

Bread of Life from Joseph

Text: Genesis 47:12-26

Introduction:

1. This section details Joseph's provision of life-giving bread to the inhabitants of Egypt as the famine continued for approx. another 5 years (See Gen. 45:6).
2. In this message we will survey the details of the account and then make application.
3. We will study this section under **three headings**.

I. THE PROVISION OF THE BREAD (VS. 12-24)

The famine conditions worsened as time passed and the people come to Joseph to purchase bread to stay alive. These verses document the three types of commodities the people used to purchase bread.

A. They purchased Bread with their Lucre (Vs. 13-14)

1. The famine conditions (Vs. 13)
 - a. The scarcity in the famine (Vs. 13a). No bread was available in all the land. There was only one source of bread and that was Joseph. Joseph's vast storehouses of grain were more than sufficient to meet the needs.
 - b. The severity of the famine (Vs. 13b). The word 'sore' means "heavy, severe". The famine was so severe that the land of Canaan and Egypt 'fainted'. The word 'fainted' literally means "to burn", "that is, the inhabitants of both countries, their spirits sunk, as well as their flesh failed for want of food." (Gill)
2. The famine commerce (Vs. 14)
 - a. The people purchased grain until their money was all gone. The land of Canaan and Egypt are specifically mentioned.
 - b. Joseph receives the money and brings it into Pharaoh's treasury.

B. They Purchased Bread with their Livestock (Vs. 15-17)

1. The plea (Vs. 15). When the money run out, the people came and plead for mercy from Joseph.
2. The proposal (Vs. 16). Joseph proposes that they exchange their cattle for grain.
3. The period (Vs. 17). The verse states that this situation lasted for a year.

C. They Purchased Bread with their Lands (Vs. 18-22)

1. Another year of the famine ended. Now the cattle had run out the people return to Joseph with a fresh plea for mercy.
2. They offer all they had left, their lives and their lands in exchange for bread.

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3. Joseph purchases all the land of Egypt with the exception of the priests' land (Vs. 22).

D. They Purchased Bread with their Lives (Vs. 23-26)

1. Joseph as the master organizer now proposes a plan of reward for work. The people would be given seed to sow the land. They would keep four parts of the produce and give the fifth part to Pharaoh. "They would keep 80 percent of what was produced with 20 percent going to Pharaoh. In effect, this amounted to a permanent annual income tax of 20 percent of gross income." (Henry Morris)
2. This became a law in Egypt that was still current at the time Genesis was being written by Moses. The only exception was the land of the priests (Vs. 26).

II. THE PICTURE OF THE BREAD (VS. 25; JOHN. 6:35, 48)

In this account, we see a powerful picture of Christ as the Bread of Life who provides salvation. Note the parallels between Joseph and the Lord Jesus:

A. The Problem of the People

1. The people were living under the threat of death. Without bread from Joseph, they would perish.
2. Because of our sin, we are destined for death unless we come to Christ.
 - a. Rom. 5:12 "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and **death** by sin; and so **death** passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"
 - b. Rom. 6:23 "For the wages of sin *is* **death**; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - c. Rev. 20:14-15 "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second **death**. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

B. The Person for the People

1. Deliverance from death was only available in Joseph. No one else had the power and the provisions to rescue them from the impending death. Joseph was the only source of life-giving bread. His vast storehouses of grain were more than sufficient to meet the needs of all the people if they would but come to him.
2. Salvation from sin and hell is only available through Christ. He is the only Saviour! Any other way will end in death (Prov. 14:12; 16:25).
 - a. John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, **the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**"

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- b. Acts 4:12 “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

C. The Principle for the People

1. Each time the people came to Joseph, they had to come:
 - a. Admitting their need (Vs. 15, 18-19). They had to admit the insufficiency of their own resources and their inability to save themselves. Ultimately, they were cast upon the grace and mercy of Joseph to save them.
 - b. Believing in Joseph. They clearly believed Joseph had the position, the power and the provisions to save them from the famine.
2. In like manner, you must come to Christ:
 - a. Admitting your need (Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:5). We are saved by grace alone. We have nothing and can do nothing to merit salvation.
 - b. Confessing your sin (Rom. 3:10, 23; 1 Jn. 3:4, 1 Jn. 1:9).
 - c. Believing in the Saviour (Rom. 10:9-10, 13).

D. The Provision for the People

1. The great need of the people was for bread to save them from death in the famine. Joseph was the only one who could dispense the grain they needed to make bread to satisfy their physical hunger.
2. Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life and he alone can satisfy the spiritual hunger of our hearts.
 - a. Mankind was created to have fellowship with God his Creator. Sin brought spiritual death and separation from God. We are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). This means there IS something missing in our lives. Or to be more accurate we should say there is SOMEONE missing from our lives because we are born dead in sins. People try to fill the void with all sorts of things but find themselves still empty at the end of it all and not truly satisfied.
 - i. Many try to fill the void with the pleasures of the world (e.g., money, materialism, sport, drugs, alcohol, media, human relationships...).
 - ii. Many try to fill the void with religion but ultimately the gnawing emptiness is still there inside.
 - b. Only a relationship with God through Jesus Christ will bring true satisfaction to the hunger and thirst of sin sick hearts. Jesus is the Bread of Life and those who receive Him as their Saviour will find He truly satisfies. Listen to the claims of Christ:
 - i. John 6:35 “And Jesus said unto them, **I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that**

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believeth on me shall never thirst.” You must come to Christ and believe on him. If you do that, you will never hunger or thirst again!

- ii. John 6:47-51 “**Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. (48) I am that bread of life. (49) Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. (50) This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. (51) I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**” Jesus Christ is the living bread from heaven. He gave his body on the cross for the world so that all who will receive Him by faith might have everlasting life. If you eat this living bread you will “not die” and you will “live for ever”.

III. THE PRINCIPLES FROM THE BREAD (VS. 25, John 6:57)

A. The Principle of Dependence

1. Through the ministry of Joseph, the lives of the people were sustained. He had all they needed to sustain physical life during the 7-year famine. They had to depend on him to meet their day-to-day needs.
2. How much more is Christ sufficient for every need of our Christian lives. Having received Christ, we are to go on living a life of day-by-day dependence upon Christ. John 6:57 “**As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.**” We live by the life of Christ working in us and through us. Christ saves us, keeps us and sustains us.

B. The Principle of Ownership (Vs. 18-19, 23)

1. The people were purchased by Joseph; they were no longer their own – “Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh”.
2. We are no longer our own as Christians having been purchased at the highest price that could be paid, the blood of God’s own Son. 1 Cor. 6:19-20 “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

C. The Principle of Service (Vs. 25)

1. The people’s attitude was “Thou hast saved our lives...we will be servants”. Clearly their hearts were filled with gratitude for what Joseph had done to rescue them from the famine.

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2. In like manner, our attitude should be one of overwhelming gratitude to God for saving us from sin and hell and for giving us eternal life in heaven. Our attitude should be "Thou hast saved us, we will serve thee!" How can we do anything less in light of our Great Salvation?!

Conclusion:

1. Have you received Christ the Bread of Life?
2. Are you walking in daily dependence upon Christ, not just for your physical needs ("give us this day our daily bread") but more importantly, for your spiritual needs?
3. What is your attitude now that you are saved? Are you willing to serve your Saviour?