

Pursuing the God

This weeks reading is from Parashat Ekev (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25*), Moshe says וְהָיָה | עַקֵּב תִּשְׁמְעוּן אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה *7:12 'Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers. (NASB)* Here Moshe explains that the Lord God will keep the covenant and mercy (הַחֶסֶד) that He swore to our fathers and that the Lord will bless the people exceedingly in the land if they remain faithful to Him (*7:12-16*). Moshe repeatedly warns to remain faithful to the Lord. These warnings are contrasted with the mighty works God did to preserve the people in the wilderness. Moshe writes contrasting the humbleness of heart, hunger, and the provision of Manna in the wilderness (*"bread from Heaven,"*) so that they would understand that *"man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does a man live"* (*8:3*). Was the Lord showing the people a future messianic expectation on the importance of the life giving *"Word of God"* that proceeds out of the mouth of the Father in Heaven?

שְׂדוּקָה יִבְתַּכ / The Holy Scriptures

ספר דברים פרק ח

א כָּל-הַמִּצְוָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם תִּשְׁמְרוּן לַעֲשׂוֹת לְמַעַן תַּחְיִין וְרִבִיתֶם וּבָאתֶם וּרְשַׁתֶּם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְתָּרֵיכֶם:
 ב וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת-כָּל-הַדְרֹךְ אֲשֶׁר הוֹלִיכָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ זֶה אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בְּמִדְבָּר לְמַעַן עֲנִתְךָ לְנִסְתָּךְ לְדַעַת אֶת-אֲשֶׁר בְּלִבְךָ הִתְשַׁמֵּר מִצְוֹתוֹ [מִצְוֹתַי] אִם-לֹא: ג וַיַּעַבְדוּ וַיִּרְעַבְדוּ וַיֵּאָכְלוּ אֶת-הַמֶּן אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדַעְתָּ וְלֹא יָדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן הוֹדִיעָךָ כִּי לֹא עַל-הַלֶּחֶם לִבְדוֹ יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם כִּי עַל-כָּל-מוֹצֵא כִּי-יְהוָה יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם:

Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1-3

8:1 'All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers. 8:2 'You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. 8:3 'He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. (NASB)

Here in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1-3* Moshe says that the Lord humbled the people and fed them with manna, a food that looked like little flakes or grains (*Shemot / Exodus 16:31*) and tastes sweet like honey. Moshe says this taught the people that man did not live by bread alone but on *"all that goes out"* (על-כל-מוצא) or proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. Moshe is saying that our life depends upon God's Word. According to the Torah, bread was generally made from wheat (*Shemot / Exodus 29:2 and Judges 6:19*), though sometimes bread was made from other grains too (*Bereshit / Genesis 14:18 and Judges 7:13*). Unleavened bread was used for Passover (*Shemot / Exodus 12:15-20, Devarim / Deuteronomy 16:3*), the bread of the presence was provided fresh every Shabbat and were to be eaten in the Tabernacle by the Priests (*Shemot / Exodus 25:30, Vayikra / Leviticus 24:8, 1 Samuel 21:1-6, and Matthew 12:4*). The word *"bread"* (לחם) is also used figuratively in the Tanakh as the bread of sorrows in *Tehillim / Psalms 127:2*, the bread of tears in *Tehillim / Psalms 80:5*, the bread of wickedness in *Mishley / Proverbs 4:17*, and of deceit in *Mishley / Proverbs 20:17*. The Psalms and Proverbs suggest to us that bread can be used to illustrate the works of the flesh. Is this how and why Yeshua used unleavened bread symbolically referring to his body? Here in Parashat Ekev and in Parashat Beshalach Lecha (*Shemot / Exodus 16*) Manna is introduced as bread that God has given to the people from Heaven. On seeing the manna on the ground each man said to his brother in Hebrew *"Ma Hu"* (אֵיִשׁ אֶל-אֶחָיו מִן הוּא וַיֹּאמְרוּ) which means *"What/who is He."* The pronoun *"hu"* (הוא) can be used in the Hebrew language to refer to a person, place, or thing. The personal pronoun can also refer to a plurality (of Israel) according its usage in Parashat Balak (*Bamidbar / Numbers 22:12, וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֱלֹהִים אֶל-בָּלָעָם לֹא תִלָּךְ עִמָּהֶם לֹא תֵאָר אֶת-הַעַם כִּי בָרוּךְ הוּא, וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ גִבּוֹר לְאַחֲזֵיקָה מִנָּה הוּא אֲרִי לֹא יָדְעוּ מִה הוּא וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹן הוּא לְחֵמָּה דִּיֵּהֵב יְיָ לְכוּן לְמִיכַל) indicated by the Aramaic word אַרִי meaning to be uncertain in the sense of seeing like in a vision according to Brown, Driver, and Briggs Lexicon. According to *John 6:31-32*, Yeshua the Messiah uses the people's statement *"Ma Hu"* (מִה הוּא) to indicate what the people did not know then, he is explaining to them now. He is the one these scriptures are referring too. The true bread that comes from heaven is the Word of the Living God (*John 6:31-32*) and affirms what is written in the Torah of Him in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1-3*. Based on Parashat Ekev, Moshe understood the Lord God to be actively pursuing us through His Word, illustrated by the *"bread that is from heaven."* Notice the context with which Moshe is speaking. *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1 'All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers.* The Lord God is pursuing us and according to these words, we are also to be pursuing Him. The prophet Amos says *5:18 Alas, you who are longing for the day of the Lord, For what purpose will the day of the Lord be to you? It will be darkness and not light; (NASB)* The people Amos is referring to, do they appear to know they are acting wickedly before the Lord? Is this because these people are not truly pursuing God in the way He chooses? To be expectant of the coming day of the Lord is something every child of God is longing for; however in that great day, will it be darkness and not light because of the heaviness of sin in your life? The rabbis say that this great day will be either light or darkness depending upon the righteousness of a particular person (*Midrash Tehillim 22*). Though our righteousness is in Christ, we also need to be pursuing the Lord being careful to do what God says according to His Word!*