

New Testament Manna

Israel, released from Egyptian bondage, traveled through a wilderness on their way to the land that God promised to Abraham. There was no source of food along the way, so God sent food in a form that the people could collect and prepare easily. When they first saw the grainy, whitish substance on the ground, they asked, "What is it?" When the people first saw Jesus nearly 1500 years later, they asked, "Who is this?" In both cases, God sent precisely what the people needed but not what they wanted. In the first instance, God sent Manna from heaven to sustain the people on their earthly journey. In the second instance, God sent His Son to redeem and sustain an individual's spirit on the journey to the promised home in heaven.

Paul looked back through history to remind us that all of Israel *"ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ"* (1 Corinthians 10:1-4). As *"The Word"* (John 1:1-5), Jesus was in the wilderness with the people. He was not walking physically with them, but He led them and provided everything for them. The food given to Israel is a type of the food that God always provides to His people. As with many Old Testament types and shadows, Jesus is the anti-type and substance. Manna is a type to give physical life. But Jesus is the anti-type to give spiritual, eternal life (John 3:16; 6:63).

The Jews of Jesus day, just like people today, had great difficulty changing their mindset from physical to spiritual thoughts. They followed Jesus because He gave them bread and fishes miraculously (John 6:1-13). The Jews brought up the subject of the signs, miracles given by those sent from God, and suggested that Jesus should feed them as Moses fed Israel with Manna (John 6:30-31). Jesus reminds them that Moses did not give them food but His Father gave it (John 6:32). His next statement takes the conversation away from the physical food to the Spiritual as He says *"For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world"* (John 6:33). The word Jesus used is "artos" and can mean either the baked flour and water loaf or food of any kind. Jesus further explains *"I am the bread (artos) of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe"* (John 6:35-36). Jesus is making the point that physical food will only nourish the body and will not nourish the spirit. The food necessary to sustain the individual forever is the heavenly, spiritual food, which is only available in Him. He is the true Bread from Heaven, able to give eternal life and sustenance to those who partake spiritually of Him by faith, (John 6:31-35).

We find a similar example in the Hebrew letter. *"It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins"* (Hebrews 10:4). But Jesus *"having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God"* (Hebrews 10:12). Jesus told the Jews plainly, *"Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead"* (John 6:49). Only the faithful; Joshua, Caleb, and the tribe of Levi survived to enter the promised land. In a similar fashion, only the faithful, those who hear, digest, and obey the words of Jesus, will enter the land that He has promised (John 14:1-3)

Jesus understood that the Jew's statement *"He gave them bread (artos) out of heaven"* indicated that they believed Moses produced the Manna rather than God. They needed a reminder that Moses was a messenger from God and went up into the mountain to receive God's words. Jesus, therefore, explained His origin and mission. Jesus said, *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose*

nothing, but raise it up on the last day. "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:38-40).

In (John 14:6), Jesus said *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."* Jesus is the only one to ever descend from heaven. He brought the knowledge so that we can know God. He is the only one who can nourish and protect the spirits within us. And He is the only one that knows the way to God and eternal life. In His final message to Christians, He mentions the Spiritual food that will be given in Heaven. To Christians at Ephesus, He says, *"To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God"* (Revelation 2:7). To Christians at Pergamum, He says, *"To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna"* (Revelation 2:17).

Are you living on the true Manna?