

## The Bread and the Blood (John 6)

Serendipity Class — May 19, 2002

In today's lesson we see how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament typology of the Tree of Life, the Passover lamb, the Exodus, and the provision of bread, meat, and drink during the 40 years in the desert.

*John 6:1-21* — At the time of the Passover feast, Jesus miraculously feeds the crowd on the mountain. There was more than enough bread and fish for everyone to be fully satisfied. Jesus retreats in order to prevent the crowd from making Him king; He later goes out to His disciples by walking on the water.

*Genesis 2:8-9* — Two trees are specifically mentioned: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God's prohibition to Adam and Eve was against taking only from the latter. (At that point in time, they were not yet under the power of sin and death; God had originally created them to be immortal.)

*Genesis 3:21-24* — God kills an animal, rather than Adam and Eve, and clothes them to cover their shame and guilt. God then casts them out of the garden (i.e., out of His immediate presence) and guards the tree of life to prevent them from regaining their earthly immortality.

*Genesis 8:15 - 9:7* — Noah emerges from the ark and offers an animal sacrifice to demonstrate his devotion to God. In turn, God promises never to destroy the creatures of earth again. God then gives all animals as food, with the prohibition against eating the blood. Further, He institutes the death penalty for any creature who takes the life of a human being. Blood symbolizes the life of the creature, hence the prohibition is analogous to that for the tree of life.

*Exodus 3:1-15* — Moses meets God in the burning bush. God pledges to deliver Israel from Egypt and into a land of prosperity. Moses wants to know who is sending him, and God answers "I AM." God declares this to be His name forever.

*Exodus 12:1-14, 21-23* — God institutes the first Passover; the blood of the lamb is to be spread on the doorframes of each house as a sign of protection against the judgment on Egypt.

*Exodus 16:1-18* — The people start to grumble and reminisce about the "good ole days" in Egypt. God promises to send bread from heaven, which the Israelites are to gather daily as an act of obedience. Even when they gather too much or too little, each person has just enough to be filled.

*Leviticus 17:10-14* — God warns against eating the blood of sacrifices, which is to be poured out on the altar for the atonement of sin.

*Deuteronomy 8:1-11* — Moses reminds Israel that the wilderness experience was a time of testing in order to teach them to live according to God's word. There is also an admonition to return thanks to God for the prosperity to come in Canaan, and to remain faithful to His commandments lest they lose God's blessing.

*Deuteronomy 15:19 - 16:4* — God sets apart the spotless firstborn animals as a reminder of the plague He sent upon Egypt. God commands the observance of the Passover, which includes eating the sacrificial lamb along with unleavened bread. Leaven is used as a symbol of corruption, and so must be completely removed from the household during the 7 day celebration.

*Nehemiah 9:13-16* — Following the return from exile in Babylon, the reading of the Law (ch. 8) sparks a revival and rededication to the covenant God had established with Israel. This part of the prayer of confession recounts the feeding and watering of Israel in the desert.

*Job 23:11-12* — Job declares that God's word is more valuable to him than his daily bread.

*Psalm 78:18-29* — A recounting of how God faithfully fed Israel by bringing forth meat, bread and water in the midst of the desert. Here manna is described as the “grain of heaven” and “bread of angels.” Not only were they fed, but they were fully satisfied.

*Psalm 105:40-41* — Another recounting of the feeding of Israel in the desert.

*Isaiah 55* — God calls on the people to eat from the bounty of His spiritual food, freely given for them. He also declares that He sends His word out and that it accomplishes all His purposes. (Christ is both the spiritual food of salvation and the Word made flesh.)

*Matthew 6:9-13* — Jesus teaches his disciples the Lord’s Prayer. The fourth petition is for enough bread for the *day*, which stresses our daily reliance on God.

*Mark 14:22-26* — Jesus radically revises the Passover meal by instituting holy communion, which represents the New Covenant in Christ (i.e., the covenant of grace).

*John 1:29* — John the Baptist declares Jesus the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

*John 15:1-17* — Jesus describes Himself as the true vine and God as the gardener. We are each grafted into the vine, and God prunes (disciplines) us that we may bear much fruit. Christ bears fruit through us, the branches; we depend upon Him as the very source of our life.

*1 Corinthians 10:14-17* — Paul teaches that the bread and the cup of the Lord’s Supper represent our participation as “one” in the body of Christ.

*Revelation 2:7, 11, 17* — three parallel verses referring to eternal life (tree of life, lake of fire, manna)

*Revelation 22:1-5, 12-21* — depiction of the new Jerusalem with God and the Lamb on the eternal throne, the river of living water flowing from God’s throne, and the tree of life alongside the river. Christ is the beginning and end of all things, and warns of judgment for those who do not listen to His word, or attempt to change it.

*John 6:22-70* — The crowd catches up with Jesus the next day, but He exposes the insincerity of their motives. He admonishes the crowd to seek the food of eternal life, which He Himself offers them. In turn, the crowd demands a sign comparable to the manna from heaven. Jesus declares Himself to be the true bread from heaven who gives eternal life to the world. The crowd grumbles because they know He is the son of Joseph. Jesus declares that only those who are given to Him by the Father can come to Him, and they must eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to receive eternal life. Many disciples then turn away from following Him, but the twelve remain. Peter declares Jesus to be the Christ of God who has the words of eternal life.

#### Key Ideas:

- Jesus is the Tree of Life (the true vine), from which we draw the power of eternal life and bear fruit in the world.
- Jesus is the spotless Lamb of God (Passover lamb) whose blood is poured out on the cross (doorposts) to turn away God’s wrath (Angel of Death, i.e., divine judgment).
- God uses Jesus to deliver us from the bondage of sin into a life of spiritual abundance (just as God used Moses to deliver Israel out of Egypt and into Canaan in the literal sense).
- Jesus is the true bread (true wine, living water) from heaven which gives eternal life to those who put their trust in Him.