

BIBLE STUDY

“ He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” (Deut. 8:3)

As you can see, there is an association between gathering manna and studying the Bible. First, God humbled the Israelites. They came out of Egypt with great pride but God led them into the desert where for three days they had no water (Ex. 15:22). That ought to humble anyone! Then God caused them to hunger. This too is significant! People with no appetite will starve if they do not force themselves to eat. So God rained down bread from heaven to feed them and they were hungry enough to gather and eat it. Since they had never seen anything like this food before they called it “manna” which means “what is it?” (Ex. 13:15).

Manna fell from heaven and covered the ground like frost (Ex. 16:14)). It was not easy to gather the manna. First, they had to leave home and walk as much as a mile to get out of the camp and beyond where the animals grazed. Then, there was only a brief window of opportunity to gather the manna. It appeared when the dew was gone and disappeared when the sun waxed hot (Ex. 16:14, 21). Further, the flakes of manna were small, like a coriander seed, and each person needed to gather two quarts.

Neither was it easy for them to study the Bible. Apparently there was only one copy of the Book of the Law and it was placed beside the ark of the covenant (Deut. 31:26). Remember! God fed them with manna to teach them that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. As difficult as it was, they were still required to know and teach every word that came from the mouth of God (Deut. 6:4-9)

While there are many lessons to be learned about gathering manna and studying the Bible, the focus of this brief study is on the supernatural ability of the Bible to meet the needs of everyone regardless of age or education. When the Hebrews gathered the manna **“some gathered much, some little. And when they measured it by the omer, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. Each one gathered as much as he needed” (Ex. 16:17, 18).** (FYI the word “omer” is only found 5 times in the Bible and every time is in Exodus 16. It is defined as a “tenth of an ephah” which is about 2 quarts).

As we have said, manna was small like a coriander seed (Ex. 16:31). Those who were old and slow, or who had failing eyesight, only gathered a “little”. The young and the vigorous, however, gathered “much”. Remarkably, God intervened so that those who gathered much didn’t have too much, and those who gathered little didn’t have too little. Paul applied this lesson to giving to encourage poor people to “give according to what one has and not according to what he does not have (2 Cor. 8:10-15).

It is obvious that manna was supernatural. It fell from heaven 6 days but didn’t fall on the Sabbath. For 6 days it couldn’t be saved over night without stinking and being full of maggots. So they could eat on the Sabbath, however, God supernaturally intervened and preserved it on one day of the week (Ex. 16:24). Further, once the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan and were able to eat the produce of the land the manna miraculously stopped (Josh. 5:12). In Ps. 78:25 manna is called “the bread of angels”. We should not be surprised, therefore, that those who failed to gather a full daily quota were miraculously sustained by our loving heavenly father.

But what about the Bible? It too is supernatural! The Word of God is **“alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12).** **“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim. 3:16).**

If you are not hungry for physical food something is wrong. The same is true about spiritual food. So start today to study the Bible for man does not live by bread alone!!