

## O.T. Shadows of Christ – Manna, The Bread of Life

(Exodus 16:1-15; John 6:27-)

### INTRODUCTION:

1. There is an event found in Exodus 16 that is special because of its *typical* nature.
  - A. It was *typical* of Israel because they *complained* against God for His perceived lack of care.
  - B. It was *typical* of Israel because they seemed to believe it better to *die in bondage with food to eat* than to be *free* and to have to *depend and wait on the Lord to provide*.
  - C. But these typical things are not what I am referring to.
2. I say this event was *typical* because in it was found a *type*, or *shadow*, not in Israel's behavior, but in God's behavior concerning to their grumbling and faithlessness.
  - A. For, God did not in frustration condemn them to death, but instead **provided manna, bread from heaven**, their **bread of life**, that they might have their daily food, be filled, and **live**!
  - B. Again, God's great grace and mercy toward sinners, those weak in faith and understanding, was seen in His salvation rather than condemnation.
  - C. This **manna** provided by the Lord was a type, or shadow, of Jesus the Christ, who in John 6 connected himself to it, presenting himself *as the bread of life sent down from heaven*.
3. Let's consider how God providing manna for Israel was a type, or shadow, of God sending the Christ and what we can learn about our salvation and our service to God today.

### BODY:

#### **I. God sent manna to a carnal and faithless people:**

- A. **Shadow:** Manna was to be sent by God in response to Israel's *carnality* and *faithlessness* toward God and His loving care (Ex. 16:1-3).
  1. They expressed this by complaining against Moses and Aaron, ultimately complaining against God.
    - a. They didn't trust God to provide despite His defeating Egypt through the plagues and the Red Sea, and despite providing miraculously purified water at Marah.
    - b. They questioned God and the value of His deliverance, believing it better to die in *bondage with abundant food* than to be *free and depend on God's hand to provide*.
    - c. That is the very definition of carnality and faithlessness, seeking security in the temporal, the earthly, over that which is by faith, that which is by God's hand.
  2. God responded by sending manna, bread from heaven, in the *dark of night* (Ex. 16:11-14):
    - a. Not until the night was through and the dew had lifted was this manna seen.
    - b. It covered the ground in abundance, being more than what Israel needed each day.
- B. **Substance:** God sent Jesus, the bread of life, to a *carnal* and *faithless* people.
  1. It was prophesied that God would send Jesus during a time of great **spiritual darkness** and death (Isa. 9:2, 6 – "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined...<sup>6</sup> For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."").
    - a. Though like the manna, Jesus was sent amidst the darkness, unlike the manna Jesus' wonder, His light, shown in the darkness.
    - b. For, as John says, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (Jn. 1:4).
  2. Jesus was sent as God's manna, the bread of life, to a people in darkness because they like Israel of old were *carnal* and *faithless*.
    - a. Despite Jesus' many miracles, the Jews did not trust Him for who He was—the Savior and provider of everlasting spiritual food.
      - i. For, these Jews had also seen the power of God in Christ's healings and feeding the 5000 with a few loaves and fishes (Jn. 6:10-13).

- ii. Though understanding this miracle to be a sign that Jesus is the Christ, they wanted to make him a physical king because He could *provide free bread* (6:14-15).
- b. Again, we see their carnality because those who had eaten the bread and fish sought Jesus the next day and found Him, only to be rebuked for their carnal desires (6:25-27).
  - i. They put great effort into finding Jesus—that He might provide more *earthly* food.
  - ii. As the purpose of the manna in the wilderness was to cause Israel to trust in God, Jesus was also seeking for them to look beyond their worldly desires for the “food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you” (6:27).
- c. And, that is our challenge today, to look beyond this world and our immediate desires to find Jesus and the bread of eternal life He provide for those who will trust in Him!

## II. God sent manna to test His people:

- A. **Shadow:** When God promised the manna in the wilderness, He said it would be given as a test (Ex. 16:4-5 – “Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and **the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.**”<sup>5</sup> On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.” – ESV).
  - 1. God gave this bread freely, but with *stipulations of faith* on its gathering.
  - 2. Israel’s willingness to gather this manna as God had specified was to show their faith in His ability to provide for them *on a daily basis*, to not store it up, to wait for God to provide!
  - 3. Despite strict instructions, some failed God’s test by trying to keep the manna until the next day and by going out on the Sabbath to gather it!
- B. **Substance:** God sent Jesus to test whether the Jews (and us) would trust in His salvation.
  - 1. Jesus, *God’s Son*, was sent to test a people that had continually rejected God’s word spoken by the prophets to see if they would *hear the Son* (Matt. 21:33-44).
    - a. God had told Israel of Christ’s coming and warned them of their rejection of Him.
    - b. The test of whether one would listen to Jesus and repent would determine their state before God.
  - 2. They would ultimately fail the test (John 6:36 – “But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.”
    - a. This was despite hearing Jesus’ teaching, which they knew was *different*.
    - b. This was despite seeing and experiencing the many *miracles* Jesus did!
  - 3. Like the faithless of Israel who died in the wilderness, those who failed to believe in Jesus die spiritually and will face eternal condemnation (Jn. 8:24 – “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”).

