

## And God Created.....Wax From the Honeybee

Samson is the first individual in the Bible to be noted for taking advantage of one of the true marvels of the creations of God. The Bible records this ***“And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.” Judges 14:8-9***

Samson’s finding the swarm of honeybees in the carcase of the lion and eating honey that they had produced, was a blessing that he ate with relish as do millions of people today. The ability that God gave the honeybee to make honey is a marvelous creation and we are mostly familiar with this process. But, less known is the role that the bees wax plays in this process. Let’s spend a few minutes and look at its role of the bees wax in honey production and as a product that man has many uses for.

Young worker bees from 6 to 18 days old consume huge amounts of honey and then hang in groups near where building materials are needed in the hive and produce “wax scales” from four pairs of wax glands on the underbelly of the abdomen. These scales of wax are passed to the mouth by the bees forelegs where they are mixed with secretions from glands around the mouth. This mixture is what will become bees wax after it is chewed several times, it is then placed on the honeycomb that the bees are building. These perfectly constructed marvelous cells or chambers will house honey as well as serve as an incubator for the young. The whole process of secreting a wax scale and passing it to be chewed and placing it on the comb requires about four minutes. The wax is initially white but will turn to a lemon yellow when it is rendered from the hive. The bees wax has a odor that is similar to the honey, pollen, and other chemicals that are secreted into it, that is part of the attractive feature of the wax. The bees then place the honey or eggs into the cells and then the top is capped with more wax. When honey is harvested from the hive the caps are the wax that is collected and refined into the bees wax that we use.

For every eight pounds of honey one pound of wax will be harvested. Waxes are not single substances, but mixtures of long-chain fatty acids and are produced by both plants and animals. The wax from the honeybee is championed as one with many attractive qualities that make it prized for many applications and is actually made from 284 separate compounds. It is used in cosmetics, metal casting, modeling, medicines, food processing, printing, varnishes, polishes, for eating and of course for candles.

So while the honeybee goes about its day to day God given abilities creating honey and raising their young, we can only marvel at the complexities with which this occurs. We should never look at a bees wax candle the same again, but each time should give God the glory for His wonderful power!