

APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

for **B'shalach**

by Mark Huey posted 30 January, 2010 www.outreachisrael.net

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

John 4:5-15; 6:25-35, 47-56; 7:37-39

"A Spiritual Bread and Water Diet (Modified)"

Israel's dramatic deliverance and departure from Egypt is the focus of this week's Torah reading, *B'shalach* (Exodus 13:17-17:16). The Egyptian Pharaoh finally consents to let the people go. The narrative describes how the Holy One ostensibly allows a few challenges along the escape route, because He knows that the nature of people is to seek the path of least resistance for the relative comforts of life (i.e., water, food, shelter). Because those necessities were readily available to Israel as slaves in Egypt, in order for them to be delivered from being forever trapped in a slave mindset, the Lord not only displays His power by defeating Pharaoh's army, but also miraculously provides the bread and water required for sustenance. In so doing, these incredible episodes—and all the wilderness travails—are recorded for posterity's sake. It is a heritage that not only Jews are to partake of, but all people who express faith in Messiah Yeshua:

"Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

In the larger context of what Paul shares in his writing to the Corinthians, mention is made of some of the other discomfiting events which occurred during the forty year sojourn from Egypt to Canaan. 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 includes references to: Exodus 16:4, 17:6; 32:6; Numbers 14:29, 26:5, 11:4, 16:41, 21:5, 25:9. We could conclude that Paul simply summarizes the times that Ancient Israel grumbled or complained to the Lord about their various predicaments, without fully understanding that these trials were supposed to instruct and strengthen the people to faithfully persevere. God's people, having been delivered from slavery, were now free to choose their own destiny:

"For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Messiah. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, 'THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY' [Exodus 32:6]. Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:1-13).

The statement of this passage that really stands out is v. 13: "God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear" (NIV). Despite the temptations that come upon men and women in life, those who faithfully trust in the Lord will have a way of escape, so that they might demonstrate themselves mature in Him. What they have to overcome is generally going to be something that they can handle.

It is also noteworthy how Paul has described God's provision of spiritual food and spiritual drink for His people. This is something previously claimed by the Messiah Himself, where He describes Himself as not only the Bread of Life, but also the bearer and provider of living waters of eternal life. In John 6, after the miracles of feeding the five thousand and walking

on the Sea of Galilee, Yeshua tells His Disciples that He is the Bread of Life, something that was prefigured by the manna that fell upon the Ancient Israelites in the wilderness:

“When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, ‘Rabbi, when did You get here?’ Yeshua answered them and said, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.’ Therefore they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?’ Yeshua answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.’ So they said to Him, ‘What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, “HE GAVE THEM BREAD OUT OF HEAVEN TO EAT” [Exodus 16:15; Numbers 11:7-9]. Yeshua then said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.’ Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, always give us this bread.’ Yeshua said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst’” (John 6:25-35).

In order for Yeshua to be the Bread of Life for people, His followers **need to feast daily upon Him**, similar to how the Ancient Israelites needed to retrieve some manna in the desert every day for their nutritional welfare. Yet Yeshua as the true bread of Heaven is much more than physical sustenance that comes from eating—but His spiritual sustenance provides eternal life. In His instructions to the Samaritan woman which occur earlier, He relates Himself as being Living Water, enabling people to never be thirsty again:

“So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob's well was there. So Yeshua, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Yeshua said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?’ (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Yeshua answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, “Give Me a drink,” you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’ She said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?’ Yeshua answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw’” (John 4:5-15).

Yeshua is able to use common physical elements, which everyday people use, to describe how He offers something more than just physical life. *In Himself Yeshua is able to provide people with eternal sustenance.* While such sustenance can affect people on Earth—especially via healings and well being—it extends far beyond this realm.

Later in John 7, at the Feast of Tabernacles, Yeshua declares how when He is glorified, the Holy Spirit will be there to manifest as living water. Access to the Holy Spirit can only come through belief in the Messiah:

“Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Yeshua stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.”’ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Yeshua was not yet glorified” (John 7:37-39).

