

## “Living Bread in a Trough”

### “Living Bread in a Trough” Part 1

1. Manger Prelude (Lu. 2:7, 12, 16)
  - a. Read vv. 6-16
  - b. The term “manger” is thrice stated. What is a manger? It is a trough to feed farm animals (beasts of burden).
  - c. Jesus would say, “I am the living bread [bread of life v. 35] which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh...” (Jn. 6:51ff.).
  - d. Christmas is when the Bread of Life came from heaven to a trough! Jesus is the Bread which gives us eternal life.
2. Meal Picture (Exod. 12)
  - a. Passover Lamb: all who partook in faith escaped Egypt’s bondage and death.
  - b. Types in the Passover:
    - i. Lamb v. 3
    - ii. Household v. 3
    - iii. Male v. 5
    - iv. Firstborn v. 5
    - v. Unblemished v. 5
    - vi. Kill and eat v. 8
    - vii. No broken bones v. 46
  - c. The unblemished firstborn Lamb of God was killed that we may partake of salvation by faith, thus making the household of God. Jesus is the Meal of salvation’s Passover Lamb.
3. Manna Provision (Exod. 16)
  - a. The manna from heaven gave life sustaining nutrients for the wilderness wonderers.
  - b. Paul the Apostle proclaimed that such provisions of miraculous deliverance, food, and drink was singularly Christ (1 Cor. 10:1-4).
  - c. Do you acknowledge Christ as your provider? Have you experienced deliverance from the penalty and power of sin?
  - d. The only way to experience such is to partake of Christ. Ps. 34:8.
4. Mirror Portrayed (Gen. 37-50)
  - a. Joseph: Type of Christ. Refer to Joseph & Jesus doc. included as an appendix.
  - b. Understanding Joseph is typical of Christ, we see how his life portrayed the salvation of not just Israel but all nations by feeding them grain during the great 7 year famine.
5. Mountain Prophesied (Isa. 25:6)
  - a. The mountain of God aka “hill of the LORD,” “Zion,” or “Temple of the LORD” is a place of communion with God and it is from Zion where Jesus came i.e. God’s heavenly dwelling. And it is to Jerusalem (earthly Zion) to which He came. And it was from Jerusalem that the Gospel has gone forth to the ends of the earth forming the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:24) – the Bride of Christ – who partakes of the great wedding feast.
  - b. It is this reality that is conveyed by Isaiah via a promised feast in the New Creation. The great mountain of God which spreads to all nations is also seen in Isa. 2:2-3 & Dan. 2:35. But before the bread of feasting is the drought of darkness and thirst/hunger. →

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### “Living Bread in a Trough” Part 2

