

Place: Lurgan Baptist 21:2:2006

Reading: Exodus 16:1-21

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

9. BREAD FROM HEAVEN !

I heard the story of a husband who was very hard to please. His wife did all in her power to keep him happy but sometimes it was not easy. Realising that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach she got up early one morning and made him an Ulster fry. There was everything on it. Bacon, sausage, tomatoes, mushrooms, potato bread, soda bread, and two eggs, one fried, and one poached. It looked really delicious. His wife looked at him, and said, "*Dear, what do you think of that ?*" He looked back, gave her a grunt and said, "*You fried the wrong egg.*" ***Whining and murmuring was Israel's besetting sin.*** It started when Moses first went to Pharaoh and the Israelites complained that he was making their job harder instead of easier. Do you recall that they grumbled at the Red Sea when they accused Moses of bringing them to die in the desert. They were even more bitter at Marah, but the complaining did not stop there. The Israelites wandered for forty years and they grumbled their way through most of it. By the time they reached the Desert of Sin, they were an entire nation of malcontents. Do you see what (16:2) says ?

In (16:3) they complained about their meal plan. But what seems to have come first was the complaining itself, evidence of a grumbling spirit. My Israel's attitude is a warning against the great sin of complaining. ***It is always wrong to make baseless accusations against good people.*** Indeed, when the Israelites complained to Moses, what they were really doing was grumbling against God. The Psalmist says,

" And they sinned yet more against Him by provoking the Most High in the wilderness. " (78:17) Did you notice what Moses said in (16:8) "*Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.*" The word

" murmuring, " is hardly strong enough. The Hebrew word was " not designed to express a disgruntled compliant. Quite the contrary, it described an open rebellion. " When the people murmured against Moses it was mutiny against God.

They were repudiating their relationship with Him, in fact they wished that they were dead. (16:3) You see, their complaining went far beyond griping about their food, they were rebelling against God's plan for their salvation. God wanted His people to serve Him, but now the Israelites were saying, "*we would rather serve Pharaoh.*" My is this not an important insight into the sin of complaining ? (Lam 3:39) Philip Ryken says,

" All our dissatisfaction and discontent ultimately is directed against God. Usually we take our frustrations on someone else, especially people who are close to us. In the case of the Israelites, although they were taking things out on Moses they were really angry with God. This is why takes our complaints personally. He knows that when we grumble about our personal circumstances, our spiritual leaders or anything else, what we are really doing is finding fault with Him. We are

complaining about what He has provided, or not provided. A complaining spirit always indicates a problem in our relationship with God.” My is it not amazing that in spite of their whining, the Lord listened to the Israelites and gave them what they asked for ? Four times the context says that the Lord heard their grumbling (16:7, 8, 9, 12) He not only heard them, but He also provided for them. ***Is it not reassuring to know that even when we murmur against the Lord He graciously meets our needs not because of our sin, but in spite of it ?*** My here is the God of all grace promising to provide for His whining people !

Now what we have here is a genuine miracle, or actually two miracles. The first was the miracle of the quail (16:13) a small game bird that is common in the middle east. The Egyptians who considered quail a delicacy trapped the birds with nets, but when quails are weary from their travels they also can be captured by hand. This provision of quail was miraculous. They came in astonishing numbers, enough to feed a multitude of millions. The Psalmist said, “ *God rained flesh upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.*” (78:27) ***The quail came to the right place, at the right time, and in the right quantity.*** Now God did not give His people quail every day. This miracle was repeated only one other time after the Israelites left Sinai.

(Num 11:31) But what God did provide every day was bread in the form of manna, and this was the second miracle. Now manna was the wilderness food of the children of Israel. We are not sure why they called it manna. Some suppose that it came from the Hebrew word “ *Mah,*” which means “ *what,*” look at (16:15)

Other think that it signifies “ *portion, or gift,*” they called it “ *gift,*” because evidently it was the gift of God.

Now which ever view we take one thing is absolutely certain. For forty years this manna was given to them morning by morning from the hand of a faithful God. (16:35)

Neither their murmurings or their sins restrained God from sending it until their feet stood in the land of promise and they had eaten of its fruit. (Jos 5:12) Now there are many precious and practical lessons that we can learn from the manna. I have divided our study into two.

