

The hidden manna

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Once humbled here, God's treasured store, the manna, Christ, once humbled here, God's treasure. God's treasure. The 16th chapter of Exodus is a remarkable chapter. The Spirit of God, who indicted the Word of God, has done so orderly, and follows faithfully certain principles. In the 16th chapter of Exodus, we read of three things in the Word of God, [00:01:02] for the first time. Four, if you include the manna. We have the first mention in the Word of God of the glory of the Lord. We have the first mention of the Sabbath. It's not called the Sabbath in Genesis, although there it is spoken of, although nonetheless the word Sabbath only means arrest. But in the Authorized, we have the first mention in Exodus 16 of the word Sabbath. And thirdly, we have the first mention of testimony. Just bear in mind, beloved brethren, those three things, as we speak simply, and I trust affectionately and [00:02:03] effectively of the manna in the way it brings before us, Christ, once humbled here. That which God provided for his wilderness people, for food, for sustenance, it was given over against the background of the appearing of the glory of the Lord. It obviously had in view the communion and fellowship that God desired to have with his people in restful conditions with himself. Looks forward to a glorious day to be fulfilled, can be known in a spiritual way today by the believer. [00:03:09] And finally, right at the end of that chapter, we have the fact that that manna was laid up before God in the ark, and there for the first time we have in the scripture the idea of the testimony. Isn't it remarkable that these three wonderful truths of the word of God are brought together in the power of the Spirit in relation to the giving of the manna? You know, we couldn't find an answer to why that is in the Old Testament, but when we come to the New Testament and learn of whom and of what the manna speaks, the wonder of it all becomes clear. We read, did we not, in the [00:04:14] first chapter of Luke, I'm sorry I forgot to read the verse, but there is a verse there that says, and the glory of the Lord shone round about, what had happened? What had called forth into this scene from another scene, a display of God, an infinite love and glory come down to save? Jesus had been born. God had come down manifest in flesh. The word became flesh and dwelt among us. And there appeared in [00:05:10] this world the glory of another world. How else could God ever bring about restful conditions, rest for himself when all that he is as to his nature and as to his character, holy, righteous, pure, loved? And doing the work that brings such as you and I, beloved brethren, into restful conditions with himself? Zephaniah says, does he not, concerning a day yet to dawn, that God will rest in his love? How else could that be brought about, other, than the coming into this world of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ? [00:06:17] And by his death and resurrection, establishing that basis where God eternally, complacent in his love and what that love has secured, will joy with his saints, joying over them with singing? And again, what strength, what power is given to the testimony when it is based upon hearts and lives and souls that have appreciated something of the precious [00:07:06] worth of Christ? Do you know, beloved brethren, these things are very, very practical. One of the things that has been pressed very strongly upon one's soul of light, beloved brethren, is this, the basis for testimony and for service in

this world is godliness. It's not gift. The Spirit of God utilizes gift, but gift of itself is only effectual when it is used in a vessel that has been sanctified and walks practically, in such a way that the Spirit of God can use that [00:08:04] vessel, unhindered, in the world. Let me just pause here and address this matter very, very simply, but sincerely, to those of us who are younger. Let us see to it that in our daily Christian lives, we know what it is to be godly.

There's a very old hymn that we used to sing at school. I can remember singing it as a boy. At school, take time to be holy. You know, beloved brethren, one of the things that should concern us in our gatherings is that there should be maintained there a godly piety. [00:09:03] That involves obedience to the word of God, separation from evil, separateness of walk, and not only separateness of walk, beloved brethren, separateness of affections. One thing for the walk to be separate from the world. That can be done academically and legally. A different matter for the heart to be separated to God from the world. That is where the secret of successful Christianity will be found today. I believe it is with those that God will secure to himself, till the end, who walk piously, godly, through this world. The psalmist records the fact that God has set apart to himself the godly man. [00:10:07] How can we be godly? Well, it is a known fact, beloved brethren, as to our bodies. In fact, I've seen this statement recently in an advertisement for pure water, mineral water. And the advert says, you are what you drink. There's a great deal of truth in that. Physically, our bodies are formed by what we imbibe, what we eat, what we drink. We'll leave that. But, you know, it's also true that the mind and the character is formed by what we think about. The Lord Jesus said this, as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

[00:11:08] And again, you know, this is very practical. If we are engaged with things that are unclean, we will become unclean. If we allow our minds to be engaged with that which is sinful, and that which is of a corrupt nature, sadly those things will affect us in our piety, in our godliness. What we read, what we look at, what we're occupied with during our free time, if you have any, what we are engaged with in our minds will form us in our character, whether good or bad.

