

**“And the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this (super-)light bread. And the Lord sent fiery (flying) serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.” Num. 21:4-6.**

Referring to this passage generally, Paul says that the great sin of the people that brought down the wrath of God in the fearful form of swiftly deadly fiery flying serpent bites – was the sin of denigrating Christ, or God the Son, as the incarnate Word, or the Essential Word of the Living God, in His role as the Captain leading the people to glory, within the Pillar of Cloud by day, and the Pillar of Fire by night.

*Gill: “‘And the people spake against God.’ Who went before them in the pillar of cloud and fire, FOR LEADING THEM IN SUCH A WAY; that is, against Christ, as the apostle has taught us to interpret it, 1 Cor. 10:9. and is no inconsiderable proof of the deity of Christ; and so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, ‘and the people thought in their heart, and spake against the Word of the Lord, the Essential Word and Son of God,’ and against Moses his servant, for doing nothing but obeying the orders of the Lord, and leading and guiding the people as he directed him; ‘wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?’ ascribing this equally to God and to Moses; using a strange word, as Aben Ezra calls it, being in a great passion, and not considering well what they said; showing great ingratitude for such a mercy, and representing it in a wrong light, as if the intent of bringing them from Egypt was to slay them in the wilderness: ‘FOR THERE IS NO BREAD...AND OUR SOUL LOATHETH THIS (SUPER-)LIGHT BREAD.’” Num. 21:5.*

Beloved. What a slap in the holy Face of that gracious and loving God who had miraculously provided these people with daily MANNA. Indeed, even in the ungrateful act of criticizing the MANNA in such a mean and despicable manner, the Jews – (though perhaps unintentionally) – praised the manna as “*light bread*,” meaning “*easily digestible*,” and hence even more to be valued as a daily food product, in addition to providing every element of good, tasty and appropriate nutrition required for robust good health by the human body.

Beloved, I confess that this subject is difficult for me to handle. The sheer, arrogant, Satanic ingratitude of those Jews. Full, free, adequate, delectable, delicious, excellent, nutritious – “*ANGELS’ FOOD*” – and those ingrates called the manna NOTHING; to wit: “*THERE IS NO BREAD.*” Num. 21:5. And again, they said, “*And OUR SOUL LOATHETH this light bread.*” Num. 21:5.

Despite its exceeding value and excellence, by calling the manna “*LIGHT BREAD*,” those rebellious Jews probably meant, slanderously, that, it had but little substance and virtue in it, and was not filling and satisfying, or rather that it was exceeding vile, mean and despicable; so they – (i.e., those typically ungrateful and slanderous Jews) – dared to call the bread of heaven, this

angels' food, this wonderful gift of Providence. In like manner do they lightly regard and speak of Christ, the hidden manna (Rev. 2:17), and His Gospel, and the precious truths of it; to wit:

***“Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation: Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down MANNA upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels' food.” (Psa. 78:22-25)***

There is no doubt that in rebelling against God in the matter of the MANNA; the Jews knew that they were deliberately rejecting Christ, God the Son, the Essential Word of God, Who was symbolized by the MANNA; to wit:

***“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.” (Jn. 6:48-50)***

Scripture plainly says so; to wit: that in rebelling against God in the matter of the MANNA, the Jews were deliberately rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, the Essential Word of God, Who was symbolized by the MANNA; to wit: ***“Neither let us tempt CHRIST,”*** – (i.e., God the Son, the Essential Word of God the Father, but, strictly speaking, NOT God the Father), – ***“as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.”*** 1 Cor.10:9.

Remember the Targum of Jonathan's topical paraphrase; to wit: ***“and the people thought in their heart, and SPAKE AGAINST THE WORD OF THE LORD, i.e., the Essential Word and Son of God.”*** Beloved. See the Jews and the mixt multitude for 40 years murmuring in the Wilderness of Sin – murmuring against the Word of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, in His glorious capacity as the Captain of the host, leading the children to glory.

There stands Joshua, on the eve of launching the Conquest of Canaan; to wit: ***“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said”*** – (NOTE: Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Man with His sword drawn in His hand, and His response is, Nay, wrong question, Joshua. Whose side are YOU on?) – ***“And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.”*** Josh. 5:13-15. Can anybody doubt that it is the Lord Jesus Christ, now functioning in His glorious role as Captain of the Host, leading God's elect to glory? To wit:

***“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings ...And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.” (Heb. 2:10,13)***

And, similarly, can anybody doubt that it is our dear Lord Jesus Christ who is the butt-end target of this world's slanders and ingratitude and murmurings and complainings, – as here illustrated by those disgusting Jews, – heaped upon God the Son in His glorious capacity as the Essential Word of God; to wit:

***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was WITH God, and the Word WAS God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not... That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” (Jn. 1:1-5,9)***

The slanderous and ungrateful assault by the murmuring Jews upon God the Son, as the Essential Word of God, was an outrageous attack upon the Eternal Word and Godhead itself; to wit:

***“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners SPAKE in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, BY WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and UPHOLDING ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Heb. 1:1-3)***

Beloved. The outrageous murmuring against God constituted “*tempting Christ*,” constituted assaulting the Godhead, – demanding swift and appropriate retaliation by an outraged Deity – even innumerable multitudes of fiery flying serpents with immediate and excruciating death in their fangs; to wit:

***“And the Lord sent fiery (flying) serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.” (Num. 21:6)***

And, “*Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were DESTROYED OF SERPENTS. Neither MURMUR ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.*” – (“*evil angels*,” Psa. 78:49) – “*Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and THEY ARE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE WORLD ARE COME.*” 1 Cor. 10:9-11.

