

Manna: Symbol of Jesus Christ

After the children of Israel complained that they missed the fleshpots and bread of Egypt, the lord told Moses that He would “rain bread from heaven” (Ex. 16:4). This bread was called “manna,” “the corn of heaven,” and “angels’ food” (Ps. 78:24–25). Exodus 16:31 describes manna as being “like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.”

God fed Israel this special bread for forty years (Ex. 16:35), a number that symbolizes a period of probation, testing, and tribulation (see Deut. 8:2–3). The manna ceased the day after the Israelites partook of grain in the Promised Land (Josh. 5:12).

Manna symbolized Jesus Christ, who is “the living bread” (John 6:51). In the context of the miraculous feeding of bread and fish to five thousand people near the Sea of Galilee, Jesus taught the people that He was “the bread of life.” He said, “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger. . . . Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh” (John 6:35, 49, 51). As the chart indicates, manna served as a type and shadow of Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice.⁴³

Manna	Jesus Christ
God called the manna “bread” (Ex. 16:12, cf. v. 15).	Jesus called Himself the “bread of life” and the “living bread” (John 6:48, 51).
Manna provided the Israelites with temporal life.	Jesus the living bread provides all with eternal life: “I am the living bread . . . if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever” (John 6:51).
Manna came from heaven: The lord told Moses, “I will rain bread from heaven” (Ex. 16:4).	Jesus is “the bread which cometh down from heaven” (John 6:50).
The lord God gave manna to the children of Israel.	God “gave his only begotten Son” (John 3:16) to the children of men.
There was enough manna for every person (Ex. 16:16–18).	The Atonement of Jesus Christ is infinite, sufficient to cover all of God’s children.
Every person received his fill of manna: “They gathered every man according to his eating” (Ex. 16:18; see also vv. 16–17).	Jesus fills those who are spiritually hungry: “I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger” (John 6:35).

Manna

Manna was undeserved. The lord said, “I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, . . . at even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread” (Ex. 16:12).

The children of Israel ate manna for forty years (Ex. 16:35), a period of testing.

Concerning those who overcome the world, they will be given “to eat of the hidden manna” (Rev. 2:17).

Jesus Christ

Jesus died for undeserving sinners: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:6, 8).

Jesus was tempted of Satan after fasting forty days and forty nights (Matt. 4:1–2).

Jesus, the “living bread,” is “hidden,” or unknown, to the wicked but revealed to the righteous.