

Place: Lurgan Baptist 24:11:2013

Reading: Exodus 16:1-21

MOSES, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

13. THE MESSAGE OF THE MANNA

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.*” ***Now whining and murmuring was Israel's besetting sin.*** I mean here they were geographically in the wilderness of sin between Elim and Sinai (16:1) on route to Canaan. But do you see were they are spiritually ? Only a month had passed since the Israelites had left Egypt and they were already questioning God's goodness. (16:1 Num 33:3)

What a month it had been. It was a month of tragedy, the death of all the firstborn in Egypt. It had been a month of triumph, the exodus from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea. It had been a month of trial. No water, bitter water, and now no food. You see, for the first time, the full privation and desolation of the desert was

etched on the people's minds. Every step they took, now led them further away from food, water, and life. I mean God had delivered them from Egypt by miracle after miracle yet look at their response. “*And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured*” (16:2) The psalmist gives us God's perspective on this incident when he says, “*they sinned yet more against Him by provoking the most High in the wilderness. And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Yea they spake against God they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness ?*” (Ps 78:17-19) The Israelites were addicted to murmuring. Here they said they preferred Egypt with its idolatrous environment to the company of God's prophet Moses, being led by God's pillar, the pillar of cloud, and being supplied by God's power. I mean was God going to forsake them after all He had done for them ?

With patience wearing thin Moses and Aaron say, “*Let's get this straight. Who are we that you grumble against us. This wasn't our idea. We didn't lead you into the wilderness. That's was God's direction. We didn't put that cloud up there. We didn't light that pillar of fire. So don't complain against us.*” Are you prone to complaining ? Remember God is the one who has made your circumstances to be what they are. Don't blame someone else. Remember that your grumbings go right back to the Lord. Your complaints land at His feet. You see, some folks think that they have the gift of grumbling and that they ought to exercise it with gusto. The only problem is that the gift of grumbling never appears in God's Book. There is no gift of grumbling. The Bible never affirms our griping and sniping and

complaining. My let's nail this for what it is. Murmuring is a serious sin. (1 Cor 10:10) It's the response of carnality. Yet do you see how God responds ? “ *Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you,* ” (16:4) ***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 I want to talk to you this on “ *The Message from the Manna.* ” Henry Law a preacher in England in the early 1800's said this, “ *Manna has many tongues.* ” Let's listen to the manna of old to see what it has to say to us. I want us to see the manna,

(1) FROM A PHYSICAL PERSPECTIVE

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) Others 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) My does God's grace not glisten in this story ? Here the Israelites are at it again, murmuring. But instead of pouring upon them His wrath, he deals with them in marvellous grace. “ *Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you.* ” (16:4) Is there not a lesson here for us ? My we are no more worthy of God and His blessings than these people. If God were to give us

what we deserve we would be in hell. But God who could rain nothing but judgment upon us, chooses to rain many blessings instead. We have often it heard it said *that God in His mercy does not give us what we do deserve, and God in His grace gives us what we don't deserve.* 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:

“ *Then said the Lord unto Moses, behold I will rain bread from heaven for you.* ” (16:4) Now the Lord performed this miracle not just to meet the need of His people but to show that He was Lord. Israel needed to correct their theology, for they had blamed Moses and Aaron for leading them into a bad situation. Do you see what they said, “ *ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger ?* ” (16:3) The giving of the manna would correct that sort of thinking and let them that it was the Lord who “ *hath brought you out of the land of Egypt.* ” (16:6) The Lord had already 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. Now there's a principle here. Where God leads He feeds. You see, the place of God's appointment is the place of God's provision. In other words you've got to be in the place where God wants you to be if you expect God to meet your needs. Do you recall the words of Christ? "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.*" (Matt 6:33) You see, the will of God will never lead me where the grace of God cannot keep me, for His resources are unlimited. Hudson Taylor's lifestory is a thrilling testimony to the faithfulness of God. Hudson Taylor had a deep experience with God that taught him not to trust in himself. He wrote to a friend, "*It is not striving to have faith but looking off to the Faithful One is all we need.*" You see, "*God is faithful,*" (1 Cor 1:9)

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 resources have been exhausted 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,*" (16:4) "*and they gathered it every morning.*" (16:21) Now God could have sent enough manna to last for weeks, months and years. But the

Lord give them manna on a daily basis. Do you know why? To test their faith. In the words of (16:4) to "*prove them.*" Would they trust God to send it each night? Would they trust Him to send them enough to carry them through the Sabbath? Sure the provision was regular but it was daily that they might be kept living in dependence on the Lord. Do you recall what the Lord Jesus taught us to pray? "*Give us this day our daily bread?*" (Matt 6:11) For God wants us to live one day at a time. God does not provide for today's needs tomorrow for He is never late. God does not provide for tomorrow's needs today for He is never early. His provision is perfectly timed and perfectly adequate. My don't be worrying about the unknown future and the things that may never happen.

