

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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Forty Years of Manna

The problem with receiving God’s blessings on a regular basis is that they can become routine, even boring. It takes effort to maintain a grateful heart.

“And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan” (Ex. 16:35).

“Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: ‘Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!’” (Num. 11:4-6).

The biggest challenge facing the Israelites as they journeyed through the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan was finding enough food to feed upwards of two million mouths. God answered that challenge with manna, a white bread-like substance that covered the ground every morning. It was nutritionally complete, and required no special preparation. “Manna from heaven” has passed into our modern lexicon as a metaphor for any undeserved but welcome gift.

But after only a few months on the trail, the Israelites grew tired of a steady diet of this heavenly food. There was no point in asking, “What’s for supper?” because everyone already knew what they’d be eating for supper: manna. It was manna for breakfast and manna for lunch, too. Want a snack? Here, have some manna! The lack of options at mealtime soon became too much. They cried out against Moses and God, demanding more variety in their diet.

It’s easy to criticize the Israelites for their ingratitude. After all, we have access to a wide variety of food to keep our taste buds amused. The Israelites once had that variety, too—back in Egypt. They remembered all the food choices they had in their former life, conveniently forgetting the bitter servitude that came with those choices.

The story of the Israelites rejecting God’s food illustrates a problem that still plagues God’s people today. The salvation that God gives us, and the lifestyle that accompanies that gift, can, over time, become routine, even boring. We can forget the life of bondage to sin that

we left behind, and begin pining for more variety in our lives.

This problem is exacerbated as we interact with the world around us. We see the carnal pleasures that our unbelieving friends enjoy, and begin to feel like we’re missing out. Our godly lifestyle starts to look stale and uninteresting. If we take the bait, we’ll get the pleasure—along with a lot of other baggage we didn’t bargain for.

Marriages can fall victim to this curse, too. After years of living with the same person day after day, it’s easy to become disenchanted with the status quo and seek passion elsewhere. Only after we jump ship do we realize the status quo wasn’t so bad after all.

Yes, forty years of manna can get a little old—if we allow ourselves to think about it that way. We can spice up our lives with the excitement the world offers, but we will pay a heavy price for the thrill. The discipline of a godly life may seem bland, but the reward that awaits us at the end makes it worthwhile. Thank God for your daily manna, and keep your eyes on the goal!

– David King