(1) The TEMPORAL Lessons From the Manna

There are many things to learn from the manna, but the basic lesson is this. God provides for His people, giving us whatever we truly need. And since He is our all sufficient provider He Himself is all we need. Manna had the educational purpose of teaching them to depend on the Lord for all their needs. What marvellous grace was this, that in response to their murmurings, unbelief and rebellion, the Lord promises to provide for them. Will you notice here,

(a) The CERTAINTY of God’s Provision:

Look you will at (16:4) You see, the Lord performed this miracle not just to meet the need of His people but to show that He was Lord. Look at (16:6) Do you recall that this was something that the Lord had already shown to his enemies. He showed the Egyptians who was Lord by drowning them on their chariots in the sea. (14:18) Now He was going to show His people the same thing,

only He would do it by meeting their needs. *The Israelites already knew that God was the God of Israel, but now they would learn it again by their own personal experience.* The Lord was going to spread a table for them in the wilderness, a thing they deemed impossible. God would give them to eat of the corn of heaven. He was going to reveal Himself as Jehovah the God of exhaustless resources !

My have you not proved Him as such ? Have you not been times when your faith has been weak, your murmurings have been strong, your vision has been dimmed, yet at such times you've discovered that “ *they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* ”
(Ps 34:10) (a)

(b) The REGULARITY of God's Provision:

You see, the Lord was going to give them bread from heaven, but that's not all, the Lord was going to give them bread from heaven every day ! “ *A certain rate every day,* ” “ *and they gathered it every morning.* ”

(16:21) The supply was to be continuous. My this was a daily evidence of the faithfulness of God. We see the faithfulness of God in the different seasons

(Gen 8:22) What about the different days ? I mean what day goes by where we cannot say with Jeremiah,

“ *His compassions fail not they are new every morning, great is Thy faithfulness.* ” (Lam 3:22-23)

) How much is enough ? We live in a culture of accumulation where enough is never enough we always want a little bit more. But all we really need is our daily bread, which God has promised to provide. As the Lord sustains us from one day to the next we are called to live in daily dependence on His providence.

Why does God tell us to trust Him for our daily bread ?

Maxie Dunnam writes, “ *He does it for our sakes, that we may know the peace and strength that come from continual dependence upon Him, the joyful life that is ours when we trust Him and see the truth of our trusting. The happiest people I know are not people who don't have any needs, but people who experience the meetings of their needs by God.* ” (a) (b)

(c) The IMMENSITY of God's Provision:

For you see, we have a God who gives richly, abundantly. (1 Tim 6:17) There is nothing stinted about the giving of God. Does this passage not bear that out ? Look if you will at (16:16) Now a conservative estimate of the total number of Israelites who came out of Egypt would be about 2 million. An omer is equivalent to 6 pints, therefore there would be about 12 million pints, or 9 million pounds, or 4500 tons gathered daily. *To illustrate this even further, someone has worked out that 10 trains, each having 30 cars, and each car having in it 15 tons, would be needed for a single days supply.* Now is that a miracle or what ? Spurgeon says, “ *God's supplies are surer than the bank of England.* ” Paul says, “ *But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* ”

(Phil 4:19) “ *According to His glorious riches.* ” Is it possible to reckon the riches of God ? It seems that God has more than one account. Well, there is (1) ***The Riches of His Goodness:*** (Rom 2:4) (2) ***The Riches of His Wisdom:*** (Rom 11:33) (3) ***The Riches of His Grace:*** (Eph 1:7) (4) ***The Riches of His Glory:*** (Eph 1:18) and my the Lord will meet our need in a manner that befits His wealth. “ *For out of His infinite riches in Jesus He giveth and giveth and giveth again.* ” (1)

(2) The TYPICAL Lessons From the Manna

Now what is a type in Scripture ? Well, an O.T. type is a figure and representation of something to come. A type’s fulfilment, the anti-type usually is seen in the N.T. You see, the manna which God gave to his people in the wilderness is a beautiful type of the food which the Lord provides for our own souls, and this food is both the Inspired Word and the Incarnate Word. In other words,

1. The Manna is a Type of the Inspired Word:

Look if you will at (Deut 8:1-3) Now lets read that without the negative “ *And you will see what man is to live on, man shall live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.* ”

You see, just as food sustains physical life so the Word of God sustains spiritual life.

Peter says, “ *As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.* ” (1 Pet 2:2) Our manna, our food is the Word of the Lord. What the manna was to Israel, the nourishment of their bodies, that the Word of God is to every believer, the nourishment of their soul. In (Exod Ch 16) its very interesting to notice the points of analogy between the manna, the earthly food of God’s people, and the Scriptures, the heavenly food of God’s people. For example,

(a) The Manna was to be EATEN:

Look if you will at (16:21) The manna was not given simply to look at, or admire, but to be eaten. It was for food, it was God’s provision to meet the bodily needs of the nation of Israel. My it is thus with the spiritual manna, the Word of God. But in order to derive from the Word of God the nourishment we require, we need to learn how to feed upon the bread of life. Now in all correct eating there are three stages !