*Lead Thou me on, keep Thou my feet
I do not ask to see, the distant scene
One step enough for me*

(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 2.5 million. An omer is equivalent to 6 pints, therefore there would be about 12 to 15 million pints, or 9 million pounds, or 4500 tons gathered daily. *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) FROM A SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE

You see, 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. Do you recall what Christ said ? “ *Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* ” (Matt 4:4) 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. Now it’s interesting to see here 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 HAD TO BE ASSIMILATED:***

Look if you will at (16:21) The manna was not given

simply to look at, or admire, but to be eaten. It was to be assimilated in the body for daily sustenance. My the Bible is to be used the same way. Some folk gather Bibles as a collection, just like antiques. Some buy a Bible to lay their hand on for some ceremony. Some buy Bibles for decorative pieces on tables. *But the Word is to be read, meditated upon, and absorbed into our spiritual bloodstream.* 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 of His Word ? To assimilate the precepts of His Word ? Do you feed on God’s Word ?

(b) THE MANNA HAD TO BE ACCUMULATED:

What’s the word that stands out in this passage time and again ? “*Gather.*” (16:4, 5, 16, 17, 18, 21,) Notice they had to gather the manna,

1. DAILY:

“ *The people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day,*” (16:4) God gave the manna on a daily basis. The only exception was on the Sabbath. (16:5) My as believers we are to gather God’s bread from heaven on a daily basis. There is to be a time in each day that we are to gather and glean from God’s Word. Menekil II was one of the great rulers of Africa and the creator of modern Ethiopia. He had one known eccentricity. Whenever he was feeling ill, he would eat a few pages of the Bible, insisting that it always restored his health. One day in December, 1913, recovering from a stroke and feeling extremely ill, he had the entire book of Kings torn from a Bible and he ate every page of it and then died. *I wonder if it was some of the long names that got him ?* Now I am not talking about literally eating pages of the Bible. I am

talking about spending time gathering from God’s promises, principles, and precepts the spiritual nourishment you need every day of your life. My do you realise that God wants to meet with you in holy tryst every day ? My could I encourage you to open the Word of God daily. (a)

2. EARLY:

“ *And they gathered it every morning,*” (16:21) Look at (16:7) “ *And in the morning then ye shall see the glory of the Lord,*” 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) Andrew Bonar, a great Scottish preacher and man of prayer had three rules. 1. Not to speak to any man before speaking to the Lord. 2. Not to do anything with his hands until he had been on his knees. 3. Not to read the papers until he had read his Bible. I once read a motto, “ *No Bible, no breakfast.*” My do you gather the manna early ? Before the distractions of a new day prevent you doing so ?

*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*

(c) THE MANNA HAD TO BE APPRECIATED:

For we are told that a pot of manna had to be kept for future generations to testify to God's gracious and faithful care of His people. (16:33) The manna had to be valued. How much value do you place on your Bible ?

*Though the cover is worn, and the pages torn,
And though places bear traces of tears,
Yet more precious than gold, is this book worn
and old,
That can shatter and scatter our fears*

*This old book is my guide, 'tis a friend by my
side,
It will brighten and lighten my way,
And each promise I find soothes and gladdens
my mind
As I read it and heed it each day*

*To this Bible I will cling, of its worth I will sing,
Though great losses and crosses be mine.
For I cannot despair though surrounded by
care,
While possessing, this blessing divine*

But listen again to the manna. Can you not hear it

saying something else ? Can you not hear it speaking the name of the Lord Jesus Christ ? (1) (2)

(3) FROM A TYPICAL PERSPECTIVE

Now an Old Testament type is a figure and representation of something to come. You see, this manna is type of Christ. The Lord Jesus Himself said, "*Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead I am the living bread which came down from heaven.*" (Jn 6-49-51) How did that manna typify the Lord Jesus ?

(a) The Manna typifies Christ in its SUBSTANCE:

It was "*bread from heaven.*" (16:4) 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 spoke of the holiness of Christ. For He was "*holy, harmless, undefiled separate from sinners.*" (Heb 7:26)

(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. (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. 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 ? He is the living Word but He is revealed to us in the Written Word. Tell me, are you taking up the Written Word so that you might feed on Christ, the Living Word ?

Some African converts were earnest and regular in private devotions. Each one had a separate spot in the forest where they would go and read and pray. Over time the paths to these places became well worn. As a result, if one of these believers began to neglect that manna in the morning, it would become apparent to the others. They would kindly and lovingly say to the negligent one, “ *Brother, the grass grows on your path.* ” My is the grass growing on your path ? Or are you having manna in the morning ?

