

DOCTRINE OF MANNA

I. Vocabulary:

- A. Hebrew: **אֲמָן** **!m** manhu; “What is it?”. This question was the initial response of the Israelites upon their first encounter with the manna. Exo.16:15; “*When the sons of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat (stupid).”* cp. vs.12. It is usually referred to thereafter simply as **!m**– “What?”
- B. Greek: **manna** - manna. Indeclinable noun; used 4x; 3x with reference to the food that was provided by God for the Jews of the Exodus generation and once metaphorically for BD. Joh.6:31, 49; Heb.9:4; Rev.2:17

II. Definition and description:

- A. The name is derived from the question of the Israelites when they first encountered this substance.
- B. The manna is described in appearance as being like the coriander seed, which is a small, pearl sized, white seed. Exo.16:31
- C. It tasted like honey wafers. Exo.16:31
- D. It was deposited on the surface of the desert six nights a week with the dew. Num.11:9
- E. It had to be gathered early in the morning, after sunrise but before the heat of the day, or it would melt away. Exo.16:21
- F. It could not be kept overnight or it would spoil, except on Friday when a two day portion was to be gathered, so as not to violate the Sabbath law. Exo.16:19-24
- G. It was gathered, ground up and cooked into cakes the way the individual desired. Exo.16:23; Num.11:7-8
- H. It is called:
1. The bread, which the Lord has given you. Exo.16:15
 2. The bread of Heaven. Psa.105:40; Joh.6:32
 3. The food from Heaven. Psa.78:24
 4. The bread of angels. Psa.78:25
 5. The true bread out of heaven. Joh.6:32
 6. Hidden manna. Rev.2:17

III. Significance of manna.

- A. Physical significance:
1. The manna demonstrates God’s faithfulness to provide our living grace. Neh.9:20 cp. Mat.6:25-33
 - a. He fed the Exodus multitude of over 2 million people indicating that God has unlimited resources.
 - b. He fed them everyday for some 40 years indicating that He is absolutely faithful.
 - c. He fed the negative among them as well as the positive. Mat.5:45

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2. That mankind's provision of food indeed is a grace proposition is seen in Jesus miracles of the feeding of the 5000 and 4000. Joh.6:5-14; Mat.15:32-28 cp. John's account to the multitudes perception of Jesus' miracle as an indicator of the Exodus miracle in Joh.6:31

B. Spiritual significance:

1. The provision of the manna, while a great blessing from God, was also a test. Exo.16:4
2. The manna is a type of Bible doctrine emphasizing the importance of doctrine to the believer in time. 1Cor.10:1-4; *see the Doctrine of the Importance of Bible Doctrine.*
 - a. Spiritual food is typified by the manna. 1Cor.10:3
 - b. Daily intake is absolutely critical to the function of the believer. Exo.16:21
 - c. It is the first priority. Exo.16:21
 - d. Each person must do it for his or her self. Exo.16:21
 - e. It is provided by God and only at the divinely determined time and place. Heb.10:25; 1Tim.3:15
 - f. Failure in regard to manna typifies various forms of negative volition.
 - g. Persistent assimilation of manna eventuates in maturity, which is typified by Canaan. Exo.16:35
 - h. Consistent mal-adjustment to the manna typifies negative volition that eventually leads to the sin unto death. Num.11:4-34; cp. Joh.6:49
 - i. Negative volition's response to an adjusted doctrinal ministry that stresses the importance of BD is humorously illustrated by the name, "What is it?"

IV. The "True Manna". Joh.6:26-58

- A. The Jews had distorted the history and significance of the manna experience through their negative volition.
- B. The credited Moses with the provision of the manna. Vss.31 cp. 32
- C. The manna is cited as a type of Christ. Vss.32-33
 1. It is Heavenly in origin. Exo.16:4; Psa.78:24; Joh.6:38
 2. It is provided freely by the Father's will. Exo.16:15; Joh.6:32
 3. It sustains life. Deut.8:3; Joh.6:58
 4. It is provided for all. Exo.16:16-17; Joh.6:51
 5. It must be personally assimilated. Exo.16:16,21; Joh.6:45, 47
 6. Eating of it (and drinking) typifies faith. Joh.6:53, 54

- V. The reference to hidden manna in Rev.2:17, is part of the SG₃ package for each believer, and refers to God's plan for eternity revealed in its totality. This probably is to include even what each individual's eternal niche will be, since it is associated with a personalized "white stone" with an individualized new name.

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- VI.** A false identification of what the manna was.
- A.** In Arabia, there exists a sweet gum like honey that exudes from the leaves of certain plants.
 - B.** This substance is primarily found among those of the tamarisk variety (genus of tropical evergreen trees and shrubs with clusters of white and pink flowers) and takes place mostly in July and August, before sunrise.
 - C.** Certain insects aid in producing this phenomenon by chewing the leaves that then allows the manna to flow out.
 - D.** According to some it comes from the leaves, others state that it comes only from the twigs and branches.
 - E.** It then hardens into little white grains that are collected before sunrise by the inhabitants and used for food.
 - F.** It has a very sweet, honey-like taste and based on the Biblical description has been identified by some as the manna that was given by God.
 - G.** Refutation:
 - 1.** The sheer number of people who were fed by manna, a figure most estimate to be over 2,000,000.
 - 2.** The fact that the manna was available for only a limited period of time. Josh.5:12
 - 3.** The fact that the manna was only available for six days a week. Exo.16:27
 - 4.** The miraculous way in which it deteriorated through the week, but was preserved on Saturday. Exo.16:19-20, 24
 - 5.** The natural manna must be gathered before sunrise, but God's manna was not gathered until after the sun rose and before it got hot. Exo.16:14, 21
 - 6.** The natural manna is found only on plants, whether on the leaves, twigs or branches, the heavenly manna was all over the ground. Exo.16:14
 - 7.** Direct scriptural statements that declare God miraculously and supernaturally provided the manna from the heavens. Deu.8:3,16; Psa.78:24-25