

# What Is It?

Exodus 16; Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 292-297



**D**o you know what a desert is like? It is hot during the day and cold at night with all sand and little or nothing growing. Where could you find food in a desert? The Israelites traveled in the desert—and they were almost out of food! What do you think they did?

**G**od took such good care of the Israelites. He sent a cloud to shade them from the hot desert sun in the day. He sent a pillar of fire to light their camp at night. He had freed them from Egypt and destroyed their enemies in the Red Sea.

But the Israelites were beginning to worry. It had been six weeks since God had led them out of Egypt. And the food they had brought with them was almost gone. “Back in Egypt we had all the food we could eat,” they grumbled. “But here in this desert we are going to starve to death.” They complained bitterly to Moses.

Of course God had no intention of letting them starve to death. “I will rain down bread from heaven,” God told Moses. “It will be there in the morning. The people are to go out every day and gather an omer\* each. But they must not keep any of it until the next day. And, I’m going to test them to see if they follow My instructions.”

Sure enough, the next morning the ground was covered with thin white flakes. The people

were surprised. “What is it?” they asked again and again. It looked like frozen dew all over the ground. Moses told them, “This is the bread God promised you. Gather it and eat it today. But don’t try to keep any for tomorrow. It won’t be good.”

So the people called it “manna.”\*\* And they gathered it up and tasted it. It tasted sweet like honey. And there was enough for everyone. But as soon as the sun grew hot, the manna that remained on the ground melted away.

Some people gathered a lot. But when they measured it with an omer, they had just an omer’s worth. Some people gathered a little. And when they measured it with an omer, they, too, had just an omer’s worth!

“Don’t keep any of it until the next morning,” God had said. But some of them paid no attention.



# The Message

We worship God when we enjoy keeping the Sabbath.

## Memory Verse

*"If you call the Sabbath a delight . . . you will find your joy in the Lord"*

*(Isaiah 58:13, 14, NIV).*

The next morning their leftover manna was full of worms and smelled bad.

On the sixth day the instruction was different. "Today you're to gather twice as much," Moses said. "Tomorrow is God's Sabbath, a day of rest. There won't be any manna on the ground in the morning. So get enough today and bake it or boil it, but save some of it for tomorrow."

The double portion they were told to gather to keep for Sabbath would not get wormy! But wouldn't you know? Some people didn't gather twice as much that Friday. Instead, they got up

on Sabbath morning expecting to find manna. They had to learn their lesson the hard, hungry way! Of course, there was no manna on the ground that Sabbath morning! And there was none on any Sabbath that came after. "How long will they refuse to follow My instructions?" God sighed to Moses.

The story of the manna teaches us two things. First, just like the Israelites, we honor God when we obey Him. Following His directions is an act of worship.

It also teaches us that God knows best. His plans for us are for our own good. Following His instructions is the only way to be really happy.

It took the Israelites awhile to learn that they needed to follow God's instructions about the manna. They finally got it right. And it's a good thing, because that's what God fed them for the forty years they spent in the wilderness!

They also learned how important the Sabbath is to God. He wanted them, and us, to make it a special day, different from other days. When they kept Sabbath special, when they didn't work by gathering manna, they were showing God their love and obedience. And they were really worshiping Him.

\*An omer is about two quarts or two liters.

\*\*Manna means "What is it?"





# S A B B A T H

**ASK** Ask your family to help you read Exodus 16:1-12. What are these verses about? Where does your food come from? Thank those who made your food for today.

**DO** Review the memory verse and teach it to your family. Try to make it into a song, then sing it together.

**SHARE** Share the manna flake you made in Sabbath School with someone. Tell them about God's sending manna to the Israelites. (Or make a snowflake shape and write your memory verse on it and share it.) Pray for that person today.

# S U N D A Y

**READ** With your family, read and discuss Exodus 16:13-36. How much manna were the people to gather each day? How long did God give the people manna? Where did God tell Moses and Aaron to keep some manna? Why?

**DO** Put a slice of fruit on a plate. Leave it out overnight, and look at it in the morning. Would you want to eat it? Why? Thank God for fresh fruit.

# M O N D A Y

**READ** With your family, read and discuss Exodus 16:16-20 again. The worms in the food kept overnight were probably maggots. Find out more about maggots. (Hint: Start with a dictionary.) Do you think anyone ate any of that manna? Why?

**ASK** Ask your family members to tell about a time they were really hungry. What did they do? What do you do when you are hungry?

**PRAY** Thank God for good food.

# T U E S D A Y

**READ** Read Exodus 16:31 with your family. Talk about how manna must have tasted.

**DO** For breakfast this week have a flaked cereal, if possible. If it's not sweetened, ask for some honey to add to it. Or just eat some bread or a cracker with honey on it. How does it taste? Thank God for the food your family enjoys.

God told Moses to keep a jar of manna in the ark to remind the Israelites how He took care of them.



# W E D N E S D A Y

**READ** For family worship read and discuss Exodus 16:1-4. Talk about deserts. How would you find food in the desert? How would you find water? How do the animals that live there get food and water? (Hint: Look in an encyclopedia.)

**DO** Read Exodus 16:31 together again. Ask an adult to show you some coriander seed, if available. Or look for it the next time you are in a grocery store. (Go to the spice and seasonings shelves.) Thank God for a variety of seasonings.





# THURSDAY

**TELL** With your family, talk about things you do every day. Ask each one to tell about their favorite thing and their least favorite thing. Talk about things you do only on special occasions. Which day of the week is most special to your family? Why?

**DO** Make a list of ways you can worship God. Remember: Worshiping God isn't done only in church on Sabbath. How do you worship Him other days? Thank Him for freedom to worship.



# FRIDAY

**READ** During worship today read and discuss 1 John 2:3-6. What does this say about how we are to live?

**DO** Celebrate God's Sabbath with food and singing. Make the table attractive with fruit, fresh vegetables, or other special things. Have a special drink. Put candles on the table and light them.

**SING** Before prayer, sing "Father, I Adore You" (Sing for Joy, No. 21), "God Is So Good" (Sing for Joy, No. 13), or other praise songs.

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## PUZZLE

**Directions:** Use the letters found on the calendar to discover the joyful lesson the Israelites learned from manna collected on Fridays.

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	B	C	D	E	G	H
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
I	J	L	M	S	T	U
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

13 7 5

12 1 2 2 1 13 7

8 12

1

4 5 10 8 6 7 13

