

The Bread from Heaven
John 6:30-51

May 8, 2016

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^A Nehemiah 9:14b-15a

^B Matthew 24:27

^C Psalm 10:4; 2 Peter 3:9

^D John 5:26; 1 John 1:1-9; Ephesians 2:14

A. Introduction

1. The purposes of John's Gospel
 - a. to bring people to faith in Christ
 - b. to enable us to see Christ, and through Him learn of God
 - c. the encounters of Jesus with people and groups that John records are all part of that purpose: whether it be the woman at the well or, as today, His discussion with the religious Jews and their critical questions
 - d. for in each of these, we gain insight into the nature of His Person, as the Son of God, having come in human form to bring salvation, not just to the Jewish people, but to all the world
 - e. He is the Bread from Heaven, ...

B. The Bread of Life (vv 30-40)

1. "We Want a Class A Moses Sign!" (30-31)
 - a. 'Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"
(NKJV)
 - b. for them yesterday's sign not sufficient, feeding a mere 5,000
 - (A) Moses fed them with Manna, over 2 million for 40 years
 - (B) implication of statement: show yourself as great as Moses
 - (C) "... Through Thy servant Moses. Thou didst provide bread from heaven for them for their hunger, ..."
(Nehemiah 9:14b-15a NKJV)
 - c. but in asking this question, they forgot the related question
 - d. where are all those who ate of the manna?
 - e. so Jesus tells them about
2. A Better Bread; A Better Sign (32-33)
 - a. 'Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.'" (NKJV)
 - b. it is "My Father" who gives this – with this intimate term Jesus claims a very special relationship with God – like the vernacular "Father of mine" it shows a distinct possessiveness

- c. it is God who both gave the manna and who gives the better Bread – Moses was only God’s instrument
- d. the better Bread is out of heaven and is the true, the real Bread, the genuine Bread – of which manna and all other breads are only types
- e. bread as we have said
 - (A) is the staff of life – made from seed of grain, in which there is innate life although it appears dead
 - (B) manna only sustained life to only 2 million for a short time
 - (C) this true Bread gives life to the world – it has greater scope than manna – it gives greater life than manna

3. “Ever Give Us This Bread” (34)

- a. ‘Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.”’ (NKJV)
- b. that is commendable request on their part
 - (A) they are aware of a universal need and their particular need
 - (B) this is a prayer to Jesus, & prayer is the language of need
 - (C) they are asking the right Person
- c. but they are still thinking of manna – of physical bread
 - (A) didn’t perceive its character of life this Bread gives
 - (B) didn’t perceive the nature of its source of this Bread; for

4. Jesus is That bread (35-36)

- a. ‘And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.”’ (NKJV)
- b. the non-spiritual cannot satisfy the soul’s hunger and thirst
 - (A) why cannot mere material blessing satisfy? – it gets used up
 - (B) why cannot mere physical blessing? – it passes away
- c. But spiritual blessing can satisfy – for it is boundless, endless

I’m feeding on the living bread,
 I’m drinking at the fountainhead;
 And whoso drinketh, Jesus said,
 Shall never, never thirst again.
 What, never thirst again? No, never thirst again!
 What, never thirst again? No, never thirst again!
 And whoso drinketh, Jesus said,

Shall never, never thirst again! –{2}.

- d. they see the Bread (the Living Bread, Jesus), but did not benefit
 - (A) these people saw, heard His words, yet failed to be blessed
 - (B) they asked for a sign: their motto, “seeing is believing”
 - (C) but Jesus says in effect “believing is seeing”
 - (D) unless you believe, you can never benefit by merely seeing – knowing about – Jesus

5. The assured blessing to those who believe in Jesus (37-40)

- a. “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (NKJV)
- b. assured by Jesus promise, that if we come to Jesus – we are by this known to be the Father’s gift to the Son – He will take us
- c. assured, not by our obedience but by Jesus’ obedience
- d. assured by the Father’s plan that salvation be eternal
- e. assured because death cannot disturb this salvation –there will be the resurrection to life for those who are Jesus Christ’s
- f. assured because the condition does not rest upon our own works and strength and power,
 - (A) but in trusting in Jesus’ work and strength and power
 - (B) that He who was raised from the dead will raise us from death

C. The Bread from Heaven

John 6:41-51

1. They Question Jesus’ Clear Declaration (41-42)

- a. ‘The Jews therefore were grumbling about Him, because He said, “I am the bread that came down out of heaven.”’ (John 6:41)
- b. you can almost hear them with that word ‘grumbling’ – it is one of those words that sounds like its meaning; as murmur or as buzz
 - (A) this word was used to describe bees buzzing in a swarm
 - (B) you can almost hear the opposition, the ‘ssss’ of their whispering as they put their heads together in a corner of that synagogue

- c. a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing – it can prevent a person from searching and finding the truth
 - (A) these were 'know-it-alls' – you have met such people, and it is often impossible to explain anything to them
 - (B) for they had a superficial knowledge about Jesus
- d. 'And they were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"' (John 6:42)
 - (A) they knew his father by name; Joseph the carpenter, a job that Jesus Himself had taken over before his ministry.
 - (B) they knew his mother
 - (C) He had lived there since being a small child
 - (1) they did not understand God's way of working the incarnation; for them they needed to see something the reverse of Elijah's being carried away in a fiery chariot
 - (2) well, one day that will take place: "For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." (Matthew 24:27)
 - (3) but the first coming of Christ was one in which His followers would be followers by faith and not by sight
 - (D) Scientist have been allowed by God to get a glimpse into the deep mysteries of His creation, and many have become 'know-it-alls' and unwilling to put their trust in their Creator