## III. God sent manna to a people without understanding:

- A. **Shadow:** When God’s *bread from heaven* came, Israel’s response was to ask, “what is it?” (Ex. 16:4, 11-12, 15). This was despite God telling them...
  - 1. What He would do (16:4)
  - 2. What it was for and when it would arrive (16:11-12).
  - 3. They had no real reason to question it—but they did!
- B. **Substance:** When Jesus, the bread of life, came to the Jews, they asked “who are you?”
  - 1. They asked this how God had told them:
    - a. Who was coming—a child born to be their Messianic **King, God in the flesh** (Isa. 9:6).
    - b. Where He would be born, while indicating His divine nature (Micah 5:2 – “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be **Ruler in Israel**, whose **goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.**”).
    - c. The signs He would do—heal sick, blind see, lame walk (Isa. 35).

- d. His work would be to bring *spiritual, inner* healing and deliverance (Isa. 61).
- 2. But, like the Israel in the wilderness of old, the Jews **failed to perceive that Jesus is the Christ** (Jn. 6:27-35)!
  - a. When Jesus revealed that the *work* God wanted them to do was to **trust in Him**, the bread of life sent down from heaven, they asked for another sign that they might believe (6:27-31).
    - i. They were followers of Jesus and had seen the many miracles, the signs!
    - ii. This, however, was a request directly related to their carnal desire for the Messiah to **provide physical bread continually and freely**, like was given to Israel in the wilderness, that they might not have to work for their food!
    - iii. All that Jesus had done wasn't enough. They wanted a daily dose of *manna* in order to believe Him to be the Christ!
  - b. When Jesus states that He is that manna, the bread of life provided by the Father from heaven, they did not understand or believe (6:32-36).
- 3. Of course, we look at them in amazement, wondering how they could be so blind, so faithless, so ignorant of Christ and His purpose!
  - a. Are we so different? Has carnality, faithlessness, and lack of understanding disappeared?
  - b. Or, do we not struggle despite our knowledge of Israel in the wilderness and in Jesus' day to see God as our *everything*, as *the source* of all that we truly need in this life?
    - i. That was what God and Jesus was trying to teach Israel by the manna!
    - ii. And yet, we still struggle!
  - c. But fortunately, like the Israel of old, we too are blessed to have a God who in His frustration does not condemn us to death, but continues to rain down blessings in grace and provision that we might come to *know and trust Him as the Lord our God!*

#### IV. God sent manna to a people who would reject it:

- A. **Shadow:** Despite the manna tasting like wafers made with honey (Ex. 16:31), and provided daily and freely while in the wilderness (16:35), Israel came to loathe and reject it (Num. 21:4-9).
  - 1. This happened earlier in Numbers 11 when Israel gripped about God's manna, *were blessed by God's grace with quail meat*, but *many died by plague* because of their attitude of distrust!
  - 2. Because Israel continued to refuse to trust God and accept His provisions, they now faced God wrath again (21:4-6).
  - 3. God's answer of grace this time, however, was for Moses to make a snake of bronze and put it on a pole for all who were dying to look at and be saved and not die (Num. 21:7-9).
    - a. We may wonder about Israel, but do you ever long for the days before becoming a Christian when fulfilling your desires was easily done...supposedly without consequence?
    - b. If we are honest, do we not sometimes think just as did Israel about their previous bondage? This is the lie Satan tells us, that it was better in bondage!
- B. **Substance:** Jesus was sent to a people who rejected Him.
  - 1. Like Israel of old that first rejected the manna of God as not fulfilling their carnal desires, many among Israel rejected Jesus because they could not overcome their carnal desires.
    - a. After calling the multitude to come to Him, the bread of life from heaven, the crowds grumbled at Jesus' words (Jn. 6:35, 40-43, 47-52).
    - b. Because they refused to move beyond their earthly way of thinking, they rejected Jesus teaching and refused to follow Him anymore (Jn. 6:53-60, 66).
      - i. It is important to understand that Jesus' demand that they eat His flesh and drink His blood was, on a carnal/fleshly level, prohibited by the Law.

- ii. So, what Jesus was trying to do was get them to move beyond their carnal thinking and accept Him as their *spiritual* Messiah and their spiritual manna sent from heaven!
  - iii. Like Israel in the wilderness, the Jews refused to leave their carnal ways and ultimately rejected God's bread of life, refusing to follow Him any longer (6:66).
2. They ultimately rejected the Christ, God's manna sent from heaven, choosing to crucify Him on the cross, even as Jesus said they would (John 3:13-16 – "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. <sup>14</sup> And as **Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.** <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.").
- a. Again, Jesus connected himself to an O.T. shadow related to God's manna.
  - b. And, as was true so often, their rejection of God's manna resulted not in immediate condemnation to death, but in God's grace to save all who would receive that manna!
  - c. Therefore, everyone who will look upon the crucified Savior who hung on a tree for us, take Him into their heart in trust and obedience to Him as their Lord and Savior **can be saved!**

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Yes, Jesus is the rejected manna of God, the bread of life sent from heaven, crucified on the cross, but raised by God for the salvation of all who will trust and obey Him.
2. Of course, the question before you is, what will you do with the Christ, the bread of life, that has come down from heaven to save you from yourself, from your sins?
3. Will you reject God's grace shown in His manna of life in Christ as did Israel of old?
4. Or, will you submit to him as your Lord and Savior, repent of your sins, confess His name, and be baptized into Him for forgiveness of your sins?