Notice, Beloved, that these “*manna-murmuring-fiery-flying-serpent*” events happened unto those ancient people for our “*examples*,” but that “*THEY ARE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE WORLD ARE COME.*” We serve the LIVING GOD, Who communicates with us through His LIVING WORD; and He thought it meet to put certain of His Providential dealings with the sons of men IN COLORFUL WRITINGS – “*FOR OUR ADMONITION.*” And, just to make sure we know which of His elect He particularly had in mind, He identifies them further, with these specific words; to wit: “*UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE WORLD ARE COME,*” OR, IN OTHER WORDS, THOSE OF HIS ELECT LIVING AND SERVING GOD IN THE LAST OF THE LAST DAYS; OR, IN OTHER WORDS, “*US !*” Wonderful thought!

Centuries ago, when these things happened, and when our Father made the selection as to which of those among His elect should be living and serving Him during the last of the last days – and therefore which of His creatures’ activities back then should be reduced to writing, He chose US, “*for our admonition.*” Beloved, we should therefore study the Scriptures to be admonished, with three questions in mind all the while; to wit:

- 1) What do those Scriptures say;
- 2) What do they mean; and,
- 3) What do they mean to me.

For example, take this account, – (which the Lord commanded and caused to be written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world have come), – and apply the three questions thereto; to wit: ***“And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them”*** – (i.e., a true holocaust, ala Sodom) – ***“that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched. And he called the name of the place Taberah*** (i.e., A burning); ***because the fire of the Lord burnt among them. And the mixt multitude that was among them FELL A-LUSTING:”*** – (Gill: *“These were not only Egyptians, but a mixture of divers people, who having heard or seen the wonderful things done for Israel, joined them in hopes of sharing the blessings of divine goodness with them; so the Targum of Jonathan calls them proselytes, that were gathered among them; these LUSTED A-LUSTING, as the words may be rendered; for women and garlic, as some Jewish writers think, even such women as were near of kin to them, with whom they were forbidden to marry, and therefore desired to have those Mosaic laws dissolved.”*) – ***“And the children of Israel WEPT AGAIN, and said, WHO SHALL GIVE US FLESH TO EAT? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is NOTHING AT ALL, BESIDE THIS MANNA, BEFORE OUR EYES. And the Manna was as coriander seed, and the color thereof as the color of bdellium.”*** – (the Manna was very pleasant to taste and look upon, being of a round form and white, as of a pearl or crystal color) – ***“And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.”*** Numbers 11:1-9.

(Delicious, nutritious, free of any and all charge, and even delivered fresh every morning free of charge, without missing a day, FOR FORTY YEARS ! To wit: ***“And the children of Israel did eat manna FORTY YEARS, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.”*** Ex. 16:35. And, this Manna is so precious a thing in the eyes and estimation of God, that He ordered a pot miraculously kept and preserved as one of three objects in the Ark of the Covenant; to wit: ***“And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. And Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer (3 quarts) full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept.”*** Ex. 16:31-34.)

***“Then Moses heard the people WEEP!”*** (Say what?) (What ingrates ! Never satisfied ! But, always Discouraged, Complaining ! And, Murmuring ! And, Disputing ! And, Weeping ! And, Speaking against God, and His Word, and His Son ! And, Tempting Christ !)

***“Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: AND THE ANGER OF THE LORD WAS KINDLED GREATLY.” (Num. 11:10)***

Beloved. Those discouraged, dissatisfied, complaining, murmuring, disputing ingrates – need to be admonished. They are identified by those things that are written over and over again:

***“And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” (1 Cor. 10:11,12)***

Beloved. We must ***“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.” Phil. 4:4.*** We have so much to rejoice about, for this world and the next. It is our happy duty and our blessed privilege to rejoice in the Lord always, and to ***“Rejoice evermore.” 1 Thes. 5:16.*** Moreover, for chronic, Satanic complainers, there is a sea snake lying at the bottom of the sea, which the Lord has commanded to bite His enemies; which is ten times more painfully venomous than any land snake, including the Cobra, Puff-Adder, and Horned Viper – of Bible lands – which slew the murmuring Jews; to wit:

***“And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and HE SHALL BITE THEM.” (Amos 9:3)***

All of which brings us to the true context and primary meaning of one of my favorite passages; to wit: ***“There hath no temptation (i.e., to complain, and not to rejoice always) taken you but such as is common to man (i.e., God’s man, God’s Elect): but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted (i.e., to complain and not to rejoice always) above that ye are able; but will with the temptation (i.e., the temptation to complain and not to rejoice always, 24/7) also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (i.e., bear the temptation to complain, and then go back to being your old, sweet, rejoicing self). Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.” 1 Cor. 10:13-15.***

(When that love and respect and honor and devotion and service – which is due and owing to God alone – is given to any one or any thing other than God – THAT, is idolatry. Refusing to rejoice at all God’s dispensations and holy providences – THAT, is idolatry. Appeal is made to their ultimate good sense and sanctified wisdom, which will sooner or later carry the day, and persuade all God’s Elect of the rightness of Paul’s position as to the joy of the Lord being the triumphant antidote to deadly murmuring against the Lord.)

***“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. DO ALL THINGS WITHOUT MURMURINGS AND DISPUTINGS: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life.” (Phil. 2:12-16)***

Amen.