

people began to be dissatisfied with the manna which God was providing and to long for the sensuous pleasures previously enjoyed. Verses 7-8 describe the appearance and use of the manna (cf. EX.xvi.31).

The weeping of the people throughout the camp greatly distressed Moses (10). He felt himself to be almost at the end of his endurance. These verses show how he poured out his prayer to God for help. There are two elements in Moses' prayer. One is that the load he is carrying and the responsibility for all the people seem to be more than he can bear. The other is that the people are demanding flesh to eat and there is no possible way in which he can satisfy this desire.

c. God's twofold answer to Moses' prayer (xi.16-35)

God took up each element of the prayer in turn. First, He dealt with Moses' need of help, telling him to gather seventy leaders of Israel, and promising that He would put His spirit upon them so that they might take over part of Moses' responsibility.

Next, God dealt with the second element of Moses' request, promising that the desire of the people would be satisfied. In fact He declared it would be so fully satisfied that they would utterly satiated with meat (118-20). Moses' faith was severely strained by this statement of God (21,22). The nation contained 600,000 men. If God were to gather all the fish of the sea and to kill all the flocks and herds, how would even this suffice to fulfil such a promise: In verse 23 God answered this objection. He did not attempt to describe the means that He would use. He simply pointed to His own great power, and declared that Moses would see the promised fulfilled.

Moses went out and gathered the seventy men as God had directed (24). Evidently he was thoroughly familiar with the abilities of the various leaders of the people and had worked with them in many ways. This was not a sudden gathering of help, but a wonderful outpouring of God's power so as to enable these seventy elders to give Moses the assistance he needed. As they stood around the tabernacle, God's Spirit rested upon them. They prophesied, and did not cease (25).