

# Manna: Bread from Heaven

Read Exodus 16:13-35

The morning after the gift of quail, when the dew evaporated from the ground, it left flakes like frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, their reaction was, "What is it?" (Exodus 16:15), or in Hebrew, "*man hu*", or manna.

Taking Exodus 16:14, 31 with Numbers 11:7-9, manna consisted of small, flake-like particles similar to frost or coriander seed, white or pale amber. It tasted like honey-wafers or "cakes baked with oil" (Numbers 11:8). It could be ground into flour and baked into cakes, or it could be boiled into porridge, or perhaps eaten raw.

Over the years there have been many attempts to explain manna as a naturally-occurring substance. Apparently none of these substances would have occurred regularly as manna did. Whatever it was, it was God's provision.

God's instructions about the manna are particularly important:

- Gather enough for each day, one day at a time. It truly was "daily bread" (as in the Lord's Prayer).
- If kept overnight, it would spoil.
- None would come on the Sabbath, to save the people from working. The day before the Sabbath they were to gather enough for two days, and it wouldn't spoil.
- They were to gather approximately an omer per person per day. An omer was approximately 2.2 liters. Imagine a container a bit larger than a two-liter bottle. But notice what was said in Exodus 16:18:

*When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every man gathered as much as he should eat. (NASB)*

As in the Exodus, God had created an opportunity to prove Himself, to test their obedience, and to teach them to depend on Him day by day.

This gift of daily bread continued through all their years in the wilderness. On the very day that they first ate the produce of the promised land, the manna ceased. (See Joshua 5:10-12.) God was faithful to give it to them as long as they needed it.

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