

MATTHEW FOUR, FOUR

Intro: The verse I have taken tonight has two things which make it important:

- 1) It is a quotation from the OT: Deut. 8:3.
- 2) The quotation is made by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke also refers to it in Luke 4:4.

For this reason it is important that we understand the OT quotation if we are to understand fully the statement. Read Deut. 8:1-3.

The Deut. passage in turn takes us back to Ex. 16 where we have God beginning to provide manna for His people during the years of their journey from Egypt to Canaan. Cf. Josh. 5:12.

By comparing Matt. 4:4 and Deut. 8:3 we observe:

I. A SIMILAR SETTING IN EACH CASE.

In both passages we have:

- 1) A testing. (Comment on the nature of each.)
- 2) Hunger.
- 3) God dealing with men:
 - a) In the first case, with the Israelites--a whole nation!
 - b) In the second, a unique situation: Our Lord tempted concerning His Deity and His Messiahship, and yet taking His place as a man. "Man shall not live . . ."

But we have also a significant contrast:

- 1) With the Israelites we have a murmuring, dissatisfied people.
- 2) With the Lord there is no complaint whatsoever--just complete obedience to the Spirit of God.

II. IN BOTH SITUATIONS GOD HAD A PURPOSE TO ACCOMPLISH.

Deut. 8:2, 3 tell us what God's purpose was with the Israelites.

Our Lord's experience had more than one purpose. It had a great deal to do with the Lord Himself. Satan was to learn from it. Angels also profited. And all who have ever heard of the temptation of Jesus also have profited.

It is interesting to contrast this first temptation of our Lord with what John the Baptist claimed for Deity in Matt. 3:9. He could not only have made stones into bread, but He could have made stones into people!

III. THE MAIN LESSONS OF THE VERSE.

- A. Man's need to be humbled. Cf. Deut. 8:2. Compare with this what Paul says about the Lord in Phil. 2:8, "He humbled himself." When the Lord said, "Man shall not live by bread alone," He was applying this to himself.

Man takes great pride in being able to provide for himself. Perhaps the hardest lesson for any man to learn is that he is utterly dependent upon God. The Lord was being humbled before Satan and before angels as One who was to feel this dependence upon God. What a mystery!

This lesson may not come to us in the same way, but this is one lesson God is always teaching us in deeper and deeper ways. Our Lord experienced it all of the way to the Cross. "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross . . ."

- B. The absolute importance of the Word of God.

The Word has to take precedence over everything--even over our legitimate needs.

The Word of God is a sure guide. There can be no real blessing apart from the Word. As Plummer has said, "The point . . . is, that food will not keep man alive; and if God says that he is to live, he will live, whether he has food or not" (Matthew, p. 40).

From the Garden of Eden on food has been a problem--the meeting of our daily needs. The Lord spoke of this in the sermon on the mount. It runs all through the Word of God.

Obviously the Lord had been spending some time during those days meditating on Deuteronomy. All of His quotations are from this book. HE DID NOT ORIGINATE SCRIPTURE WHICH HE COULD HAVE DONE, BUT HE CHOSE TO ABIDE BY WHAT HAD BEEN WRITTEN. When He said, "It is written," He meant that God had caused Moses to write, AND THAT WHAT HE HAD WRITTEN STILL STOOD. The Word of God never changes even in the case of the Son of God!

- C. The trustworthiness of God.

If God did not give the Lord Jesus a command to turn stones into bread, then He will see to it that He gets bread in some other way!

If the Lord led the children of Israel through places

where there was no bread, then He would provide for them in some other way.

Cf. Psa. 37:25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

Cf. Phil. 4:19. Also Matt. 6:25-34.

And this leads to the last point.

D. The variety of ways God uses to meet the needs of His people.

The trouble with the Israelites was that they did not see familiar circumstances around them where bread had been provided before.

Cf. the feeding of the 5,000 - Matt. 14:15-21.

Cf. the fruitless fishing that the apostles had done, and what the Lord had done about it - John 21:3-11.

Do you remember the many different ways God gave the Israelites water?

UP TO EXODUS 16 NEVER BEFORE HAD GOD PROVIDED MANNA FROM HEAVEN FOR HIS PEOPLE!

And notice: WHEN THE LORD HUNGERED, GOD DID NOT RAIN MANNA FROM HEAVEN FOR HIM. INSTEAD, GOD SENT ANGELS WITH ALL OF THE FOOD THAT HE NEEDED!

Concl: This passage of Scripture does not teach laziness. The Israelites were not a lazy people, and our Lord was certainly one of the busiest of people. But the passage does teach two things:

- 1) One negative: DO NOT LET YOUR CONCERN FOR YOUR PHYSICAL NEEDS BECOME SO IMPORTANT THAT IT SHUTS OUT EVERYTHING ELSE --ESPECIALLY THE WORD OF GOD.
- 2) One positive: ALWAYS REMEMBER AND BE ASSURED THAT GOD WILL ALWAYS MEET YOUR NEEDS REGARDLESS OF THE HOPELESSNESS OR THE STRANGENESS OF THE SITUATION.

He may send angels. Heb. 13:1 indicates such a thing.

But, however, it will come, it will come. Therefore, let us never hesitate to trust Him who is always faithful.