1. Parchedness (Isa. 35:1-2)
  - a. As the enslaved Hebrews yearned for deliverance, and as the weary wilderness ones needed vital nutrients, and as the starving nations needed grain, and as the Gentiles dwelling in gloom, distress, neglect, and darkness groped for the light – each of us must draw from the well of living water and embrace the light of Christ.
  - b. Read Isa. 9:1-7
  - c. Jesus is the desert bloom bringing life from wilderness (Isa. 35:1-2). He brings light to the darkness (Isa. 9:2; 42:7; Mat. 4:16; Jn. 9:25), and water to thirst (Jn. 4:10; 7:37).
  - d. He is the Word which gives eternal life (Deut. 8:3).
  - e. One must partake of the One who was presented to us in a feeding trough as the “Bread of Life.”
  - f. What is your purpose? What is your destiny? The answer to both is the “Bread from heaven.” Both our purpose and destiny is to glorify God and enjoy communion (portrayed with wine and bread) with Him forevermore.
  - g. You can partake of the life-giving Bread and Water by faith. As the Hebrews partook of the Passover Lamb by faith in their huts with their sandals on their feet ready to be delivered from bondage – you can partake (receive) Christ by faith in His person, words, and provision of His own body offered up as the Passover Lamb. For all who trust in Him will not be ashamed for He is marvelous in our eyes (Mat. 21:42). Just believe in Him. Trust Him.
2. Presentation (Lu. 2:7, 12, 16)
  - a. As noted, the Bread of Life was presented in a trough.
  - b. It is paradoxical that the King of Glory stooped to a lowly stable. [Note that the Son traversed from glory to dust but He did not become dust though tasting death (Ps. 16:10; Isa. 53:9-12).] But it is quite appropriate that the “living bread” came to the starving and not to the indulgent.
  - c. Jesus presented Himself as the living bread of life which came down from God (Jn. 6:26-58).
3. Participation (Mat. 26:26-28)
  - a. Do you think the Disciples thought for a moment that they were literally/physically eating and drinking of Christ’s body and blood?
  - b. In the context of Jn. 6:26-58 is the broader context of Chapters 4 and 5. Before saying that He is food and drink which must be partaken, He also said that His food was to do the will and work of the Father (Jn. 4:34). And that they (and we) must “not labor for the food which perished, but for the food which endures to everlasting life.” (Jn. 6:27). And when they ask specifically, ““what shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent”” (Jn. 6:28-29).
  - c. Furthermore, in v. 63 Jesus said, “It is the Spirit who gives life the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”
  - d. What’s more, partaking of Jesus (Jn. 6:53-54) is not unlike partaking of His sufferings and glory cf. respectively: 1 Pet. 4:13; 5:1. We do not literally experience crucifixion nor innate glory of the eternal Son who alone atoned for our sins, yet we share in such things to a lesser degree.
  - e. Again, Deut. 8:3 comes into play so to speak. One does not live by the literal speech of God but by the Word Who was and is God!

“Living Bread in a Trough” Part 3

1. Partaking (2 Pet. 1:4)

- a. Though not a precise correlation with the ‘living Bread of God’ motif, this verse (albeit controversial) is certainly pertinent to our consideration of partaking of Christ.
- b. Though I acknowledge, respect, and certainly allow for the other views of the Lord’s Supper; my current stance on its nature is one of spiritual and or symbolic rather than physical and or mystical. “As early as the second century, it has been conveyed that the Lord’s Supper is not only the actual body of Christ but a part in the deification of the believer. “There is a long tradition, beginning with Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215), that places more weight on this verse than it can fairly carry, and we must preserve the awesome distance between the creator God and everything and everyone he makes. To say that we are God, or become God, would be a shocking misinterpretation of Peter.”<sup>1</sup>
- c. Partaking of the divine nature is a real thing and a spiritual thing. I see it as other spiritual realities such as being born from above, which is in my view not a mere metaphor but spiritual reality of having been endowed with a new nature – which is, indeed, partaking of the divine nature i.e. the Spirit of God.
- d. M. Green: “in substance it is saying much the same as John 1:12. Peter does not mean that man is absorbed into the deity; that would at the same time dissolve personal identity and render impossible any personal encounter between the individual and God. But as in 1 Peter, he speaks of a real union with Christ. If we are partakers of Christ’s sufferings (1 Pet. 4:13), and partakers of the glory that shall be revealed (1 Pet. 5:1), it is because we are partakers of Christ. What Peter is saying here, though couched in this unusual form, is just the same in content as Paul’s claim in Romans 8:9; Galatians 2:20; John’s, in 1 John 5:1; and his own, in 1 Peter 1:23. It paves the way for Ignatius, a few years later, to say that Christians ‘partake in God’. To repent, believe and be baptized into Christ is, so the whole New Testament asserts, to enter into a totally new relationship with God, in which he becomes our Father and we members of his family. It is in this sense that Peter rightly claims that believers are *already* participants in the divine nature.”<sup>2</sup>
- e. The status/identity of being a son of God was seen to be divine (Jn. 19:7). And we have become His children (Jn. 1:12; 1 Jn. 3:1-2 cf. Mat. 5:45; Gal. 3:26; Jn. 11:52).
- f. These parallel examples are likely summed up in such pictures as being born again (mentioned above), being a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), and being conformed to the image of Christ (Ro. 8:29). [See Acts 17:27-29 for Paul’s use of related Hellenistic thought.]
- g. There is no need to see a literal deification. In fact, God’s objective is to conform us as humans to the image of the perfect human Christ (again, Ro. 8:29 cf. 1 Tim. 2:5)!
- h. God did not create us to be gods but humans and stewards of His creation. To become perfect humanity, we must “escape the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4c). When our old yet present carnal nature is allowed to take the helm, we become less human and more beast. Sin serves to dehumanize us not humanize us. We say to sin is human but that’s not actually true in the fullest. Sin is not human nature but fallen nature!
- i. Therefore, to partake of the divine nature is not to become God or to become cannibalistic but to partake of the new nature given us by the Spirit cf. Jn. 6:63; 3:5-6ff.; and to become a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17) which begins to be conformed to the image of the perfect human

