

Men's Sunday Night
A Study in The Book of Exodus
Lesson 8 – Exodus 16
Journey to Freedom.
The Bread of Life

This chapter should be read in connection with John 6, for the manna from heaven is a type of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life. It also illustrates the written Word of God on which God's pilgrim people feed from day to day. The Hebrew word *manna* means "What is it?", the statement of the Jews when they could not explain this new food that God had sent. "Great is the mystery of godliness," writes Paul in 1 Timothy 3:16. "God was manifest in the flesh." Consider how the manna pictures Jesus Christ: 1. It came from heaven. 2. It came at night. 3. It came on the dew. 4. It fell in the wilderness. 5. It came to a rebellious people. 6. It fell right where they were.

The dew kept the manna from being defiled by the earth. This is a type of the Holy Spirit for when Jesus came to earth, it was through the miracle ministry of the Spirit. Had Jesus not been born of the virgin, He could never be called "*the Holy One.*" How easily accessible the manna was to the Jews. They did not have to climb a mountain or cross a deep river, the manna came where they were. Jesus Christ is not far away from sinners. They can come to Him at any time.

The hungry Jews were not fed by looking at the manna, admiring it, or watching others eat it; they had to pick it up and eat it themselves. Christ must be received inwardly by faith if the sinner is to be saved. This is what Christ meant in John 6:51–58 by "*eating His flesh and drinking His blood.*" John 6:63 makes it clear that Christ was not speaking about literal flesh and blood, and John 6:68 tells us that it was His Word that He was referring to. When we receive the Word inwardly, we are feeding on Christ, the Living Word.

Note that the spiritual manna (Christ) accomplishes more than did the physical manna that God sent to the Jews. The Old Testament manna sustained physical life, but Christ gives spiritual life to all who receive Him. The Old Testament manna was for the Jews only, but Christ offers Himself to the whole world. It did not cost Moses anything to secure the manna for Israel, but to make Himself available to the world, Christ had to die on the cross. How sad it is that most of the people in the world walk on Christ as if he were unused manna on the ground, rather than stooping to receive Him that they might live.

Read Exodus 16:1-36 and Answer the Following Questions:

1. When the children of Israel depart from Elim, where does the Lord lead them? What is their situation and what is their reaction?
2. How was God intending to solve this problem, and what was the “test” he was going to give them? (See 16:4-5)
3. What were God’s instructions (rule) about manna? (See 16:4-5)
4. How did Moses react each time the people complained and argued with him? (See 16:6-7; 17:2-3)
5. How does the Lord react to the people’s grumbling? In what ways might you be grumbling against the Lord in your life right now, and how can you change your attitude?
6. What should Israel have learned about the Lord from the experiences in 16:7-12?

7. Why did the Lord instruct the Israelites to gather only a day's portion of manna at a time? What happened when they disobeyed?

8. What does the Israelites disobedience in storing manna tell us about human nature?

9. Why is it important for the Israelites to remember their time of eating manna in the wilderness? What does the manna represent in the Christian life today?

10. What other (rule) did Israel need to learn to keep now that they were free? (See 16:27-30)

11. What commandment does the Lord give to His people in Exodus 16:32-33? Why does He give this commandment?

Manna **"Food from Heaven"**

Manna, basically a word that means "what is it?" is a bread-like substance that fell from heaven, and tasted like honey. The Israelites would go and collect a daily portion of manna each day, ensuring to get a double portion before the Sabbath (so they didn't work for their food on the Sabbath). If they grabbed too much or too little, they suffered the consequences. An exercise in trusting God's provisions, the Israelites ate this bread of heaven throughout their several-decade stay in the wilderness.

Where is Manna Mentioned in the Bible?

We first see manna introduced here in Exodus 16. Right before this, the Israelites complained to Moses, saying he brought them out to the desert to die, with no food supply. While they grumble and say their days in slavery in Egypt were better, God provides food and doesn't let them go hungry.

Numbers 11:8, describes what the Israelites did with this bread from heaven. They made it into cakes, boiled it, and ground it into flour. Deuteronomy 8:3, which Jesus later quotes when tempted by Satan, mentions these provisions from God, although it also mentions that man does not live by bread alone. Even if we fulfill our physical needs, we have spiritual needs as well. John 6:58, makes mention of manna as well. It says that even though manna filled the physical needs of the Israelites, it didn't prevent death. On the other hand, the bread of life (Jesus) prevents spiritual death.

Psalm 78:23-25, calls manna "the bread of angels," since this manna appeared to fall from the sky like snow. Another psalm, Psalm 105:40, talks about how God cared for the needs of the Israelites in the wilderness.