

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
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Hidden Treasure Series

THE ONE WHO GIVES LIFE

Exodus 16

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**INTRODUCTION:** For the past few weeks, we have been digging into the Old Testament in search of the hidden treasure of Jesus Christ. We have discovered Jesus as the offspring of Eve who was destined to crush the serpent's head, and last week, we found a type or image of Jesus presented in the ark, the place of safety and refuge. Today we are going to look for Jesus in another unlikely place—the story of the Israelites receiving manna in the wilderness.

Today's message has 4 points:

- It was God's idea.
- It was in God's time.
- God gave the instructions.
- It was the perfect plan.

Although many of you have heard the story of manna, you've probably not thought of it as an illustration of God's salvation.

**1-IT WAS GOD'S IDEA**

**SCRIPTURE:** Exodus 16:2-3

*In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. <sup>3</sup> The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."*

**EXPLANATION:** Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, but once in the desert, they were less than satisfied and began grumbling about their lack of food. Instead of asking God for what they needed, they griped and complained to Moses and among themselves.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Did any of you parents ever deal with meal-time battles with your children? Or maybe you remember causing your parents grief at the dinner table? Sometimes kids do not want to eat what's placed before them. If your family was anything like mine, you probably were not given a choice. I heard about one mama who refused to let her child eat anything else until he had eaten what he had been given. So, if he did not eat it at dinner, it went into the fridge and was brought out again the next day for breakfast. If the child did not eat it then, it was put away and brought out at lunch. Although the mom did not like waste, that was not her primary concern. She was trying to instill in her son a lesson about not being too picky and eating nutritious food instead of junk. She also wanted to teach her child an appreciation for the time, effort, and money that went into preparing a meal.

**EXPLANATION:** In a similar way, God allowed the Israelites to experience hunger in order to teach them about the conditions of their hearts. Deuteronomy 8:3 says, *“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.”*

God wanted the Israelites to understand that, as important as physical nourishment is, it is still not as important as having a right relationship with him.

I hope you see the implications here for your own life!

- It was God's idea.

## **2-IT WAS IN GOD'S TIME**

**SCRIPTURE:** Exodus 16:11-15 & 31

*The LORD said to Moses, <sup>12</sup> “I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.’” <sup>13</sup> That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. <sup>14</sup> When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. <sup>15</sup> When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat... <sup>31</sup> The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey.*

**EXPLANATION:** God did not send manna in response to the Israelites' complaints. He didn't respond to their demands like a parent giving in to their child's temper tantrum. God sent manna in response to the Israelites' need. God always intended to provide for his people. In his perfect timing, God sent quail and manna to feed them. (An interesting note—the original Hebrew word used in verse 15 for the Israelites' question "What is it?" is the same root word that is translated as manna in verse 31.)

In the same way, God waited until the perfect time to send his son to secure our salvation.

**SCRIPTURE:** In John 6:30-33 the Jewish people questioned Jesus.

*"So they asked him, "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?"<sup>31</sup> Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'*"<sup>32</sup> Jesus said to them, *"Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.<sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."*

In the same way that God sent manna, he sent his son Jesus, from Heaven to earth, to offer us salvation.

- It was God's idea.
- It was in God's time.

### 3-GOD GAVE THE INSTRUCTIONS

**SCRIPTURE:** Exodus 16:16-20

*This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.'"<sup>17</sup> The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little.<sup>18</sup> And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed.<sup>19</sup> Then Moses said to them, "No one is to keep any of it until morning."<sup>20</sup> However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them.*

**EXPLANATION:** God gave the Israelites specific instructions regarding how, when, and how much of the manna to collect. At dawn, the people picked up about two quarts each. They were not to store or try to preserve it. Only on the day before the sabbath were they allowed to gather more. Unfortunately, as is often the case with us humans, the people did not follow instructions well.

**ILLUSTRATION:** In almost every recipe, there are a few different components. The first component is usually a list of ingredients. The second is a set of instructions, and the third is suggested servings and sometimes caloric information. Sometimes, the recipe is pretty simple. You mix all the ingredients together and throw it into the oven to bake. Sometimes, however, it may be complicated with multiple steps. For instance, you may need to mix the dry ingredients first and add the walnuts last. Occasionally, you may get a recipe that instructs you to divide the eggs or mix half the salt in the original batter and add the other half to a separate bowl with separate ingredients for a sauce. In those types of recipes, if you just throw everything together and pop it in the oven, you are not going to get the result you wanted. The point is this. The instructions are there for a reason, and it's important to follow them.

The Israelites were not very good at this. Time and again, throughout history, they struggled to obey God. But, despite their attempts to greedily hoard the manna, they could not preserve the manna outside God's rules. In this way, God taught them how to trust him more. They had to believe that God would daily provide what they needed.

**APPLICATION:** In the same way that manna could only be collected according to the instructions given by God, a relationship with God can only be obtained in the way that God has defined—through Christ. In John 14:6, *“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

We live in a world that says “Have it your way,” but God says there is only one way. Just like the Israelites could not collect and save the manna any old way they wanted, we cannot come to God by our own means. No matter how good our intentions, it will not work. God provided the means by which we can be saved, and he outlined the process of salvation. His way is the only way.

- It was God's idea.

- It was in God’s time.
- God gave the instructions.

#### **4-IT WAS THE PERFECT PLAN**

**SCRIPTURE:** Exodus 16:35

*The Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan.*

**EXPLANATION:** God fed the Israelites with manna for forty years. For forty years, there was a daily supply of this life-giving sustenance. There was always just enough to give them exactly the nourishment they needed.

**APPLICATION:** Manna was one-of-a-kind. It could not be planted and grown. Man could not generate it. The Israelites were dependent on God to provide the manna they needed. Likewise, humans cannot manufacture their own means by which to be saved. God sent his son once and for all time to be the savior of the world.

Additionally, God sent manna to sustain and strengthen the Israelites during their time in the desert, and God sent Christ to sustain and strengthen us. However, while manna only served their physical bodies for a short time, Christ will sustain us spiritually for all eternity.

**SCRIPTURE:** John 6:35 & 48-51 says

*“Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty...<sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. <sup>50</sup> But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”*

Manna is a picture of Jesus, sent by God to satisfy our every need.

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**INVITATION:** Bread in the ancient world was a vital component of life. Without bread, a meal was considered incomplete. Thus, bread became synonymous with the essence of life.

Think about the way in which Jesus taught his disciples to pray. He told them to ask God to give them their “daily bread.” In other words, they were to ask God for everything they needed. While the women usually made the bread, Israelite fathers were the ones who presented it to their family. Like a father blessed and broke the loaf of bread meant to feed his family, God presented Jesus to the world and Isaiah 53:10 tells us that it was his will to crush him on behalf of humanity. He did this for us so that we might have a relationship with him. If you want to know more about the Bread of Life, the altar is open.

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