

Manna – What Is It?

[Exodus 16:11-15](#)

Exo 16:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Exo 16:12 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.

Exo 16:13 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.

Exo 16:14 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.

Exo 16:15 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.

As the children of Israel journeyed from Egypt toward Canaan, they without a doubt had many needs. There were, by some estimates, about two million of them and they needed massive amounts of food and water. Both of these needs were met by the supernatural power of God. This passage gives us some insight into the food they ate as they journeyed.

The Manna that fell in the wilderness was a tremendous blessing to the people of Israel. It fed them in that harsh land for forty years. God used it to *sustain them, strengthen them* and to *supply them* until they arrived in Canaan. The Manna was given to them to feed their fleshly bodies. The Manna also serves to teach us spiritual truth.

While Jesus lived on this earth, the Jews challenged Him to prove to them that He was Who He claimed to be. They suggested that if He had really been sent by God He would give them Manna from Heaven to eat, like Moses had given their forefathers.

Joh 6:30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

Joh 6:31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

In response, Jesus told them that God, not Moses, had given their fathers bread in the wilderness. He also told them that the Manna served an even greater purpose than that of feeding a people long dead. He told them that the Manna represented Him. Jesus claimed that He was the Bread of Life.

Joh 6:32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

Joh 6:33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Joh 6:34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

Joh 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Joh 6:48 I am that bread of life.

Joh 6:50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

Joh 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Jesus identifies Himself with the ancient Manna that fed Israel.

Now, when the people of Israel first encountered the little pieces of bread lying on the ground, they looked at it and called it Manna. The word Manna means “*What is it?*” I would like to take that question for my title today. I want to show you what the Manna was and why it represents Jesus. Let's notice a few facts about the Manna today. It might be God will use this passage to help you come to know Jesus, or to come to know Him better.

I. Its Conception Pictures Jesus

Exo 16:4 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.

The idea for the Manna originated with God. It was not man's idea. All the people of Israel could think of was the food they had left behind in Egypt. Left to themselves, they would have produced something they could have been a part of. The people would have sought out something that would have gratified their flesh. By sending the Manna, God totally removed man from the equation.

You see, the Manna was free; all the people had to do was stoop down and pick it up.

Exo 16:14 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.

Exo 16:15 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.

Exo 16:16 This *is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, *according to* the number of your persons; take ye every man for *them* which *are* in his tents.

Exo 16:17 And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less.

The Manna was also the gift of free grace. They deserved judgment and death, but God gave them life! And that is exactly what God has done in the area of salvation. Left to himself, man will seek out a religious experience that satisfies and gratifies his flesh. Man would have never conceived of a plan that demanded nothing of man. Man wants to work. Man wants to earn his salvation by the good works he does. Man likes to brag! He likes to flaunt his achievements. But, that is not God's plan.

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

Eph 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

God's plan is for man to come to Him through Jesus and through Jesus alone. There is no other plan of salvation available that will save the human soul.

Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

Act 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Salvation is not about what we can do, but it is all about what Jesus has done. My friends, you can do anything you please; believe anything you choose; join any group or church out there; but salvation and peace will only be found in one place; and that place is in Jesus Christ!

II. Its Characteristics Picture Jesus

The details the Bible uses to describe the Manna that fell in the wilderness reveal a beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus.

A. Its Appearance

Exo 16:31 And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it *was* like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it *was* like wafers *made* with honey.

The way the Manna looked paints a picture of Jesus.

1. It Was Small –

Exo 16:14 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.

This speaks of His humility.

- **He is the Creator of the universe.**

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

- **He is God Almighty.**

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

- **Yet, He came into this world and robed Himself in human flesh.**

Joh 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

- **He humbled Himself and became a servant so that He might die for His people on the cross.**

Php 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Php 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

Php 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

Php 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

What love! What grace! What supreme condescension!

2. **It Was Round –**

Exo 16:14 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.

- **Like a circle that has no beginning and no ending; Jesus Christ is eternally God.** He did not have His beginning at Bethlehem; but was able to proclaim:

Joh 8:58 ... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

- **And, just as He had no beginning, He shall have no ending.**

Heb 7:24 But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

Our Savior is eternal.

3. **It Was White –**

Exo 16:31 And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it *was* like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it *was* like wafers *made* with honey.

White like the purest of snow. The whiteness of the Manna speaks of the purity of Jesus.

- **He was born into this world without the taint of human sin.**

1Pe 2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

1Pe 2:23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

1Jn 3:5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

Heb 7:26 For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

- **He lived without sin, so that He might die for sin on the cross.**

Heb 9:26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Heb 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

B. Its Appeal

God designed the Manna in such a way that it was a blessing to everyone who ate it.

1. It Was Sweet –

Exo 16:31 And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it *was* like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it *was* like wafers *made with honey*.

The taste of the Manna was like tasting “*wafers made with honey*”. No doubt it was pleasant surprise to everyone who placed in on their tongue. This is a great picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the sinner, Jesus appears to be harsh, a cosmic killjoy Who delights in keeping people from having fun.

But, when you come to know Him, you find that He is the delight of the soul! You find that He makes life worth living. One songwriter said: *Every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before.*

The Psalmist said it this way,

Psa 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him.

That has been my experience and I am guessing it has been your too, if you are saved.

