

THE STAFF OF LIFE

by Henry M. Morris*

One of the most amazing of the "I am" claims of the Lord Jesus Christ is found in John 6:35:

I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

It is obvious that this assertion, like His other "I am" claims (*"the light of the world," "the door," "the true vine,"* etc.), has to be interpreted spiritually.

Or does it? There may be more here than meets the literal eye, in light of the often ignored truth that Jesus Christ is both our Creator and Sustainer. Remember Colossians 1:16–17, which reminds us that *"by [Christ] were all things created, . . . And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."*

Bread in Human Life

Bread in one form or another is beyond question the most basic form of food in practically every human society, past or present, so much so that it is often called "the staff of life." Fossilized cakes of bread have even been found in a number of ancient archaeological sites. In the Bible the term "bread" is sometimes used to refer to food in general and is often used symbolically also.

Although the first foods mentioned were the seed-bearing herbs and fruit trees (Genesis 1:29), it is clear that man's basic foodstuff was bread. This becomes

clear when God pronounced His great Curse on man and all man's dominion because of sin. *" . . . cursed is the ground for thy sake; . . . In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground . . ."* (Genesis 3:17,19).

Bread has been made from many different kinds of grain, with the wheat or barley or other grain first grinding the grain into flour, then mixing it with water, then baking the resulting dough and forming it into cakes or loaves. Various other ingredients are often added to produce different varieties of bread, but each type of bread so made almost inevitably becomes the most essential foodstuff of that society.

Thus, "making one's living" involves growing the grain and making the bread, either directly or indirectly. But the curse on the ground makes this or any other work difficult, involving hard work in a reluctant environment, but *" . . . if any would not work, neither should he eat"* (II Thessalonians 3:10).

Bread from Heaven

There was one special time when God's chosen people had to live in a hostile desert environment for forty years and could neither plant grain nor produce bread. In answer to their prayers, however, God *"satisfied them with the bread of heaven"* (Psalm 105:40).

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That was the wonderful manna, which miraculously appeared on the ground each day there in the wilderness. All the work required in this special case was the effort by each person to gather as much as needed for that day (or, on the day before the Sabbath, for two days). The manna bread was actually called “*the corn of heaven*,” and “*angels’ food*” (Psalm 78:24–25).

Years later, when God had become man in the person of Christ, the Jews challenged Him to give them a miraculous sign, such as Moses had given them when he called for God to send the manna. But note the astounding response given then by the Lord Jesus:

. . . Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; . . . For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world (John 6:32–33).

The Lord thus claimed not only to have *sent* the bread which came from heaven, but to *have been* that bread!

I am that bread of life, . . . Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: . . . and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world (John 6:48–51).

But how can we eat such “*living bread*” as this? Not just our daily bread like the wilderness manna, but bread that will impart eternal life? “*It is the Spirit that quickeneth*” said Jesus, “*the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*” (John 6:63). When we hear—or read—His words, and believe Him by faith, whether or not we fully understand all the depths of spiritual truth they convey, that is enough! “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life*” (John 6:47).

The Words of Life

When we recall that Jesus not only spoke the words of God, but also that He *is* the Word of God (the Living Word), then we can remember that there is yet another marvelous meaning in the living bread. God told His loved ones back in the awful wilderness: “. . . *man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live*” (Deuteronomy 8:3). It was not some magic ingredient in the manna that kept them alive in the desert, but the integrity of God’s Word. Jesus even rebuked Satan as He, in His humanity, was being tempted, by simply quoting this Scripture: “*It is written*,” He said, “*That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God*” (Luke 4:4).

Note that it is not just the general theme of the Bible that is vital, but “*every word of God*.” It is important that each person appropriate the words of Scriptures into his own life, for they are life-giving food for the soul. As Jeremiah said: “*Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart*” (Jeremiah 15:16). Or, as Job said: “*I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food*” (Job 23:12). And in the longest psalm, there is this testimony: “*How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*” (Psalm 119:103). The words of God (that is to say, the words of Scripture) are not only spiritual bread, but also honey and milk and meat (note Hebrews 5:12)—our “*necessary food*,” just as they were to Job long ago.

Even as Christ is the living bread that gives life to all who partake of that bread by faith, He is also the living Word, of whom it was said that “*In Him was life*” (John 1:4). Just so, the written word of God is “*quick* [that is ‘living’], and *powerful*” (Hebrews 4:12), and can give life

to those who believe. It is only through the Scriptures, in fact, that we learn of Christ and His gift of eternal life.

“*Search the scriptures,*” said Jesus, “*for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me*” (John 5:39). The apostle Paul wrote to young pastor Timothy concerning the power of the Scriptures as follows: “. . . *thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*” (II Timothy 3:15). The chief responsibility of Christians, therefore, is to be “*Holding forth the word of life*” (Philippians 2:16).

The Bread of the World

Bread is the staff of life for all people, wicked as well as righteous, but it is especially appropriate to speak of the living bread from heaven as received by those who believe in Christ and His word.

