

The God of the Valleys (1)

We began the series titled, *“the God of the Mountains”*, based on the statement made by the Syrians, in the time of Ahab, king of Israel, *“The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys”* (1st Kings 20:28). This present series will explore various valleys in the Scriptures and experiences with God in those valleys.

Balaam, in his prophecy, spoke concerning God’s people, *“As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river’s side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters”* (Num. 24:6). As we explore these valleys, we shall understand that whether on the mountain top or in the valley, as Peter reminds us, *“the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers”* (1st Pet. 3:12).

The first valley we wish to consider, is the *“valley of Eshcol”* (Num. 32:9; Deut. 1:24). It is called, *“the brook Eshcol”* in Numbers chapter 13 (vs. 23-24). It is the place that the twelve spies which Moses sent out to spy the land of Canaan found the clusters of grapes and an abundance of fruit (Num. 13:23-27). In fact the name, *“Eshcol”*, means, *“cluster”*.

Those spies, as they entered into the valley of Eshcol, got a foretaste of what the Lord had in store for His people in the land of Canaan. Upon bringing the clusters of grapes as proof of what was before them, they reported, *“surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this if the fruit of it”*.

More than 20 times in the Old Testament, the land that God promised to give His people for an inheritance is described as a land flowing with milk and honey. It is interesting to note that Peter describes the Word of God as *“milk”*. In his first epistle he exhorts us, *“as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby”* (1st Pet. 2:2).

Peter is expressing that our desire for the Word of God should be like the desire of a newborn baby for milk. The word, *“desire”*, as it is used here, means to *“long for”*. The word, *“sincere”*, means, *“pure”*. The psalmist wrote, *“Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it”* (Ps. 119:140). As those who have been brought out of the bondage of sin, redeemed by precious blood, we should have an insatiable desire for the pure Word of God.

Just as milk is essential for the growth and development of the child, physically, so the *“milk of the Word”* is essential for the growth and development of the child of God spiritually. In the book of Colossians, Paul reminds us that we are actually nourished by Christ (Col. 2:19). In the book of Ephesians, he wrote about growing up into Christ in all things (Eph. 4:15).

It is interesting to note that in the book of the Songs of Solomon, in her description of her beloved, the bride says of Him, *“his eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set (sitting in fullness; or, set as a precious stone)”* (S.O.S. 5:12).

The promised land was not only known for milk but also for honey. The Word of God has also been compared to the taste of honey. The psalmist wrote of the judgments of the Lord, *“Sweeter than honey and the honeycomb”* (Ps. 19:10). In another psalm we read, *“how sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”* (Ps. 119:103).

When Ezekiel was instructed to eat the roll containing the words of the Lord, he responded, *Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness”* (Ezek. 3:3). Likewise, in the book of the Revelation, when John had eaten the book, which he took out the hand of the angel, he said, *“it was in my mouth sweet as honey”* (Rev. 10:10). Thinking again the of the bride’s description of her beloved, she said, *“his mouth is most sweet; yea he is altogether lovely”* (S.O.S. 5:16).

Moses also described the land of Canaan to the Lord's people as, "*a land wherein thou shall eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack in it*" (Deut. 8:9). The Lord had fed His people with manna from heaven forty years, until they came to the borders of Canaan (Ex. 16:35). The Lord Jesus quoted from Nehemiah, who described the manna as "*bread from heaven*" (Neh. 9:15; Jn. 6:31).

The Lord Jesus later explained that He was the living bread which came down from heaven (Jn. 6:35, 48, 51). So, believers today enjoy the privilege of feasting on the "*living bread from heaven*", on Christ.

Canaan pictures for us all that we are and have in Christ, through faith, by virtue of the triumph of the cross and His glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

Just as the land of Canaan would provide an abundant supply of every good thing that Israel needed for their sustenance and well-being physically, and was the fulfillment of God's promises to them, so today, God's people can depend on the faithfulness of God in providing for every need, both materially and physically.

How we love to quote from the psalmist, "*the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want (nothing is lacking to me)*" (Ps. 23:1). Paul wrote, "*And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work*" (2nd Cor. 9:8). He reminds us in the book of Philippians, "*but my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 4:19).

Walk today through the valley of Eshcol, by faith in the promises of God, enjoy the abundance of blessings, too many to enumerate, that He has provided in Christ. Paul wrote in the book of Ephesians, "*We have redemption thorough His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*" (Eph. 1:7).

We are reminded in the book of Romans, "*Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Rom. 5:1). John tells us that we have the promise of eternal life (1st Jn. 2:25). Peter says that we have been begotten unto a living hope, through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, to an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us (1st Pet. 1:3-4).

Just as God's people tasted the grapes of Eshcol, the Lord invites, "*O taste and see that the Lord is good*" (Ps. 34:8). Peter reminds us that we have tasted that the Lord is gracious (1st Pet. 2:3).

*On the Bread of Heaven feeding,
As I sojourn here, below;
Guided by His skilful leading,
Daily grace He doth bestow.*

*In my bosom, constant yearning
For the Word of God, so pure;
From the Holy Spirit learning,
Of His love so true and sure.*

*Seated in the heav'nly places
Blessed with every blessing meet;
Everywhere the Spirit traces,*

Taste of goodness ever sweet.

*In His presence thus abiding;
I may every promise claim;
Sustained by His grace providing,
Strength according to the day.*

*Til I'm raptured home to glory,
Raised with Him whom I adore;
Revel in redemption's story,
Sing His praise for ever more.*

Bernie Payne