1. There is APPROPRIATION:

You know, when we sit down to a well spread table it is obvious that we cannot eat before us. We simply appropriate to ourselves a portion of the food which is before us. You see, to appropriate means “ *to take unto ourselves,* ” it means “ *to make our own.* ” Now an unconverted person many speak of “ *the Saviour,* ” but only a Christian can say with Mary, “ *My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.* ” (Lk 1:46-47) You see, faith personalises, faith appropriates unto oneself ! Now just as we have appropriated the Saviour, so we need to appropriate the Scriptures ! I heard of a godly old Granny who lived in an English

town many years ago. Gradually she became too decrepit to take much part in the goings on of the household, but her presence in the home was a benediction, for she was always gracious and her conversation was spiced with godly wisdom. *She loved to sit in her rocking chair reading her favourite passages of Scripture.* Often she would doze off for a few minutes with her glasses still on, and her Bible open on her lap, and often she would talk with glowing face about the promises of the Bible which she had trusted down through the years. One day she slipped her to a deeper doze than usual, and forgot to come back. She wakened in heaven having passed peacefully over death into the land that “*is fairer than day.*” She left her Bible there on the lap of her now untenanted body, in that rocking chair. From then, on that Bible became a treasured family heirloom. Her married son and his wife often read it together and were much interested in the observations she had jotted down in the margins.

For some time they were puzzled by the two letters “*T & P,*” which they found dotted here and there in the well thumbed pages. By and by they noticed that the “*T & P,*” always came at the side of some Scripture promise. A bit later they found one place which was the key to all others. She had written the two words represented by “*T & P.*” There it was, in the dear, familiar handwriting, “*Tried and proved.*” She had learned to feed on God’s Word, she had appropriated the promises unto herself. Have you learnt this lesson yet ? Do you know what it is to appropriate the promises and precepts of the Word of God ? Making them your very own. 1.

2. There is MASTICATION:

To masticate means “*to grind food with the teeth, to chew it slowly and thoroughly.*” Now here many of us are serious offenders. We bolt our food, we swallow it before it has been properly masticated. Is the same not true spiritually ? How many of us have learned to use our spiritual teeth ? To chew over the Word of God ! What do I mean ? Well, meditation stands to reading as mastication stands to eating. Do you know what it is to meditate on the Word of God ? Do you recall what God said to Joshua ? “*This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that you mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein, for then thou shalt make thy prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*” (1:8) Do you take time to meditate on the Word of God ? To ponder the Word ? You see, in all proper eating there is 1, 2, and then,

3. There is ASSIMILATION:

For the food which I have eaten and masticated is now taken up into my system and is transmuted into blood and tissue thereby giving me health and strength. So that food assimilated appears in the vigour of my step, the strength of my arm, and the glow on my face ! Now my system is able to ward off disease and germs which attack my body ! *Now is it not the same in the spiritual realm ?* For the food we have appropriated and masticated must be assimilated ! Do you recall what Paul said about the believers at Thessalonica ? “*For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*” (1 Thes 2:13) Here then, is the grand end in view, the Word of God is given to us that

we might feed thereon, and this feeding is for the purpose of translating the Scriptures into the terms of daily living.

The manna was to be eaten ! Question, do you feed regularly on God's Word ? Do you absorb it into your spiritual bloodstream ? (a)

(b) The Manna was to be GATHERED DAILY:

“ The people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, ” (16:4) The students of Rabbi Simeon ben Jachai asked him why the Lord did not give enough manna to Israel for a year at a time. The Rabbi answered with this story, *“ Once there was a King who had a son to whom he gave a yearly allowance, paying him the entire sum on a fixed day. It soon happened that the day on which the allowance was due was the only day of the year the father saw the son. So the King changed his plan and gave the son day by day, that which sufficed for the day. And now the son visited the father every morning. Thus God did with Israel. ”* Do you realise that God wants to meet with you in holy tryst every day ? What would you think of a man who sat down to Sunday dinner and tried to eat enough at one meal to last all week ? Is this what some of you are doing spiritually ? My could I encourage you to open the Word of God daily ! (a) (b)

(c) The Manna was to be Gathered EVERY MORNING:

“ And they gathered it every morning, ” (16:21) There is a well known rule for daily devotions, *“ No Bible, no breakfast. ”* Was this not the practice that was followed by the Lord Jesus ? *“ And in the morning rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed. ” (Mk 1:35)*

***“ I met God in the morning
When my day was at its best
And His presence came like sunrise
Like a glory in my breast***

***Other ships were blown and battered
Other ships were sore distressed
But the winds that seemed to drive them
Brought to us a peace and rest
So I think I know the secret
Learned from many a troubled way
You must seek Him in the morning
If you want Him through the day. ”***

(d) The Manna was to be SHARED:

Look at (16:16) if you will ! Now whatever else this may mean this much is certain, that the father as leader of the household, had to feed his children with the manna. I wonder how we fathers are getting on with the spiritual education of our children ? Are we bringing them up in

the nurture and admonition of the Lord ?