[00:12:03] You know, it's absolutely vital on that principle to keep what is evil away from children. We live in a world that is being played havoc with by corruption.

And the enemy is mightily powerful, engaging the minds of young children, children of the saints of God, with things that destroy godliness. Brethren, let us heed the exhortation to keep from our homes, from our lives, from our children, those things that will spoil them for God. You know, it's perfectly obvious that God knew well this principle, when before he gave the children of Israel the law, he gave them food. Notice that the giving of the manna comes before the giving of the law. [00:13:15] I can prove this principle from scripture. In Psalm 78, it says concerning the manna that it was the corn of heaven, it was the food of the mighty, food of angels. And it says in Psalm 103, concerning angels, that they excel in strength, and they keep his commandment by hearkening to his word.

That's what the Bible says about angels. They excel in strength, they keep his commandment, they hearken to his word. And what do angels eat? Manna. [00:14:09] Do you know if the children of Israel had properly assimilated the manna, they would have kept the law. There was that in the manna that would have developed godly strength. There was that in the manna that would have formed obedience to the word. There was that in the manna that would have delighted the soul. The manna, you know, it's almost unique in the things that the Bible speaks of.

If we include in our readings the 11th chapter of Numbers, where there is one other thing said about

the manna that is not mentioned here, [00:15:04] you will find that the Spirit of God tells us its size, its shape, its color, its smell, and its taste.

It was small. It was round. It was like coriander seed. That's its smell. Coriander was a fragrant seed.

It was white, or as the 11th chapter of Numbers says, it was like delium. Delium.

And also, its taste was as wafers made with honey, or again according to Numbers 11, like fresh oil.

[00:16:07] Small. You know, we've read, I've just read to you some scriptures from the Gospel of Luke that in some way or other will bring out these features that are said of the manna and direct our hearts to Christ. It came down from heaven. It settled upon the dew. It came down from heaven over against that display of the glory of the Lord. That small, round thing. And you know, we've read, have we not, those fragrant, intimate, simple words of the Gospel of Luke, [00:17:04] when in regard to the words of the angel to Mary concerning how this miracle was to be brought about, that the power of the highest would overshadow her, and the Spirit of God would come upon her. Therefore, that that shall be born of thee, that holy thing.

You know, there is an expression of scripture that it behoves us well not to say very much about. The enigma of the divine conception of Christ in the womb of the Virgin, bringing about a manhood that was not tainted by sin.

[00:18:02] He partook not of the nature of Adam. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore it says that holy thing, the impeccable nature of Christ, sinless, divinely conceived, perfectly naturally born.

Therefore, there was nothing miraculous in the birth of Christ. He was born of a woman, divinely conceived, that holy thing that shall be born of thee, Son of God.

No room in the inn? Outside of this world? You remember Isaiah the prophet says concerning the Jewish nation, when we beheld him, there was no beauty that we should desire him, no lordliness. [00:19:11] He was indeed that stone that was cast away as worthless by the builders of Israel. He was, as far as this world was concerned, insignificant, outside, of no consequence.

He was small. Let us ever remember, dear brethren, that in our Christianity we form part of that which is outside of this world system, this world's glory, and this world's plans. We form part of that miracle that is being formed in this world today, consequent upon the stooping into manhood of the Son, that small, holy thing. [00:20:08] It was round. I read somewhere years ago, I'll probably be shot down on this one, that it is impossible to form, in engineering, a perfect sphere on earth because of the pull of gravity. But I understand that in space it is possible to form a perfect sphere. He was perfect. There was nothing in his character or in his nature that was formed or affected by earth. He was heavenly. He was a man of another world, the second man out of heaven, and that word there has to do with origin. He came forth from that sphere. [00:21:06] Consequently, in his manhood here, he was absolutely perfect, absolutely symmetrical. The symmetry of his life, the balance of his life, was absolutely perfect.

What do I mean by that? In his manhood, he shewed to God everything that man should

be—obedient, faithful, devoted, holy, righteous.