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<sup>1</sup> Lucas, R. C., & Green, C. (1995). [\*The message of 2 Peter & Jude: the promise of His coming\*](#) (p. 51). InterVarsity Press.

<sup>2</sup> Green, M. (1987). [\*2 Peter and Jude: an introduction and commentary\*](#) (Vol. 18, p. 84). InterVarsity Press.

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(Ro. 8:29), and be perfected on “the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6). Then we will “*partake*” of His glory to be revealed (1 Pet. 5:1).

- j. It’s been succinctly stated: The Son of God became the Son of man that sons of men could become the sons of God, who are known for being peacemakers (Mat. 5:9).
- k. Therefore, an aspect of our participation as children of God is the dissemination of the Bread of life. →

### 2. Profusion (Lu. 9:12-17)

- a. This point of Israel’s mission to be a light spread out unto the Gentiles is prevalent but here in the miraculous feeding of the five thousand we see an analogy viz. Jesus’ intent to share the living bread (Himself) unto all. The disciples asked Jesus to scatter the multitude, yet Jesus told them it was theirs to feed the people vv. 12-13.
- b. And in the end, twelve baskets of leftovers were taken up, likely symbolic of Israel’s (12 tribes) mission to feed the world the true Bread of life. Note, the gathering, instead of scattering, *could* be another negative indicator of the disciples’ ignorance to keep gathered rather than to spread abroad cf. Acts 1:8.
- c. Jesus spoke a parable of how the Kingdom is like leaven in bread which permeates and expands the loaf (Mat. 13:33). Note: this is paired with the mustard seed parable which also conveys the profusion of the Kingdom.

### 3. Practice (1 Cor. 11:23-26)

- a. Proclamation (24-25) Not a demonstration i.e. mystical spiritual union via physical bread and wine cf. Jn. 6:63.
- b. Promise (26 cf. Mat. 26:29) The instruction to practice – in remembrance – brings forth the focus of His pinnacle achievement and the promise of the consummate wedding feast when He returns. Hence I take our sacrament of Communion a reminding participation of His finished work and the coming feast where we will dine, as it were, with God cf. Isa. 25:6.

### 4. Postlude

Combining Motifs: This message was inspired by the recognition of the name Joseph symmetrically located in Scripture coupled with the motif of the heavenly life-giving Bread of God.

- a. Joseph: At Jesus’ birth we saw Him presented in a manger in Bethlehem, and soon after His birth Joseph took Him to and later out of Egypt to Nazareth. At Jesus’ death another Joseph (of Arimathea) provided Him a tomb. One Joseph stood at Jesus’ trough and another gave Jesus His tomb. We also observed in Israel’s early history, Joseph of Israel (Jacob) while in Egypt had provided food, and thus life, for all nations (cf. Gen. 41:57). The symmetrical motif of the Josephs offer protection, portrayal, prophesy, and provision regarding Jesus’ birth, life, death, and life from death (resurrection).
- b. Bread of Life: The motif of the “living” life-giving “Bread from heaven” is found in the birth and death of Jesus. He is presented as the Bread of life in a feeding trough at His birth and at His death He is the seed which has been buried in order to bring forth much grain after death (Jn. 12:24)! But there is yet more. Jesus was born in Bethlehem just as it was foretold, the Messiah would emerge from the town of Bethlehem (Jn. 7:42 cf. Mic. 5:2; Mat. 2:1-6). Bethlehem literally means “house of bread.” Let’s, therefore, take the cup and bread of salvation and celebrate the eternal Bread from heaven and His life-giving sacrifice by taking the bread and cup of salvation in remembrance of the One who was portrayed, promised, provided, and punished for our redemption.

