

**The Answerer**

Answering children's questions

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## **'Manna from Heaven'**

(Exodus 16:1-36)

The word 'Manna' (meaning or 'What is it?') is another name in the Bible for food or bread. And bread has many forms and uses – as you might have seen at home, the shops, or on a TV cooking show, even one for kids: read on.

The saying ***"Oh, Manna from heaven!"*** is a way of saying that you have been given a needed hand-out, or had a treat, a surprise, a gift that you didn't expect.

Manna is what the Israelites **ate for 40 years!**  
(Wholemeal, flat, or white vitamin enriched ... I know not!)



In the book of Exodus in Chapter 16, the 40 years of wandering in the desert meant that **God had to feed them in the desert for 40 years! And He did!**

The manna fell at night & looked like grain flakes or like small potato chips. It had to be gathered in loads of "an omer (2 litres) per person per day." **Wait for it!** And a double portion on the day before the Sabbath. (Saturday) None of it was to be kept overnight, except for before the Sabbath as instructed by God.

If what they gathered WAS kept overnight on the other nights: it was a problem the next morning. It was smelly and was infested with maggots. *And some went people went out looking on the Sabbath ... and of course they found nothing.* It seems that some people *had* to disobey Moses ... 3 times in chapter 16 alone; no wonder God got angry with them more than a few times.

In case you do not know or remember: (Not that you are 3,000 years old – but you might have heard the story of Joseph and Moses before reading his story.) After leaving the slavery of brick making in Egypt, enduring bosses 'Taskmasters' with whips, Moses sent 12 spies into 'The Promised Land' to check it out for people, for good land and the housing and so on.



On returning, ten of them refused to believe that God would help them to defeat (drive out, even kill) all those who were occupying the land. Only Caleb and Joshua believed that they could win any battle, even though "... they are a strong people, but we can easily defeat them = because God has promised to help us". But the other 10 spies said "NO" to going up against them. (They refused to believe God could help them.) So, to punish them, God had them wander around in the desert for 40 years until all the doubting 'grown-ups' had died.



The Bible states: "adults 20 years & older" would not get to see 'The Promised Land'. The Israelites also got thirsty and some of them threatened to stone Moses to death! (That really would have made everything much worse.)

Some humans can be very, very hard to please ... *some Israelites even wished to be back in Egypt as slaves - making more bricks! Again! They longed for garlic, onions and leeks in spite of the brick-making. Even today, we are all different ... with some complainers!*

It is a mystery – but Jesus referred to himself as: 'The Bread of life' and in a spiritual sense **He is**. Without Him, Christians have nothing in eternal life, no hope. He referred to himself as: "...the bread of life." But He was meaning the 'essential food' for eternal life. (Read it in full in the Book of John chapter 6 v 33.)

And to confirm the importance of this 'Bread of life' John is told in Revelation, the last book in the Bible, that believers must be careful not to get caught up in idol worship - anything that we care about more than God. Why? Because it is a **choice** that some Christians make, but a wrong choice, to value 'things' more than God and sort of worship them: Maybe idolising cars, TV stars, movie stars, motorbikes and even drugs and food. (Liking the 'manna' rather than the giver!)



In a sort of 'Report Card' on the main churches not so long after Jesus had gone back to heaven - God said about one church: "Let everyone who can hear, listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches: Everyone who is victorious shall eat of the hidden **manna**, the secret nourishment from heaven." (Rev. 2:17 TLB) 'Victorious' means overcoming the trials of this life and the temptations to stray from God's way. *Only God can help us to be like that ... so always seek His help if you are in trouble. Appreciate all God gives and does for us, **& remember to thank God for all He does for us!***