But in his manhood, he shewed to man everything that God was. And the one was in perfect symmetry with the other.

[00:22:10] To man, thy wondrous love and grace, thy faithfulness to God.

And you know, beloved brethren, the strength of our testimony in this world will be dependent upon this. There has to be that faithfulness to God as well as that faithfulness to man. In Christ, he was perfectly balanced. And you can go through this gospel and you can find it time and time again. He could embrace the leper. Moving out in the compassions and kindness of God that had come into this world to deal with men's ruin, he could embrace it in his arms, which is the literal meaning of the word. [00:23:12] That he touched him, yet in himself, unaffected by the sin that that hideous condition of leprosy speaks of.

We've moved on in his life. We shall have to move quickly. The time is nearly gone. We looked at him for a moment, did we not, in that garden of Gethsemane. When there were laid out to holy affections such as you and I may have, if formed by the word of God and tempered by the spirit of God, we can see the perfection of a man there who shrunk from sin. [00:24:01] Who could look into that cup that his father proffered him and see in that cup every movement that his steps would involve from there, from Golgotha, from Gethsemane, on through Gabbatha, on to Golgotha. That moment when God made his soul an offering for sin, and with perfect sentiments, perfectly holy desires, in looking into what that pathway involved for him, as a dependent man, he prayed, Father, save me.

And yet, that abhorrence from sin was perfectly balanced by that devotion and that obedience to God, not my will.

[00:25:11] Thine be done. Perfectly round, absolutely balanced, perfect in his symmetry in his life to God and to men. What a fragrance there was in that life. A fragrance to God. We sing, you know, sometimes a little hymn concerning Calvary, where sin all seems to prevail. What a scene Calvary is. What a scene Calvary is. Sin at its height, love supreme.

Where sin all seemed to prevail, but there was shade on that scene, the glory of redemption, the glory of a man who was confident in his person to deal with the sin, to answer every moral claim of God in holiness, in righteousness, in what man should have been, he glorified God. [00:26:28] But in the doing of it, embrace the very men who murdered him.

Think of what is involved in a person who can answer completely to God in his holiness, but in the doing of it, could answer for men who were actually murdering him. What a fragrance. Coriander seed, that fragrance that rose up to God from that holy life and that marvelous death.

[00:27:18] Its color was like delium. Do you know delium is only mentioned twice in scripture? We're told concerning the Garden of Eden that one of the rivers, Euphrates, encircled the land of Havilah. It says of the land of Havilah, the gold of that land is good. Gold is the first metal mentioned in scripture. Significant, isn't it? Could you have thought of any other metal that God would mention first in scripture? Gold. Do you know there are two other things that are mentioned in that verse concerning the land of Havilah? Delium and onyx. [00:28:11] Delium, you know, is a fragrant gum. It's not a mineral. It's part of the vegetable sphere of creation. And we are told it is pearl-like in its appearance.

There is an opacity, a shining of its whiteness, and it's only mentioned twice in scripture, in connection with the gold and the onyx. You know, we have to pass on, but there's the personal glory of Christ. There's the official glory of Christ, because it was onyx stones that were on the shoulders of the high priest. Those powerful shoulders that could sustain the people of God for God. Emblematically, onyx. [00:29:05] Speaking of the priesthood of Christ, you've got the personal glory of Christ, you've got the official glory of Christ, but in between is the delium, the manna, the moral glory of Christ. He was God. He was the Christ. But He is Jesus, my Saviour.

Is the soul not thrilled when we realize that the one who will sustain the universe for God in a priestly way is himself personally the Son of God?

The Son of God, and yet as to His character, is known by my soul as Jesus.

[00:30:08] What a man He is. What a person He is. The chiefest among the thousands. None like unto Him. God's man. Yours and mine, adorable Lord, Saviour.

