



MINUTES WITH MESSIAH

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THE STATE OF MIND

“And the house of Israel called its name Manna: and it was white like coriander seed; and its taste was like a cake fried in honey.” (Ex. 16:31)

“The people went about and gathered, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was the taste of fresh oil.” (Num. 11:8)

Over the years scholars have asked why scripture describes the taste of manna in one place as “like a cake fried in honey,” and in another like fresh oil. What was it that made the marked difference in taste? Some have concluded that manna took on the flavor of the thoughts of the eater. That is, like the shmoo in the Li'l Abner

If you think steak it tastes like steak.

comic strip, if you think steak it tastes like steak; if chocolate then it tasted like that dietary essential. But then why would some people think it tasted bland and oily? The context of Numbers 11 shows that they were in a complaining mood. Then it describes the oily taste. It's all a matter of attitude.

Some people can look at a miracle of God and see a miracle. Others look at it and see vegetable oil. Some see the world around us and see nothing; others the wonders of God's creation. Some see Jesus as a “good man” while others see the Messiah, the savior of the world. It's all a matter of attitude.

Moses tells us that when Israel first saw the food from heaven they said: “Manna?” This was a Hebrew-Egyptian word meaning “what.” Some

may have agreed with modern “scholars” that it might have been a natural substance they coincidentally came upon. They didn't fully see the miracle, so they said, “What is it?” Later they realized that when they gathered too much it spoiled, not enough and it increased to the exact measure required, and on the eve of Sabbath the

Their expression changed to “It is what!”

leftovers didn't spoil. Then the scripture says, “They called it Manna.” Their expression changed from “What is it?” to “It is what!” It is what God gives. It's all a matter of attitude.

Yet in spite of the miracle, some complained. They said, “We should have stayed in Egypt,” forgetting that in Egypt they had complained about their hardship, too. Some people had an attitude that wouldn't be happy with a miracle of God. They wanted happiness, but were disappointed with the “things” they thought would bring it. As someone once said: Everyone looks for the City of Happiness, but they fail to realize that the City of Happiness is in the State of Mind.

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PURIM: HAMAN

“An’t I yer master? Didn’t I pay down twelve hundred dollars cash, for all ther is inside yer old cussed black shell? An’t yer mine, now, body and soul?” he said, giving Tom a violent kick with his heavy boot; “tell me!”

In the very depth of physical suffering, bowed by brutal oppression, this question shot a gleam of joy and triumph through Tom’s soul. He suddenly stretched himself up, and, looking earnestly to heaven, while the tears and blood that flowed down his face mingled, he exclaimed.

“No! no! no! my soul an’t yours, Mas’r! You haven’t bought it,—ye can’t buy it! It’s been bought and paid for, by One that is able to keep it;—no matter, no matter, you can’t harm me!”

Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Harriet
Beecher Stowe

The character, Uncle Tom, here shows an understanding of scripture that we sometimes forget. Sure, we know these things. We may even

How do we practice for the big things, but in the little things.

be able to cite chapter and verse for them, but Tom, when tempted to give up his faith, knew them. I see three things in this statement that deserve our attention by way of reminder.

You can’t harm me! The character had been repeatedly hit by an angry man. He was facing a flogging. With blood in his eyes and pain in his

heart he says, “You can’t harm me.” He knows that from the beloved scriptures. “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Mat 10:28) There are places in this world where people are being beaten because they are Christians. Just a few years ago I heard the story of a man in Indonesia who was put in the hospital because of a beating by Moslems who objected to his being a Christian. On Sunday he walked out of the hospital, and to the assembly of the saints, knowing that even leaving the hospital could kill him. We admire faith like his. We sometimes even say that we would do the same in such a circumstance. I hope and pray that I would. However, in this are we like Naaman? When told to dip in the muddy Jordan River to cleanse his leprosy, he balks. His servants asked, “If the prophet had bid you do some great thing would you not have done it; how much rather then when he says `wash and be clean’?” (2 Kings 5:13) We like to think we would do the great things. In a way it seems it would be easier to be faithful under such circumstances. But there’s an old saying: Practice makes perfect. How do we practice for the big things, but in the little things. We would be faithful if beaten, or if our life were threatened. But what about when only our soul is threatened? When someone disrespects the church, do we stand up for God’s people, or are we embarrassed to speak up? When someone tempts us to follow in their sin, do we quote scripture, or do we make some other excuse because we are afraid to be called a “Bible thumper?” When something good, or even bad, happens to us do we openly praise God, or are we afraid to be called a “Jesus freak?”