2. It Was Sufficient –

Exo 16:35 And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

For 40 years the Manna was sufficient for the young ones and the old one and for everyone in between. The Manna was right for everybody! The growing boy grew into manhood off the nourishment of the Manna. The young girl grew into a woman by eating the Manna. It sustained the rich and the poor. It fed the leader and the follower. It was good enough to sustain the lives of the entire congregation of Israel for 40 years.

Again, this is a picture of Jesus! He is an all-sufficient Savior. Regardless of where you are in life, or where you have been, Jesus is all you need! He can save the young ones; He can save the old ones and He can save all the ones in between. He can save rich folks, poor folks and folks who are getting by. He can save religious folks and wicked folks. In fact, He can and will save anyone who will come to Him. The invitation Jesus offers is good for “*whosoever will*”.

Rev 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

The Manna did not fail until they arrived in the Promised Land. The salvation Jesus gives will never fail. It will safely shepherd the people of God home!

Joh 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

Joh 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Joh 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

Joh 6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

Joh 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Two thoughts are worthy of note right here. First, according to Exodus [16:16-18](#), no matter how much Manna a person gathered, they always had the right amount. When you come to Jesus, you will find that He is sufficient to save your soul!

Second, According to [Num. 11:8](#), after two years, some people got tired of the Manna. They tried every trick at their disposal to change its flavor. But, instead of improving the taste, their attempts to make the Manna better ruined the taste. When man adds his alterations to the Gospel message to make it more appealing, he robs it of its saving power! The Gospel is sufficient just like it is.

Rom 1:16 ...it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

C. Its Appropriation

The way the children of Israel appropriated the Manna also paints a picture of how people must come to Jesus.

1. It Was Appropriated By Stooping –

Exo 16:14 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.

Exo 16:15 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.

The Manna appeared on the ground. In order to gather it, the people had to bend their knees and get down there where it was. Friends, the only way to come to Jesus for salvation is with a humble heart.

Mat 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 18:4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

No one comes to Jesus filled with pride and thinking they are adequate within themselves. The only ones who can come to Him are those who see themselves as sinners in need of a Savior.!

2. It Was Appropriated By Swallowing –

Exo 16:16 This *is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, *according to* the number of your persons; take ye every man for *them* which *are* in his tents.

Exo 16:17 And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less.

Exo 16:18 And when they did mete *it* with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.

The Manna was gathered by the men of the tent. When the Manna was brought into the tent, it was divided out according to the number of people in the tent. The Manna was there, but it could help no one until it was eaten. The only way to benefit from the Manna was to get it inside you!

Again, this speaks to us of Jesus! You can come to church, carry the right Bible, hear sermons, sing songs, pray prayers and do all the religious stuff you want to. But, you will never be saved until you come to Jesus for yourself. No one can do it for you. Thank God for saved moms and dads, but children cannot ride into Heaven on their coattails. Grandparents that love Jesus are a blessing, but you have to be saved for yourself.

III. Its Coming Pictures Jesus

Where the Manna came and to who it appeared also says something about this miracle bread.

A. It Came to a Forsaken Place

Exo 16:1 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.

Exo 16:14 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.

The children of Israel were wandering around in a harsh, barren wilderness when the Manna began to appear. When Jesus came:

- **He came for people who were trapped in the wilderness of their sins.**

Eph 2:1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Eph 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

- **He came to deliver people who had no hope of delivering themselves. He came to set the captives of sin free.**

Luk 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

Luk 4:19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Thank God, Jesus came to where we were. Had He just come for the good people, Heaven would have been a lonely place. No, He came for the lost, the sinful and damned.

- **He came for us.**

Mar 2:17 When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, **They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

B. This Manna Came to a Foolish People

Exo 16:2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

Exo 16:3 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.

God sent the Manna to a people who longed for what they had left behind in Egypt. They were tired of God's plan and God's way. They did not deserve His blessings. Still, He sent those foolish people the food they needed.

So it is with Jesus Christ. He came to a people that wanted nothing to do with Him.

Joh 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

Joh 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

He came to a people that hated Him, mocked Him and ultimately crucified Him. Yet, He came to them anyway. He came in love, grace and forgiveness. He came to offer them eternal life, if they would only believe. He makes the same offer to every one in this room today.

Folks, I was not looking for Him when He came to me. I was lost and on my way to Hell. I knew there was a God and that I was going to meet Him some day. I knew I would probably face Him in judgment. But, I really didn't care about Him. I did not give Him much thought at all. Yet, it appears that He gave me plenty of thought. He broke into my darkness and called me to a new life.

What about you? Have you ever tasted that Heavenly Bread? Have you been saved by the grace of God? If you have, then you know what "IT" is all about! If not, you can be, and we'd just be tickled pink to help you with it.

There is so much more that could be said about the Manna. [Verse 7](#) of our passage this morning tells us that the Manna was sent to reveal God's glory. Friends, God receives more glory from saving us than from anything else in this world. If you need Him why not give Him glory and come to Him today?

Can you imagine eating the same food for forty straight years? I am sure many got bored with the same old Manna year after year. That is why some tried to change it. Well, some have gotten that way about Jesus too. The sameness of going to church and serving the Lord has led to boredom in your life, and you are not as close to Him today as you once were or as you need to be. You might need to go to Him this morning and say, "*Thank you Lord for giving me the Bread of Life. Thank you for the Heavenly Manna. Thank you for saving my soul.*" Think about what a mess you would be in if He hadn't!