There was in that life an opaqueness, a whiteness, a separation from evil and sin, and a separation to God that had never been seen in this world before. The taste of manna, it was sweet. You know, it's an astonishing thing, you know, that most of the things in scripture that are of a fragrant smell are bitter to the taste. [00:31:10] Myrrh, a fragrant smell, but intensely bitter. What a story that tells. But you know, it's not so, the manna. Not only was it fragrant to the nostrils, but it was sweet to the taste. You know, it challenges our affections, beloved brethren, as to how much, as far as the speaker is concerned and you, I can find my delight, my joy, my satisfaction in musing over the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[00:32:01] The manna was sweet. Well, I must pass on because the time has gone. It was put in a pot and it was laid up in the testimony. God, in effect, is saying, here, before the ark was made, before the tabernacle was set up, this is the first thing that is said concerning the ark. The ark. Isn't it remarkable? That golden pot. You're only told it was golden in Hebrews. The first thing that is said concerning the ark in Hebrews chapter 9, in the which was the golden pot of manna. Oh, my beloved brethren, God has treasured up to himself that perfect life. It is there secured in the presence of God. And there, I believe, is the basis of the testimony of God in this world. [00:33:01] The only way that you and I can fulfil our responsibility in this world. We're told, are we not, that an omer is the tenth part of an ephah. The measure of a man in responsibility. There God supplies the power and the food wherewith his people might move through this world responsibly to his glory and to his praise. How dreadful it is to read in the epistle to the Hebrews concerning the children of Israel that God gave this to. Their carcasses were strewed in the wilderness. They say in Numbers 11, our souls loathe this light bread. Give us garlic, cucumbers, lentils, fish, Egypt's food. Yes, beloved brethren, the world's food is very palatable to the old nature. The only thing that is palatable to the new nature is the Christ of God.

[00:34:14] Let us feed on him. Finally, a little word about Pergamos. You know how significant it is that in the address to Pergamos, God sees fit to hand out to the overcomer that he shall eat of the hidden manna. What was characteristic of Pergamos? Well, historically we are told that it refers to that period of time that followed after the terrible persecution under the Roman Empire that is brought before us in the address to Smyrna. What happened in Pergamos? Instead of Christianity being refused and rejected and persecuted and trodden down, it became a world power.

[00:35:12] I've never been able to find where it comes from, but I can remember hearing an esteemed brother saying that the name Pergamos means marriage. You won't find that in a concordance, mind you. Strong's gives it as meaning fortified. Well, it is significant that the church in Pergamos, in order to fortify itself, linked itself up with the world, became married to the world. And what effect did that have? Faithfulness. And in truth, practically, it became divorced from Christ.

The enemy of our souls, Satan, having realized that open persecution affected nothing, but bringing out faithfulness to Christ as under Smyrna, he resorts to subtlety and corruption.

[00:36:23] There was permitted under Pergamos the doctrine of Balaam, who caused Israel to sin. How did he do it? Whatever he did brought about the fact that the children of Israel became intermarried with the Moabites, and that led to fornication. Corruption. Hearts gone cold to Christ. Taken up with that which in the world appears to be glorious and safe.

[00:37:08] You know how astonishing thing is that it is in the church of Pergamos that we have mentioned the only saint of God who is mentioned by name in the addresses to the seven churches. There is only one man mentioned by name in the seven churches. His name was Antipas. And the one who moved amongst the candlesticks says of him, my faithful witness, his name means against all. There was a man in Pergamos who stood against all the corruption, all the infiltration of the world, all its glory and its power that the church suddenly outwardly seemed to adopt. [00:38:03] There was a man in the midst of it that stood for Christ and said no. So they killed him. My faithful witness, the man who sealed his testimony by his blood.

God give us grace to be true. God give us grace to stand in our days against those things that are not according to Christ, that may seem great and large and glorious as far as the world's organization is concerned, but are not of Christ. To such persons, it is said, I will give him of the hidden manna. Hidden manna. How marvelous it is to be true to Christ outwardly, to stand against all that is not of himself, inwardly in the closet, to commune and share with God the thoughts that he has concerning his own beloved son. [00:39:16] We sing it and to know the blessed secret of his preciousness to thee. There is always an answer from God in the present to those who are faithful in their devotion and separate in their life and dedicate themselves to being here for Christ. That can only be produced by daily, daily feeding upon him. In feeding upon him we can know in our souls the restfulness of being with God apart from everything in this world. There is strength formed in the soul that the spirit of God can use in the testimony of Christ in this world. [00:40:01] And there is at the end of it, that which will come from Christ himself. Well done, good and faithful servant. God give us grace to feed upon Christ, to know something of his glory, to know something of his preciousness in his manhood, to know something of the marvel of his death, to know something of his preciousness to God. It will enlarge the soul, it will open the mouth in worship, it will open the mouth in testimony, but it will delight and fill the soul. Amen.