

Commentary — From the Margins

No Extra — No Lack

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also. I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. As it is written, "Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack." (2 Cor 8:1–15)

1.

Where is it written, *Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack?* Is it not a quotation from Moses?

But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. (Ex 16:18)

What Israelites gathered in the second month after they left Egypt, the representation of sin, was manna, bread from heaven ... after leaving sin—the law had not yet been given so these Israelites were not under the law; nevertheless, they had left sin by simply following Moses out from Egypt—Israel had no lack even though they called manna *worthless food* (Num 21:5).

Paul associates giving, even when the holy ones are in severe poverty, with receiving bread from heaven, bread that formed the shadow and type of Christ Jesus, the true bread of life (John 6:35). But manna didn't come from heaven as *bread*, but in a form like coriander seed that had to be gathered and ground in hand mills or beaten in mortars and boiled in pots and made into cakes (Num 11:7–8). Considerable work went into transforming manna, after it was gathered, into bread.

When Jesus identified Himself as the true Bread of Life that has come down from heaven (John 6:35), He said nothing about the amount of work that went into preparing manna so that it could be eaten. Rather, He said,

I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:35–40)

In the wilderness, the people of Israel complained about manna:

Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, "Oh that we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at." (Num 11:4–6)

And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." (Num 21:5)

And the crowd that followed Jesus across the Sea of Galilee complained:

So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" (John 6:41–42)

Manna forms the lifeless shadow and copy of Christ Jesus, and work was required to turn manna into something that could be eaten as a wafer [flat bread] that tasted like honey (Ex 16:31) ... manna forms the physical type of Christ Jesus, with the work that it took to process manna into unleavened bread forming the shadow and copy of the faith/belief required to follow Jesus, walking in this world as Jesus, an observant Jew, walked; i.e., to walk striving to live without

transgressing the commandments for the person truly born of God cannot keep on sinning (1 John 3:9).

As gathering and processing manna required work, faith/belief requires work albeit not the work of hands or body—and as manna was gathered and processed every day but the Sabbath (manna would not keep over night except on the sixth day), faith/belief requires work throughout the period between when the individual Christian leaves sin and engages the long trek to glory, a trek made long via the unbelief of the old man or old self, a trek that shouldn't be as long as it is and a trek that won't be long following the Second Passover liberation of Israel.

Manna was given before the law was given at Sinai: a Christian receives the indwelling of Christ Jesus before the law of God is written on hearts and placed in minds as a contractual condition of the New Covenant. Work to process manna was required of ancient Israel under Moses before the people of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai. Likewise, a Christian's faith/belief will be tried, tested before the Christian's heart is circumcised and the law written on it.

About the testing of ancient Israel, Moses records,

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, *I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that **I may test them**, whether they will walk in my law or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.*"

So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, "At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble against us?" And Moses said, "When the LORD gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD." Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.'" And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

And the LORD said to Moses, "I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"

In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat. This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Gather of it, each one

of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent." And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. And Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it over till the morning." But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.

Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat; but when the sun grew hot, it melted.

On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each. And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, he said to them, "*This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning.'*" So they laid it aside till the morning, as Moses commanded them, and it did not stink, and there were no worms in it. Moses said, "*Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none.*"

On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? See! The LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Remain each of you in his place; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day."

So the people rested on the seventh day. (Ex 16:4–30 emphasis and double emphasis added)

Because the people of Israel would not listen to the Lord when they were still in Egypt and would not cast away their idols of Egypt (Ezek 20:7–8), and because the people of Israel as a whole failed their testing when the Lord gave manna to Israel, the Lord gave the law to Israel at Sinai, thereby bringing sin to life that sin might devour these people that grumbled against Him and would not listen to Him—and that is what the giving of the law represents, bringing sin to life so that it will devour a people.

Paul writes,

For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we [who are truly born of God] are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code. What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall

not covet." But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. *For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died.* The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. (Rom 7:5–14 emphasis added)

By giving the law to the people of Israel at Sinai, the Lord brought sin to life within the people of Israel so that sin might slay this people in forty days:

And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' ... I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you." (Ex 32:7–10)

The Lord tested the people of Israel in the wilderness of Sin in the manner of whether the people would keep the Sabbath, and the people failed their testing; so the Lord brought sin to life so that sin might devour the people ... note, no one died when people went out to gather on the Sabbath (Ex 16:27) before the law was given, but after the law was given, the man found gathering sticks on the Sabbath was condemned to death and stoned outside the camp (Num 15:32–36). And so it will be before the Second Passover liberation of Israel and after the Second Passover: the Christian that transgresses the Sabbath before the Second Passover shall be rebuked by God but shall not perish [because this Christian is not yet born of God as a son] whereas after the Second Passover when every Christian shall be filled-with and empowered by the breath of God, the Christian who transgresses the Sabbath shall perish in the lake of fire when judgments are revealed for this Christian will have committed blasphemy against the spirit of God with which he or she was filled.

When Paul makes Christian giving regardless of prosperity or poverty analogous to the Lord giving ancient Israel manna and the Most High God giving disciples indwelling eternal life in Christ Jesus, then giving a form of test, or better, provides a basis for testing disciples ... if the disciple has the mind of God within the disciple, he or she will give out of his or her prosperity or poverty—

One of the things I have observed over my six and a half decades of life is that a poor person is much more generous than is a wealthy or semi-wealthy person,

who tends to give out of his or her surplus, with my observation confirming what Jesus said,

Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And He said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

And the above is the situation that Paul addressed, with the holy ones at Macedonia being akin to the widow who put in her two mites, and the holy ones at Corinth being wealthy enough to contribute out of their abundance but not as of when he wrote having done so.

