

Did They Eat Only Manna In The Wilderness?

Introduction

It is assumed that all the children of Israel ate was manna while in the wilderness.

Numbers 11:5-6

“We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: [6] But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.”

Before the manna was given they acted as if their main need was bread. That's if they only had that article of food they would be satisfied. Now that nothing in that line is needed, they see a deficiency in it. All of which proves that when men clamor for a thing that is not really indispensable they are apt to tire of it soon and want something else.

The children of Israel did eat manna for 40 years after they came out of Egyptian bondage by the exodus.

Exodus 16:35

“And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.”

The Passover

After coming out of Egypt, the children of Israel kept the Passover. What did they eat to keep the Passover?

Numbers 9:11-12

“The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. [12] They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it.”

We see here that the Passover was observed while in the wilderness, and to observe the Passover they ate the Lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs.

The Offerings

There was other food available for them to eat and that is seen from the food that was used in the Offering.

Leviticus 2:1-14

“And when any will offer a meat offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon: [2] And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests: and he shall take there out his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord: [3] And the remnant of the meat offerings shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a

thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire. [4] And if thou bring an oblation of a meat offering baken in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. [5] And if thy oblation be a meat offering baken in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil. [6] Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon: it is a meat offering. [7] And if thy oblation be a meat offering baken in the frying pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. [8] And thou shalt bring the meat offering that is made of these things unto the Lord: and when it is presented unto the priest, he shall bring it unto the altar. [9] And the priest shall take from the meat offering a memorial thereof, and shall burn it upon the altar: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord. [10] And that which is left of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire. [11] No meat offering, which ye shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire. [12] As for the oblation of the first fruits, ye shall offer them unto the Lord: but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour. [13] And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt. [14] And if thou offer a meat offering of thy first fruits unto the Lord, thou shalt offer for the meat offering of thy first fruits green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears. [15] And thou shalt put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon: it is a meat offering. [16] And the priest shall burn the memorial of it, part of the beaten corn thereof, and part of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof: it is an offering made by fire unto the Lord.”

We see that flour, oil, salt, honey, and grain were with them in the wilderness from the Law of the Offering.

Cattle

We may also notice that the children of Israel had cattle with them in the wilderness.

Numbers 32:1

“Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle;”

Deut. 3:19

“But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle, (for I know that ye have much cattle,) shall abide in your cities which I have given you;”

We see that the children of Israel had not manna, but they had a great multitude of cattle. The cattle that were without blemish were used in the various sacrifices. (**Lev. 1**)

Meat

The Law told the people that they could not eat the fat or the blood, which would show that they were allowed to eat the other part of the meat.

Leviticus 7:23-26

“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of sheep, or of goat. [24] And the fat of the beast that dieth of itself, and the fat of that which is torn with beasts, may be used in any other use: but ye shall in no wise eat of it. [25] For whosoever eateth the fat of the beast, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, even the soul that eateth it shall be cut off from his people. [26] Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings.”

We may see also that the Law of clean and unclean meats as to what could be eaten and as to what could not be eaten would have been without purpose of them if they were to only eat manna in the wilderness.

If manna were the only thing that the children of Israel were to eat, God certainly would have told them to eat no meat at all. But instead we find Laws of meat that they could eat in the wilderness.

Grapes and Grain

Deut. 23:24-25

“When thou comest into thy neighbor’s vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel. [25] When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbor, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor’s standing corn.”

Grapes, Pomegranates, and Figs

Numbers 13:23

“And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs.”

Buying Food and Water

Deut. 2:6-7

“Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink. [7] For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.”

This was the instruction that was given to the children of Israel as they passed by the land of Esau.

If manna were the only food God wanted them to eat in the wilderness; these instructions would have certainly been useless. But God’s Word does not fail; it is not useless.

Quails

Because of the murmuring of the children of Israel against the manna; the Lord gave them quail to eat.

Numbers 11:31, 32

“And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. [32] And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp.”

Conclusion

During the 40 years in the wilderness, God supplied the children of Israel with manna. But certainly as we have shown; it was not the only things that the children of Israel ate while in the wilderness.