(e) The Manna was to last until TRAVELING DAYS were done:

“ *And they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.* ” (16:35)
The Book of Joshua says, “ *And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land, neither had the children of Israel manna any more, but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.* ” (5:12) My we may be in the last of the last days, perilous times may be upon us, but we still have God’s blessed Word. Oh, may we prize it more highly, read it more carefully, study it more diligently, live it more thoroughly and preach it more powerfully, for therein lies the secret of spiritual maturity ! (a)

(b) The Manna is a Type of the Incarnate Word:

The Lord Jesus ! How did I know ? (Jn 6:31-35) You see the manna was a type of the Lord Jesus Himself ! Now think of some of the parallels between the manna and Christ.

(a) The Manna typifies Christ in its SUBSTANCE:

The context reminds us that it was “ *bread from heaven.* ” (16:4) It was not the product of earth, it grew neither in the wilderness or Egypt ! It was a gift from heaven come down to earth ! So was our Lord Jesus Christ, He was the one who descended (Eph 4:10) who came down from heaven. Paul describes Him as “ *the Lord from heaven.* ” (1 Cor 15:48)

(b) The Manna typifies Christ in its SHADE:

“ *It was like coriander seed, white,* ” (16:31) It lay unsullied in the dew drop on the sand of the desert. Of course, the purity and glory of Christ is set forth in this colour. When Christ was transfigured Matthew records,
“ *His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.* ” (Matt 17:2) “ *God is light,* ”
(1 Jn 1:5) and as F.W. Grant says “ *In Christ alone is this perfect reflection of God found.* ”

(c) The Manna typifies Christ in its SIFTING:

You see, it was ground, beat and baked. (Num 11:8) Does that not remind us of the sufferings of our Blessed Lord ? He was treated cruelly, callously, and coldly ! In the Antonio Fortress they played the kings game with them as they treated the Lord of Glory like a play thing. (Jn 19:2) But what was this in comparison to what He endured on the cross ? The hiding of the face of God, the withdrawal of the presence of God, the enduring of the wrath of God ! My Christ was bruised for our iniquities. (Is 53:5)

(d) The Manna typifies Christ in its SIZE:

Twice, in one verse we are told that it was rather minute.

“ *And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness, there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.* ” (16:14) My when Christ came to this earth He came as a little baby. He came to a small nation, and was born in little Bethlehem.

(e) *The Manna typifies Christ in its SWEETNESS:*

For it is said, “ *and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.* ” (16:31) And is not our beloved sweet ?

“ *What is thy beloved more than another beloved ? O thou fairest among women ? My beloved is white and ruddy the chiefest among ten thousand His mouth is most sweet.* ” (S.S. 5:9)

(f) *The Manna typifies Christ in its SYMETRY:*

For it did not have jagged edges, it was not difficult to eat. Rather it was “ *round,* ” in its shape, and therefore suitable for everyone. In just the same way, the Lord Jesus revealed Himself as the suitable Saviour. For not only did He say, “ *I am the living Bread which came down from heaven,* ” but added, “ *if any man eat of this bread He shall live for ever.* ” (Jn 6:51)

(g) *The Manna typifies Christ in its SANCTION:*

For we read “ *lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations.* ” (16:33) Concerning the anti-type the Lord Jesus we read, “ *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us.* ” (Heb 9:24) The Christ who was crucified is now glorified !

***“ The highest place that heaven affords
Is His by sovereign right
The King of Kings and Lord of Lords
He reigns in perfect light. ”***

Do you know something ? The manna satisfied them ! He, the Lord “ *satisfied them with the bread from heaven.* ” (Ps 105:40) Is Christ not enough to satisfy ? Can you say with the hymn-write this

***“ Thou O Christ art all I want
More than all in Thee I find. ”***

The everlasting song of heaven will be “ *Jesus only Jesus.* ” My if He will be enough for heaven why not for earth ? If enough for eternity why not for time ? Is Christ enough for you this ? Is He precious to you ?

Oh, may we afresh

***“ Turn our eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of earth***

*Will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.”*