

Manna - An Overview

The name Manna is said to derive from the question “man hu,” seemingly meaning “What is it?” When Israelites first saw the substance covering the ground, they asked each other and Moses, “What is it?” Many false opinions are circulating today about what kind of known biological substance could have appeared on the dampened ground. But none of those opinions can explain the sudden appearance, consistency, tastes of uncooked and cooked Manna, nor its different action on the sixth and seventh days of the week. The Bible is the only reliable source of information about Manna’s physical and spiritual aspects.

The story of Manna is like many subjects that begin in the Old Testament and continue into the New Testament. The creation story began in Genesis 1:1 and is explained further in the Gospel of John and the Colossian letter. God’s tender care for His faithful worshipers starts with a promise in (Genesis 3:15), provides safety for Noah from the flood (Genesis 6-8) and justification for all from sins by giving His son as a sacrifice (Romans 6:3-7). That loving care, expressed by a Father for His children, takes many forms throughout scripture. However, the word manna highlights passages about God’s care when it is used in scripture, concluding in Christ’s words, “To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat” (Revelation 2:17)

Today, we cannot fully visualize a vast area of ground covered with a pale substance that can be turned into flour and baked to provide all the nourishment our bodies need. Some people now live on powders made into vitamin pills and pureed vegetables to be drunk as smoothies. But the substance God gave to Israel as they traveled through the wilderness, along with quail and water, gave them a complete diet. To use Manna effectively, God gave instructions on gathering and preparing it. As Israel tried to have their way, the substance turned rotten and harbored worms. Used correctly, it provided the physical needs of the people and gave evidence to the test God told Moses about. *“The LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My Law or not”* (Exodus 16:4 NKJV).

There are two aspects of Manna that this blog and others to follow will describe. First is the nourishment it gave to sustain Israel on their journey to their promised land. Second, it was the first test to separate the faithful from the unruly, even before the Law was given. It nourished their life to travel while their belief and obedience in following God grew. We should not be surprised to learn they did not follow instructions (Exodus 16:27) and later refused to enter the promised land as God directed them. *“So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” So they said to one another, “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt”* (Numbers 14:1-4 NKJV).

As we study Manna, we must also look at how the world uses the word. From Dictionary.com: A noun: 1-the food miraculously supplied to the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus 16:14–36). 2-any kind of sudden or unexpected help, advantage, or aid to success. And 3-divine or spiritual food. Some use the word manna with disrespect, and others use it like an adjective, describing something other than the food given to people from heaven, which God supplies. We find “Manna BBQ” restaurants in Mesa,

Glendale, and Peoria, Arizona. At 420 North 20th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130 is "Manna's Therapeutic Nutrition." And there is a "manna | A Culinary Experience" in Wilmington, NC.

From a short search on the internet, it is evident that people are seeking manna today. Referring to Israel, the scriptures say that *"they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year"* (Joshua 5:11-12 NKJV). When the land provided food, the manna from heaven ended. If that manna ceased, do the prophets promise more? The scriptures will give us the answer.