## “Living Bread in a Trough”

### Pastor’s Corner (Part 1)

In order to frame this three part series, I’ve decided to reveal the end to which I planned its development. It’s my joy to discover Scripture’s motifs, typology, chiasms, and symmetry; to name a few of Scripture’s communicative tools. These are important because they add additional layers to the plainly proclaimed Gospel. Knowing the structures is to unveil their subject or message. Although this series will observe multiple communicative methods, it is framed in symmetry. There is a paradise lost and paradise gained. There is a tree of life forfeited (Eden), a tree of life re-emerged (New Creation), and the tree of life which secured the latter (the Cross). There is a dove preceding the scattering of nations (Noah’s dove before tower of Babylon) and one preceding Jesus’ gathering back of nations to the true Temple Mount of God. The two cherubim framing the Ark of the Covenant parallel the two framing the slab in Jesus’ tomb. Scripture is also framed with two weddings. Our series framework is found in two symmetrical motifs. One is that Jesus’ birth and death are accompanied with presentations/provisions of two Josephs (from trough to tomb) with Jesus’ life portrayed in a third Joseph. The other motif finds symmetry in that Jesus is born in the “house of bread” (Bethlehem) and presented in a feeding trough and His death is the seed which rose to bring life-giving fruit of the New Creation – which grows to cover the earth.

### PC Part 2

Satan, society, and selfishness have too often been successful at distracting us with busyness, pleasure, self-medicating, and vices in order to avoid the most difficult of life’s questions of meaning and destiny. Such occupies us and “rescues” us from having to consider these vital issues of life and death. It’s been observed that codependents busy themselves consciously or subconsciously with the lives of others so they can avoid the dutiful yet dreaded management of their own lives. Many, including me, would love to be left alone to live in peace but that is not God’s plan for us either. But before we can find our purpose, preservation, and peace, we must first be awakened to our real impoverishment and inadequacies. We must be awaked to the reality of a spiritual void for which Jesus came to fill. Until one acknowledges his hunger and thirst for righteousness, he will not cling to the Bread of life. May God search us and reveal to us our own demented thinking and grievous ways (Ps. 139:23-24) that a right spiritual thirst will emerge (Mat. 5:6), of which only Christ can quench (Jn. 4:14). We must welcome the Light of the world to expose the darkness in our hearts cf. Isa. 9:2.

### PC Part 3

Do you partake of Christ? The Jesus who was presented to us in a feeding trough, said that “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you” (Jn. 6:53). What did He mean? Consuming blood was explicitly forbidden for Hebrews and cannibalism was certainly not permitted among the Jews and civilized Gentiles. Jesus reiterated the radical phrase above in different terms five more times in the next five verses and in three of them (vv. 56, 57, & 58) He used the term “munch” (as in a noisy crunch sounding chew). It actually signifies a pleasure in partaking of the food. Jesus’ speech – resembling cannibalism if taken in the physical sense – provoked many to desertion (Jn. 6:60). However, when one has been given the gift of regeneration through the new birth, he realizes that Jesus’ body and blood was broken and poured out for him; and thus he delights in partaking of Christ’s nature which puts to death the lust and idolatry of sin and counts it a privilege to sacrifice for Jesus. Are you “munching” on Christ or indulging in sin? Only those who have been born again possess a divine nature which can enjoy Christ. “Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth” (“Hark the Herald Angels Sing” Hymns and Sacred Poems 1739 by Charles Wesley).