To believers, out of fellowship with God, however, the spiritual bread that God sends can be very bitter. The Bible speaks, for example, of “*the bread of tears*” and “*the bread of sorrows*” (Psalm 80:5; 127:2). This was said to be the spiritual food of those members of His elect nation Israel who were being chastened by God because of disobeying His word (by logical extension, this same principle would apply to disobedient Christians).

The figure of bread can also be used to describe the chosen beliefs and life styles of those who deny or refuse to submit to God. For example: “*Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel*” (Proverbs 20:17). Bitter bread indeed!

Another form of sin—that of careless and unfruitful living—is contrasted with the life style of the truly godly woman who “*eateth not the bread of idleness*” (Proverbs 31:27). Idle hands are the workshop of the devil, as the old maxim goes,

for God intended man to work—even more so after sin came in, “*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread*” (Genesis 3:19), He has said.

In general, the spiritual food of the ungodly is their commitment to opposing the true Bread from heaven. “*For they eat the bread of wickedness*” (Proverbs 4:17). The Bible also mentions the “*bread of affliction*” (I Kings 22:27), “*the bread of adversity*” (Isaiah 30:20), and “*the bread of mourners*” (Hosea 9:4). Bread is thus both the widespread physical food of all mankind and also the preferred universal symbol of man’s spiritual food, whether wholesome and life-giving or sad and bitter.

The Living Bread

For true life, men and women must live on both the written word of God and the Living Word. Likewise, they must have both the physical bread and the Living Bread, the true Bread of Life.

We should also remember that even our physical bread—and all our physical food—has been made and provided by God “*who created all things by Jesus Christ*” (Ephesians 3:9). In one sense, the Lord Jesus is even in the very molecular structure of the bread itself, as also in His entire creation, for “*by Him all things consist*” (Colossians 1:17) and He is now “*upholding all things by the word of His power*” (Hebrews 1:3).

No wonder the apostle Paul could tell even the skeptical evolutionary Stoic and Epicurean philosophers in first-century Greece that the God who created the world was “*not far from every one of us: For in Him we live, and move, and have our being*” (Acts 17:27–28). How foolish and wicked it is, therefore, to continue living on the stale and bitter bread of worldly deceit and sinfulness when one could be thriving on the Bread of Heaven! ❀

DOES SALT COME FROM EVAPORATED SEA WATER?

by John D. Morris, Ph.D.

Seawater contains a variety of salts, and when seawater evaporates, these solids are left behind. The most abundant salt in seawater is sodium chloride (NaCl) which will be referred to in this article simply as salt (technically it is called halite).

Layers of salt occur naturally in the geologic record, comprising an abundant source of salt for human consumption worldwide. Today, some salt deposits are land derived, as when salty water seeps from the rocks of Grand Canyon, evaporates and leaves a salty residue. Others are related to enclosed coastal lagoons, which fill up with seawater during a storm, but whose waters are trapped and evaporate between storms. Thus, salt deposits are classed as evaporites.

If a basin of seawater 100 feet thick were to evaporate, only about 2 feet of salt would be left behind. Can seawater evaporation account for all “evaporites”? If so, multiplied millions of years would be necessary for their build up, for some salt beds are extremely thick and wide. The salt deposits often occur in layers covering thousands of square miles with salt hundreds of feet thick.

Old earth uniformitarian thinking postulates an enclosed basin or coastal lagoon which repeatedly floods and evaporates over long periods of time, allowing thick deposits of salt to build up. The mind boggles at huge basins undergoing identical cycles of flooding and evaporation uncountable times, all the while remaining in the same location for millions and millions of years. By contrast, modern lagoons fill in, migrate, erode—there is no long-term stability for coastal features.

The regionally extensive salt beds in

the geologic record are quite different from evaporites forming today. Seawater contains many chemical and mineral impurities as well as both single-celled and multi-celled plants and animals and any exposed dry lagoon will be an active life zone. Thus, modern evaporites are quite impure. But the major salt deposits in the geologic record are absolutely pure salt! Salt mines simply crush it and put it on the store shelf. Surely these large, pure salt beds are *not* evaporated seawater. Some other process must have formed them.

As with many features in geology, catastrophic views are replacing the old, impotent uniformitarian ones. Many have observed that the large salt accumulations occur in basins formed by major tectonic downwarping, often associated with ancient volcanic eruptions. The evidence does not fit with the idea of a trapped lagoon. Where are the fossils? Where are the impurities?

Many now think the salt was extruded in superheated, supersaturated salt brines from deep in the earth along faults. Once encountering the cold ocean waters, the hot brines could no longer sustain the high concentrations of salt, which rapidly precipitated out of solution, free of impurities and marine organisms.

The great Flood of Noah’s day provides the proper context. During the Flood, great volumes of magma, water, metals, and chemicals, were extruded onto the surface from the depths of the earth, as the “fountains of the great deep” (Genesis 7:11) spewed forth hot volcanic materials. Today we find them (especially salt) interbedded with Flood sediments, just as the “Back to Genesis” model predicts. 



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