

# Bread From Heaven

## Exodus 16

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The whole community of Israel started out from Elim. They came to the Desert of Sin. It was between Elim and Sinai. They arrived there on the 15th day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt.

In the desert the whole community told Moses and Aaron they weren't happy with them. The Israelites said to them, "We wish the Lord had put us to death in Egypt. There we sat around pots of meat. We ate all of the food we wanted. But you have brought us out into this desert. You must want this entire community to die of hunger."

Then the Lord spoke to Moses. He said, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people must go out each day. Have them gather enough bread for that day. Here is how I will put them to the test. I will see if they will follow my directions.

"On the sixth day they must prepare what they bring in. On that day they must gather twice as much as on the other days."

So Moses and Aaron spoke to all of the people of Israel. They said, "In the evening you will know that the Lord brought you out of Egypt. And in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord. He has heard you say you aren't happy with him. Who are we? Why are you telling us you aren't happy with us?"

Moses also said, "You will know that the Lord has heard you speak against him. He will give you meat to eat in the evening. He'll give you all of the bread you want in the morning. But who are we? You aren't speaking against us. You are speaking against the Lord."

Then Moses told Aaron, "Talk to the whole community of Israel. Say to them, 'Come to the Lord. He has heard you speak against him.' "

While Aaron was talking to the whole community of Israel, they looked toward the desert. There was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud!

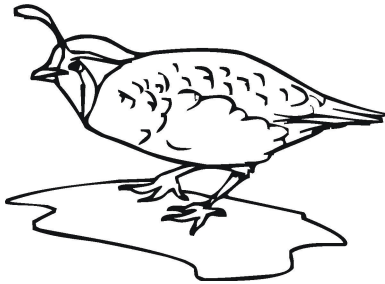
The Lord said to Moses, "I have heard the people of Israel talking about how unhappy they are. Tell them, 'When the sun goes down, you will eat meat. In the

morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.' "

That evening quail came and covered the camp. In the morning the ground around the camp was covered with dew. When the dew was gone, thin flakes appeared on the desert floor. They looked like frost on the ground. The people of Israel saw the flakes. They asked each other, "What's that?" They didn't know what it was.

Moses said to them, "It's the bread the Lord has given you to eat. Here is what the Lord has commanded. He has said, 'Each one of you should gather as much as you need. Take two quarts for each person who lives in your tent.' "

The people of Israel did as they were told. Some gathered a lot, and some gathered a little. 18 When they measured it out, those who gathered a lot didn't have too much. And those who gathered a little had enough. All of them gathered only what they needed.



Then Moses said to them, "Don't keep any of it until morning."

Some of them didn't pay any attention to Moses. They kept part of it until morning. But it was full of maggots and began to stink. So Moses became angry with them.

Each morning all of them gathered as much as they needed. But by the hottest time of the day, the thin flakes had melted away.

On the sixth day, the people gathered twice as much. It amounted to four quarts for each person. The leaders of the community came and reported that to Moses. He said to them, "Here is what the Lord commanded. He said, 'Tomorrow will be a day of rest. It will be a holy Sabbath day. It will be set apart for the Lord. So bake what you want to bake. Boil what you want to boil. Save what is left. Keep it until morning.' "

So they saved it until morning, just as Moses commanded. It didn't stink or get maggots in it.

"Eat it today," Moses said. "Today is a Sabbath day in the Lord's honor. You won't find any flakes on the ground today. Gather them for six days. But on the seventh day there won't be any. It's the Sabbath."

In spite of what Moses said, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather the flakes. But they didn't find any.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses. He said, "How long will all of you refuse to obey my commands and my teachings? Keep in mind that I have given you the Sabbath day. That is why on the sixth day I give you bread for two days. All of you must stay where you are on the seventh day. No one can go out." So the people rested on the seventh day.

The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seeds. It tasted like wafers that were made with honey.

Moses said, "Here is what the Lord has commanded. He has said, 'Get two quarts of manna. Keep it for all time to come. Then those who live after you will see the bread I gave you to eat in the desert. I gave it to you when I brought you out of Egypt.' "

So Moses said to Aaron, "Get a jar. Put two quarts of manna in it. Then place it in front of the Lord. Keep it there for all time to come."

Aaron did exactly as the Lord had commanded Moses. He put the manna in front of the tablets of the covenant. He put it there so it would be kept for all time to come.

The people of Israel ate manna for 40 years. They ate it until they came to a land that was settled. They ate it until they reached the border of Canaan.