As important as eating bread or drinking water are to live, human beings are not to find the meaning to life solely in physical things. We are to find the meaning to our lives in the

revelation of God's Word, and in the relationship that we have with the Father through His Son. The Torah makes the point to state,

“He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that **man does not live by bread alone**, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD” (Deuteronomy 8:3).

This week, as you read the memorable recollections of the parting of the Red Sea and the defeat of Pharaoh's army, followed by the songs and timbrel celebrations of Miriam, and then the trials of lack of water and shortage of food—perhaps the verses we have just discussed from the Apostolic Scriptures will expand your understanding of why the Holy One made the Israelites endure these trials. There are hints provided in *B'shalach* that these trials were specifically arranged by God to “test” them:

“Then he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree; and he threw *it* into the waters, and the waters became sweet. There He made for them a statute and regulation, **and there He tested them**” (Exodus 15:25).

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will 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 or not they will walk in My instruction” (Exodus 16:4).

According to these passages, the tests of lack of water and bread were actually attached to seeing whether the people would follow *torati* (תּוֹרָתִי), “My instructions” (Exodus 16:4, NJPS). In many regards even up until today, **the Lord has not changed His methods** for requiring His people to follow His instructions.

In order to have eternal life, we have to make sure that we have partaken of the Bread of Life and the Living Water, who is our Messiah Yeshua. We have to believe His words as the Greater Prophet who was to come (Deuteronomy 18:18-19). In fact, the Lord Himself taught that we have to consider “eating” of His own flesh and “drinking” of His own blood, to have redemption:

“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. 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 will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.’ Then the Jews *began* to argue with one another, saying, ‘How can this man give us *His* flesh to eat?’ So Yeshua said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. **For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.** As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever” (John 6:47-58).

These words would have been very difficult for many First Century Jews to fathom, given the Biblical prohibition against consuming blood (Leviticus 17:10-12), and what can be read as being an endorsement of cannibalism. *But this is not what is intended.* Closely focusing upon the broken body and shed blood of the Messiah—as though one were going to literally consume of them—is what is intended.

During Yeshua's Last Sedar meal, the Lord made the Disciples pay close attention to some specific bread and a specific cup of wine—likely the *afikoman* and the third cup, or the Cup of Redemption. This unleavened bread and wine were to represent how He was soon to be beaten and humiliated, and how He would shed His blood—so all humanity would have permanent atonement for sin. Remembering this significant point in the *sedar* is something that future generations of Messiah followers are to surely keep in mind during their commemorations:

“While they were eating, Yeshua took *some* bread, and after a blessing, He broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ And when He had taken a cup and

given thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom'" (Matthew 26:26-29).

Unlike the Ancient Israelites who departed from Egypt, and who just followed the Lord via the fire and the cloud—today, we have the ability to have the Lord's actual presence inside of us, because of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to all brought by the sacrificial work of Yeshua. Not only is this true of us as individuals, but together as fellow brothers and sisters we have the opportunity to demonstrate God's holiness as we make up His Temple:

"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

The key, for born again Believers to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord, is making sure that He increases, and we decrease (cf. John 3:30). Do we truly have hearts of flesh that are able and willing to obey Him, via the transforming power of the Spirit?

"Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

As we consider the messages from *B'shalach* this week, I would like us to consider what it means for Believers to operate by the power of the Spirit, as opposed to the baseness of our flesh. When we have the ability to focus our attention on spiritual things of God, we are able to please Him and truly serve Him as redeemed sons and daughters. The Apostle Paul explains,

"For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. **However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.** But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Messiah, he does not belong to Him. If Messiah is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Yeshua from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Messiah Yeshua from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. **So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.** For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Messiah, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*" (Romans 8:5-17).

Praise God for the adoption! Praise Him that Believers can call Him Abba, Father! Praise Him that by His Holy Spirit we can understand what He was doing with Israel so many generations ago! Praise Him that we today might benefit from past experiences, and be taught how we might live in a way that pleases Him! *May He be blessed and glorified even more, through all that He does through us!*

I thank You, Lord, for the Bread of Life and Living Waters found in Yeshua—so that His life might flow from my innermost being with inexpressible joy (1 Peter 1:8)!

Until the restoration of all things...

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