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### Appendix 1: Selected List of Parallels of Joseph of Israel and Jesus of Nazareth

1. Shepherd of Father’s sheep (Gen. 37:2 cf. Jn. 10)
2. Spoke the truth of both deliverance and condemnation (Gen. 40:1-23 cf. Mat. 21:42-44)
3. Father’s beloved son (Gen. 37:3 cf. Mat. 3:17)
4. Rejected by his own brothers (Gen. 37:48 cf. Jn. 1:11)
5. Ready to do their fathers’ will (Gen. 37:12 cf. Lk. 22:42)
6. Sent by their fathers to their brothers (Gen. 37:13-14 cf. Heb. 2:11)
7. Ridiculed (Gen. 37:19 cf. Lk. 22:63)
8. Plotted against (Gen. 37:20 cf. Jn. 11:53)
9. Stripped of their robes (Gen. 37:23 cf. Jn. 19:23)
10. Taken to Egypt (Gen. 37:28 cf. Mat. 2:14)
11. Sold for the price of a slave in silver (Gen. 37:28 cf. Mat. 26:14)
12. Attempted murder by his own brothers (Gen. 37:20 cf. Mat. 26:4)
13. LORD was with them (Gen. 39:2 cf. Lk. 4:18)
14. Resisted temptation (Gen. 39:7-19 cf. Mat. 4:1)
15. Falsely accused (Gen. 39:16-18 cf. Mat. 26:59-60)
16. Bound in chains (Gen. 39:20 cf. Mat. 27:2)
17. Captive with two other men (Gen. 40:1-3 cf. Lk. 23:32-33)
18. Prophesied future (Gen. 40-41 cf. Mat. 24)
19. Services quickly forgotten (Gen. 40:23 cf. Lk. 17:17)
20. Gave glory to God (Gen. 41:25 cf. Jn. 17:4)
21. Given all authority (Gen. 41:41 cf. Mat. 28:18)
22. Ministry began at age 30 (Gen. 41:46 cf. Lk. 3:23)
23. Unrecognized by his own (Gen. 42:8 cf. Jn. 1:11)
24. Offered forgiveness to those who rejected them (Gen. 45:1-15 cf. Lk. 23:34)
25. Exalted after suffering (Gen. 41:41 cf. Phil. 2:6-11)
26. God employed what men did to destroy them for good (Gen. 50:20 cf. Col. 2:15)
27. Their ministries saved all the nations (Gen. 41:57 cf. Rev. 21:24; 22:17 cf. Isa. 2:2-3; Zech. 14:16)

### Appendix 2: Re: 2 Pet. 1:4

“As early as the second century, it has been conveyed that the Lord’s Supper is not only the actual body of Christ but a part in the deification of the believer. “There is a long tradition, beginning with Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215), that places more weight on this verse than it can fairly carry, and we must preserve the awesome distance between the creator God and everything and everyone he makes. To say that we are God, or become God, would be a shocking misinterpretation of Peter. Nevertheless, we should still marvel with Calvin that ‘it is the purpose of the gospel to make us sooner or later like God; indeed it is, so to speak, a kind of deification.’”<sup>3</sup>

Other parallels are offered: “The most daring phrase of all is, of course, *participate in the divine nature*, which has a deliberately Hellenistic ring about it, for this polemical reason.<sup>7</sup> But in substance it is saying much the same as John 1:12. Peter does not mean that man is absorbed into the deity; that would at the

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<sup>7</sup> Otherwise, Käsemann, p. 182; Wand, pp. 150ff.

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same time dissolve personal identity and render impossible any personal encounter between the individual and God. But as in 1 Peter, he speaks of a real union with Christ. If we are partakers of Christ’s sufferings (1 Pet. 4:13), and partakers of the glory that shall be revealed (1 Pet. 5:1), it is because we are partakers of Christ. What Peter is saying here, though couched in this unusual form, is just the same in content as Paul’s claim in Romans 8:9; Galatians 2:20; John’s, in 1 John 5:1; and his own, in 1 Peter 1:23. It paves the way for Ignatius, a few years later, to say that Christians ‘partake in God’. To repent, believe and be baptized into Christ is, so the whole New Testament asserts, to enter into a totally new relationship with God, in which he becomes our Father and we members of his family. It is in this sense that Peter rightly claims that believers are *already* participants in the divine nature.”<sup>4</sup>

If Communion is anything more than symbolic remembrance, I would take the view of real spiritual presence articulated by the Reformers, Puritans, and even Patristic Church Fathers.

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