2. Jesus Is the Bread Given by the Father (43-46)

- a. 'Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.'" (John 6:43-44)
 - (A) Jesus tells the to stop grumbling off in the corner there, but to listen and to learn
 - (B) and the lesson they need to learn is one of the profoundest
 - (1) that salvation is a marvellously intricate achievement
 - (2) there is a co-operation between the Father and the Son so that it can take place
 - (3) while a person is called upon to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour
 - (a) this is a genuine, legitimate invitation made to mankind;
 - (b) one that put the responsibility fully upon a man or woman to respond to that invitation
 - (c) as well as settling a further responsibility on the believer to pass the gospel message along
 - (d) yet God's sovereign calling is a necessary ingredient to that person's responding to the invitation
 - (C) so a person as described in Psalm 10:4 (NKJV), 'The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.' (Psalms 10:4 NKJV) will not hear that calling – no matter how religious they be, like Jesus' opposition here.

But what to those who find? Ah, this
Nor tongue nor pen can show —
The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but His loved ones know. —{3}.

- (D) Bernard of Clairvaux wrote those words over 8 centuries ago but they have been the experience of Christians for two millennia
 - (E) then Jesus continues
 - b. 'It is written in the prophets, **'and they shall all be taught of God.'** Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. Not that any man has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.'" (John 6:45-46)
 - (A) So, not only does the Holy Spirit lead people to the truth in His work of convincing a person of sin, righteousness & judgement
 - (B) but the Father teaches also: indeed, "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'" (2 Peter 3:9)
 - (C) it is evident from the first few chapters of the Bible that God made mankind for fellowship with Himself, and until that fellowship has been re-established, a person can never be satisfied
 - (D) so Jesus the Son of God who has seen the Father – has spent an eternal Oneness with the Father and with the Holy Spirit – has come down from heaven in human form to show us the Father
 - c. This is the message Jesus was making known to these grumblers
3. Jesus is the Living Bread (47-51)
- a. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died." (John 6:47-49)
 - (A) His is the living bread because as God the Son
 - (1) He possesses life – not as you and I possess, life, as something given to us from outside ourselves – from God through our parents – and to be taken away from us at some time
 - (2) but as He has already stated in this book, "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;" (John 5:26)
 - (3) for which reason Jesus is empowered to say a few verses back: "... I will raise him up on the last day."
 - (B) He is the living bread for those who partake of Him receive life
 - (1) manna indeed came down from heaven, and sustained life of those who ate it, but only for a few short years

- (2) Jesus is the bread coming down from heaven, who imparts eternal life, a life everlasting in terms of quantity, and perfect in terms of its quality
- (C) so how does one partake of this bread – at the Lord’s table? No that is just a symbol of the reality; listen,
- b. “This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.” (John 6:50-51)
 - (A) that bread of life is made available to us freely – listen to its benefit – the one partaking of it shall live forever
 - (B) that bread is His flesh – do we actually eat it at the Lord’s table?
 - (C) that is the error made by the Roman church; no
 - (D) in the OT picture, the fellowship or peace offering, which is a symbol of our eternal peace and fellowship with God, starting here and continuing through eternity
 - (1) that sacrifice was first offered up to God of the choicest parts
 - (2) then it was eaten along with leavened bread signifying joy, as opposed to the bitterness signified by unleavened bread
 - (E) Jesus would be offered up on the cross – the best of all sacrifices, so that those who trust in him – partake of Him – are brought into fellowship with God (see First John, chapter one)
 - (F) He is our peace or fellowship offering – (Ephesians 2:14)

D. Conclusion

1. Bernard of Clairvaux also wrote these words which I should like to leave with you to think upon this week

We taste Thee, O thou living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still;
We drink of Thee, the Fountainhead,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill.
Our restless spirit yearns for Thee,
Where'er our changeful lot is cast:
Glad when Thy gracious smile we see,
Blest when our faith can hold Thee fast. —{4}.

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NLT	New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 National Council of Churches of Christ; Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

Bruce	-	<i>The Gospel & Epistles of John</i> , by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983
BM	-	<i>Biblical Museum</i> , Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
EBC	-	<i>The Expositor’s Bible Commentary</i> , © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, MI: <i>John</i> , by Merrill C. Tenney
EGT	-	<i>The Expositor’s Greek Testament</i> , Hodder & Stoughton; 1903 <i>John</i> , by Marcus Dods
NICNT	-	<i>The New International Commentary on the New Testament</i> <i>The Gospel according to John</i> , by Leon Morris
NTC	-	<i>New Testament Commentary</i> , by William Hendricksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954
RWP	-	<i>Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament</i> , by Dr. A. T. Robertson

2. *'I'm feeding on the living bread,'* Pinebrook Choruses, #46, Pinebrook Press, PA, 1946.
3. *'Jesus the Very Thought of Thee,'* by Bernard of Clarivaux (1091-1153) translated by Edward Caswall.
4. *'Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts,'* by Bernard of Clarivaux (1091-1153) translated by Ray Palmer.