infrastructure, requiring complete dependence on supernatural provision.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'flesh pots' from your past does Satan use to tempt you during present difficulties?
2. How does selective memory of sin's 'pleasures' distort spiritual perspective?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר ו	אֵלֶּה ׀	בְּנֵי י	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל	מִי	יֵת
said	H413	And the children	of Israel	unto them	Would to God
H559		H1121	H3478	H4310	H5414
לְהַמִּית	בְּיַד	יְהוָה	בְּאֶרֶץ	מִצְרַיִם	בְּשִׁבְתֵּנוּ
to kill	by the hand	of the LORD	in the land	of Egypt	when we sat
H4191	H3027	H3068	H776	H4714	H3427
סִיר	הַבָּשָׂר	בְּאָכַלנוּ	לֶחֶם	לְשֹׁבַע	כִּי
pots	by the flesh	and when we did eat	bread	to the full	
H5518	H1320	H398	H3899	H7648	H3588
הוֹצֵאתָ ׀	אֶתנוּ	אֶל	הַמִּדְבָּר	הַזֶּה	לְהַמִּית
for ye have brought us forth			into this wilderness		to kill
H3318	H853	H413	H4057	H2088	H4191
אֶת	כָּל	הַקָּהָל ל	הַזֶּה	בְּרָעָב:	
H853	H3605	this whole assembly	H2088	with hunger	
		H6951		H7458	

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 17:3 (References Egypt): And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

Deuteronomy 28:67 (References God): In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

Lamentations 4:9 (Parallel theme): They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger: for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field.

Numbers 14:2 (References God): And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

1 Corinthians 4:8 (References God): Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

Joshua 7:7 (References God): And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!