

## Manna and Salvation from Heaven

Some well-intentioned and spiritually-minded people are confused or mistaken about the relationship between God's grace, man's faith and works, and salvation. Choosing to stake their claim on "salvation by faith only with no mixture of works whatsoever," they are either unaware of, or decide to ignore passages, such as James 2:14-26, which makes an unmistakable link between faith, works, and salvation. They see salvation as a "free gift" and demand that if it is a gift is free, then there can be no requirements for or effort expended by us in order to receive it. But let's think about...

Exodus 16:15 records an explanation to Israel of the *manna* that covered to ground of the wilderness in the morning as they journeyed to the Promises Land, "*It is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.*" Note: God **gave** it to them. They didn't plant and tend grain, then harvest and process it to get it, God **gave** it to them. Right? Yes, but how so? Did they find a freshly baked loaf of it when they arose in the morning? Is that how God *gave* it to them? Or, did He instead make it *freely available* to them?

Take it a step or four further with me. What did they *have to do* to *receive the benefits* of this *free gift from God*? Were there *requirements, regulations, and limitations* that governed its reception and benefits? Please consider:

- This "*bread from heaven*" served the purpose of sustaining life by means of a *test*, "*whether or not they will walk in my instruction*," Exodus 16:4.
- The *manna* had to be *gathered*- they had to *go out and get it*; so effort was expended (work) in order to receive the benefits of what God gave them, Exodus 16:16-18,21.
- The *freely given gift of manna* also, in addition to being gathered, had to be prepared and cooked to be enjoyed; so, more personal *effort/work* was involved to receive its benefits, Exodus 16:23.
- Though the Lord *freely gave* the *manna*, it did have *regulations, requirements, and limitations* attached, Exodus 16:16-9,21-26.

Additionally, please understand that though the *manna* was *freely given (offered)* by the Lord, and *effort, regulations, requirements, and limitations* were included, those who failed to abide by these stipulations **failed to receive its benefits**, Exodus 16:20,27-29!

Now, if we can understand how God's *freely-given gift of manna from heaven* still required *effort/work* to achieve, and included *regulations* that required *obedience* in order to receive its *benefits*, why can't we see that God's *free gift* of salvation through Jesus Christ also requires *effort* in order to obtain, and includes *requirements of obedience* in order to receive its benefits? Did the Israelites in any way "earn" their *bread*? Of course not! Did those who refused to meet the *requirements* receive its *benefits* anyway? Again, of course not! Did their *efforts/work* or *obedience to its requirements* negate God's grace in providing it as a *free gift*? Finally, of course not again!

This *manna*, just like the *free gift* of salvation through Jesus Christ was made available to all, but only those who *faithfully obeyed* God's instructions regarding it received its benefits. In light of these things, please read Titus 2:11-14 very slowly, carefully, and thoughtfully, "*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession,*

*zealous for good deeds.”* Now do you see that God’s *gracious gift* of salvation is only *received* through our *obedient faith*? God’s *grace appeared, bringing salvation to all men*, in the form of *instructions* to be followed in order to receive its benefits. Hope this **helps!** (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at [southportcofc.org](http://southportcofc.org); email to [mrpcstrong@hotmail.com](mailto:mrpcstrong@hotmail.com))