There is a famous painting by Georges Seurat, *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, which is made up not of regular brush strokes and splashes of color, but by multitudes of tiny dots or points. Taken in small sections, the dots don’t mean anything; but seen as a whole it creates a beautiful picture. So it is with us. If we succumb to worries about what men will

think of us or do to us in the small things, our life won't have enough points to make the complete picture. But if we are faithful in the small things that man can do to us, then we can handle the broad strokes of the brush, as well.

By one that is able to keep it. Isn't that a marvelous statement? I know when it comes to the things of this world, I am not able to keep them; especially when it comes to money. Sometimes I wonder that I can keep my own sanity. So when I hear that Jesus can keep my soul, that is something special. "Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." (Jude 1:25) Of course, we understand that ability and action are two different things. He is able to keep our souls, but that doesn't mean that he will do so against our will. Any cat owner knows this principle. You can keep a cat only so long as it chooses to be kept. If it chooses to go next door or across town, there is nothing you can do to keep it. When we choose to go away Jesus mourns even more than we do over a lost cat. But as long as we look to Him for our protection, he can and will keep us.

It's been bought and paid for. We are slaves. We were put up on the block, and our price was paid. "For whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human masters." (1 Cor 7:23) As such we are obligated to serve the Master who paid the price. We are to serve him first. "No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the other and despise the one." (Luke 16:13) If he allows us to work for someone else, it is still his service that takes priority. "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Mat 6:33) We are his, to do with as he wills. Our will should then no longer be our own, but that of the Master. As the Talmud says, "Make His will your will so that He will make your will His will."

Everyone knows that a slave has certain obligations to his master. What few people, even slave owners, have understood is that the master, though he is the one who paid the price, has certain obligations to the slave. He becomes obligated for the basic necessities of the slave-food, shelter, clothing, maintenance of health. The extent to which a slave holder in the American system met these obligations often had a far reaching economic impact for himself. If he took the extra expense to meet these obligations, he had less often to go to the expense of replacing a slave. Our Master, being the Master of masters, knows how to treat us better than any other. "Is there anyone among you who, if

The master, though he is the one who paid the price, has certain obligations to the slave.

your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Mat 7:9-11)

How comforting then is the thought that we have been bought. Yes, it means we must serve the one who paid the price. But it also means, since the one that paid the price is the best of all possible masters, that we need worry about nothing. Uncle Tom rejoiced in the face of trials, because he knew who his real master was. Let us never run away from Him who bought us. Let us know the freedom that is slavery under the Good Master.

"But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness." (Rom 6:18)

Hosanna

Tim O'Hearn
(John 12:13)

Ho - san - na! Ho - san - na! Bles - sed is he who comes in the name of the
Please save us! Please save us! Je - sus is He who comes in the name of the

The first system of musical notation consists of a treble and bass staff in G major. The treble staff contains the melody with lyrics underneath. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. There are two triplet markings (the number '3') above the treble staff and one below the bass staff, both corresponding to the 'Bles - sed' and 'Je - sus' lyrics.

Lord. Ho - san - na! Ho - san - na! Bles - sed the King of Is - ra - el.
Lord. Please save us! Please save us! Je - sus, Thou King of Is - ra - el.

The second system of musical notation continues the piece. It features the same treble and bass staff arrangement. The treble staff has lyrics and a final melodic flourish. The bass staff continues the accompaniment. There are two triplet markings (the number '3') above the treble staff and two below the bass staff, corresponding to the 'Bles - sed' and 'Je - sus' lyrics in both parts.

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