

December 31, 2017 - Ex. 16:4-27 - Giving of the Manna
Torah Reading: Exodus 16:4-27 - Giving of the Manna
Psalm 53
Haftarah: Isaiah 58:2-11
Isaiah 33:16-24 + 34:8

After Israel murmured, did God rain down fire and brimstone on them? No, he rained down manna. That's grace!

But manna was given with instructions, so it was also a test, to see if they would obey.

Exodus 16:4 - "Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no."

Rashi - "gather a certain rate every day" or "gather what is needed for the day" - the thing of a day in its day. What is needed for a day's eating they will gather on its day, but they will not gather today for the needs of tomorrow. — [from Mechilta]
 "to test them" - [i.e.,] that they will not leave any of it over, and that they will not go out on the Sabbath to gather [the manna].

Exodus 16:6 - "And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt:"

Rashi - Since you [the people of Israel] said to us [Moses and Aaron], "For YOU have brought us out" (verse 3), you shall know that we are not the ones who brought [you] out, but [it was] the Lord [Who] brought you out

i.e. the last of their sustenance from Egypt had run out. From then on they would be nourished by God, and that would their assurance that they were now really set free from Egypt. We also know this in our own spiritual life, when we see God's provision.

The Glory of the Lord

Exodus 16:7 - "And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?"

[See **Exodus 16:10** - "And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud."]

glory = *kabowd* - from a root that means "weight." The full weight of who God is, is displayed clearly.

This is the first mention of the "glory of the Lord" in the Bible, and it is connected to the

giving of the manna.

It is seen again at Sinai:

Exodus 24:16-17 - "And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel."

The glory of the Lord is mentioned once more at the dedication of the Temple by Solomon.

2 Chronicles 7:1-2 - "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house."

It was displayed to the humble shepherds at Christ's birth:

Luke 2:9 - "And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid."

It was seen again in Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Luke 9:29-31 - "And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

Exodus 16:8 - "And Moses said, This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD."

Rashi - This is what he [Moses] said to them: "In the evening you shall know that He has the ability to grant your desire, and He will give [you] meat; but He will not give it to you with a smiling countenance, because you requested it inappropriately and with a full stomach. As for the bread, which you requested out of necessity, however, when it comes down in the morning, you shall see the glory of the radiance of His countenance. For He will bring it down to you lovingly, in the morning, when there is time to prepare it, and with dew over it and dew under it as if it were lying in a box."

They requested bread appropriately, since it is impossible for a person to get along without bread, but they requested meat inappropriately, because they had many animals, and furthermore, it was possible for them to get along without meat. Therefore, He gave it to them at a time when it would be a burden for them to prepare it, [at an] inappropriate [time].— [from Mechilta Yoma 75a,b]

The Manna - "What is it?"

Spiritual manna - Christ and his grace - is incomprehensible to the natural man.

1 Corinthians 2:14 - But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The manna (Heb: *man-hu* "what," similar to the Egyptian *menu* - food) fell only six days in the week, and in double quantity on the sixth day; it bred worms and became offensive if kept more than one day, excepting on the sabbath. The people had never seen it before. It could be ground in a mill, or beaten in a mortar, and was then made into cakes and baked. It continued the 40 years the Israelites were in the wilderness, wherever they went, and ceased when they arrived in Canaan.

Manna tasted "like wafers made with honey." (**Exodus 16:31**) and "like dough kneaded with oil" (**Numbers 11:8**).

"Give us this day our daily bread."

Like salvation, manna demands ongoing participation. It's a daily thing. Yesterday's faith does no good for today's challenges.

1. In the same way we have to appropriate - personally agree and receive - salvation, Israel had to go out and gather the manna themselves. They didn't have to travel very far, just outside. But it wasn't delivered into their mouths, or even into their tent, or forced on them.
2. Israel had to be totally dependent on faith that God would provide. The manna came from heaven, not through their effort, and not brought from Egypt.
3. They had to be content with only enough for that day. Hoarded manna would breed worms and stink.

A Miraculous Provision

Exodus 16:17-18 - "And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating."

Their effort did not vary the amount they each needed. An omer (about six pints) was enough for everyone.

Rashi - Some gathered [too] much [manna] and some gathered [too] little, but when

they came home, they measured with an omer, each one what he had gathered, and they found that the one who had gathered [too] much had not exceeded an omer for each person who was in his tent, and the one who had gathered [too] little did not find less than an omer for each person. This was a great miracle that occurred with it [the manna].

A vigorous adult would gather more than a child, but when shared together, the manna met every need equally, like the miracle of the loaves and fishes of Jesus (**Matthew 14:13-21**).

Paul saw this assured provision as a reason for the sharing of resources, and he applies this to the fellowship (*koinonia*) of the church:

2 Corinthians 8:12-15 - "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: 'As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.'"

Exodus 16:19 - "And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning."

- Like the Passover lamb, when any of the lamb not eaten must be burned and not retained.

Exodus 16:21 - "And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted."

Since the scattered manna would melt in the sun's rays, "This shows that we must rise before dawn to pray to you, because if we are ungrateful, our hope will melt like frost and flow away like dirty water." - Wisdom of Solomon 16:28-29

But Rashi sees a purpose for even the melted manna:

Rashi - What remained [of the manna] in the field melted and became streams from which deer and gazelles drank. And the nations of the world would hunt some of them [these animals] and taste in them the flavor of manna and know how great Israel's praise was. — [from Mechilta]

The Sabbath given before the Law

Exodus 16:25-27 - "And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none."

So, were the people just dumb or rebellious, or both?

Are we?

Jewish Legends of the Manna

The Midrash says "The Torah could be given only to eaters of manna."

The Talmud states that the taste of the manna was integrally linked with the taster's thoughts. To the gentile mind, the manna tasted bitter. To Israel it tasted like one's favorite food. Some of the Gentiles, Edomites and Midianites, came up and, seeing the chosen people eating, they also gathered of the manna and tasted, but it was to them as wormwood." - (Jalkut Shimoni, fol. 73, col. 4)

Ezekiel 16:10 - "My meat (food) also which I gave thee, fine flour and oil and honey wherewith I fed you."

Book of the Wisdom of Solomon - "Thou feddest thine own people with angels' food, and didst send them from heaven bread prepared without their labor, able to content every man's delight, and agreeing to every taste. Conforming to the taste of whoever ate it, it transformed itself into what each eater wished" (16:20-23).

Exodus Rabbah 5:9:: "Rabbi Jose ben Hanina says: ... the manna that descended with a taste varying according to the needs of each individual Israelite. The young men, eating it as bread...the old, as wafers made with honey...to the babes, it tasted like the milk from their mothers' breasts...to the sick, it was like fine flour mingled with honey."

R. Abbuha said: [Do not read *le-shad* (cake), but *shad* (*breast*)] viz: Just as the infant finds very many a flavor in the breast, so also did Israel find many a taste in the manna as long as they were eating it.

Pirkei Avot/Ethics of the Fathers: The manna was one of the ten things created by God at twilight on the eve of the first Shabbat" (5:9)

When Moses went up on Mount Sinai, a cloud received him and bore him up to heaven. there he saw the angels grinding the manna in the third firmament called Shechachim (clouds), and then they would throw it down to the Israelites below.

The main discussion of manna in the Talmud is found in Yoma 75a-b, though it begins discussing manna a little before that and continues a little later. A debate between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yismael is recorded there over whether manna is identical to the sustenance of angels or just an extraordinary human food.