

## II. New Testament

The NT mentions manna explicitly in four instances. Most prominently, manna appears within the bread of life discourse of John 6:22–59 (see John 6:31, 49), alongside the expressions “bread from heaven” (vv. 31–33, 41–42, 50, 58), “bread of God” (v. 33), “bread of life” (vv. 35, 48), and “living bread” (v. 51). In this passage, the Johannine Jesus builds a binary opposition between the manna that the ancestors ate in the wilderness but which did not overcome death, and the true bread from heaven that gives eternal life. Here, the manna no longer appears as a substance of the past but is something currently available in Jesus. Jesus depicts himself as the bread of the manna story (John 6:35). Thus, manna is not only food and nourishment but is described as a person and used as a metaphor to present Jesus’ salvific function.

Numerous hypotheses have been proposed concerning the origin of the citation in John 6:31, with a majority advocating for Exod 16:4, 15. Other suggestions include Num 11:6–9; Deut 8:3, 16; Josh 5:12; Neh 9:15, 20; Pss 78:24; 105:40; Prov 9:5; Sap 16:20 (LXX); the Johannine community; or a merged polyvalent quotation (Rytel-Andrianik: 85). Some have suggested that John 6:31–58 draws exclusively on extra-biblical aggadic manna traditions (Richter: 208–51, 262–71) or that it combines aggadic fragments with biblical sources (Borgen: 1, 20–27). In terms of its form, the passage has been considered as itself a Midrash – i.e., a new interpretation of the scriptural manna in the light of Jesus – and as a homily (Borgen: 1, 28–98; Malina: 102–6).

Aside from the Johannine references, manna appears explicitly in Heb 9:4 and Rev 2:17. According to Heb 9:4, manna is stored in a golden jar within the ark of the covenant, along with the tablets of the covenant and Aaron’s rod. Revelation 2:17 mentions the hidden manna as a gift from Christ, thereby adopting the idea of manna as heavenly nourishment.

Indirect references to the manna tradition include 1 Cor 10:3–4 where, significantly, Paul depicts the manna as a spiritual food in light of, and in analogy to, the bread of the last supper; and 2 Cor 8:15, which refers to the adequate amount of collected manna in the Exodus account.

**Bibliography:** ■ Borgen, P., *Bread from Heaven* (Leiden 1965). ■ Malina, B. J., *The Palestinian Manna Tradition* (Leiden 1968). ■ Meyer, R., “Μάννα,” *ThWNT* 4 (ed. G. Kittel; Stuttgart 1942) 466–70. ■ Richter, G., “Die alttestamentlichen Zitate

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