2.

Paul makes voluntarily giving an offering in the collection for the saints analogous to receiving the indwelling of Christ, with poverty and prosperity being equalized in Christ, but Paul also associates giving, even when in severe poverty, with benefiting the giver: the one who has wealth in this world will not take that wealth from this world whereas the Israelite who has nothing in this world will lack for nothing when leaving. Therefore both prosperous and poor need to give, this conclusion being a bit of an ideological hop but well within Paul's association of collecting foodstuffs in Achaia for famine relief in Judea to ancient Israel receiving manna when in the wilderness.

If there is a need to give—and even a benefit or blessing for giving—what is to be given and where?

Too many Christian preachers milk parishioners as if those who entered the pastor's, or the teacher's services were Holsteins entering a milking parlor ... Paul made asking for support a test of who, as a pastor or teacher, is of God and who isn't: the one who asks for support isn't of God. But this test of genuineness doesn't affect a Christian's obligation to give as he or she is able, and give to whom the Christian believes is doing a work of God.

Over the years, I have avoided the subject of "giving" to avoid appearing to be self-serving; for I do a work that is mostly supported by the productivity, past and present, of my hands, but that is partially supported by offerings made by less than a dozen people. I do a work without asking for support, and this is how I will continue working. And I wouldn't now write about "giving" if global economics didn't suggest that a worldwide financial collapse is a real possibility ... when money is worthless—this will be the end result of debt-based currencies—and when gold and silver can purchase neither wheat nor corn, the person who will survive is the one who has made a practice of giving, and giving beyond the person's abundance. And because it has been the habit of the person to give, this person will, during the seven endtime years, give to others from whatever meager stock of foodstuffs the person has. This person will give without expecting anything in return.

The immediate subject of what Paul wrote to the holy ones at Corinth was how they should imitate the saints in Macedonia in giving foodstuffs for the relief of the saints in Judea as famine gripped that region, famine that would result in rebellion and the destruction of Jerusalem within a few years.

Faithful Latter Day Saints [Mormons] have, since America's Great Depression, had on-hand a year's worth of everything the family will need to survive, a practice that has led Latter Day Saints to additionally establish regional food distribution warehouses from which they can supply emergency support to communities in need ... these regional warehouses coupled with individual family storage have allowed Latter Day Saints to explore the possibility of leveraging food into discipleship when inevitable cultural collapse occurs.

Leveraging food into discipleship can be reduced to saying, *If you'll convert, we'll feed you and your family*—and hunger will become a strong argument for conversion, especially when it was through instructions from their prophet that they set about storing foodstuffs—

The Pope hasn't told anyone to store a year's worth of foodstuffs, or given instructions to quietly takeover the food distribution systems of America. ... When the Second Passover occurs and there is general pandemonium in the cities of America and of the rest of the world, American supermarket doors will be locked. Shelves that only hold a few days' worth of food will be emptied either before or after the doors are locked. Regardless, within a week or so, there will be nothing to purchase and may well not be any means for purchasing food or fuel. A person can then expect to see urban looting spread outward from population centers until the looters meet organized rural resistance.

The Latter Day Saint practice of storing foodstuffs is publicly known, thereby making Latter Day Saint households targets when collapse occurs; hence these households have taken messages to ensure their safety.

The endtime years of tribulation are seven years long, not one year ... storage of a year's worth of foodstuffs will only delay the onset of hunger and want. Storage of seven years' worth of foodstuffs isn't practical. So at some point during the Affliction, every person will question whether he or she will survive that day, let alone the next day.

Survival will become a matter of faith—

The time to develop the habit of giving is when a person can give; for the day will come during the seven endtime years when the person will need God to miraculously give to that person his or her daily bread.

The measure used by the person who gives is the measure God will use to give to the person when want is present: if the person has given only of the person's surplus, the person can expect to receive little from God. However, if the person has given when in poverty, the person can expect to receive a sufficient amount to survive when the world is in poverty.

I routinely receive requests for moneys from ministries in, say, Kenya, India, Pakistan. Usually the ministry has an orphanage and is conducting evangelistic crusades and is bringing many to the Lord, or so the ministry tells me, but the ministry needs outside support because the people are poor and the children are hungry ... I believe that, indeed, the people are poor and that the children are hungry, but I don't believe that these ministries bring anyone to the Lord. What I believe is that most of these ministries do God more harm than good, and cause the name of Christ to be blasphemed within their own lands. If these ministries were truly of God, they would not ask for support from other men, but would ask God for support—and God is absolutely faithful in supporting those who work for

Him. No ministry that truly works for God ever has to ask other men for support. The ministry will make do with whatever resources God provides; for the poor will give from their poverty and that amount, however little it is, will be enough to do the work God intends for the ministry to do.

Again, the above are the terms under which Paul worked and under which I work and under which all of *Philadelphia* works.

It was the impoverished brothers that came from Macedonia that saw Paul's need and supplied that need when Paul taught the holy ones at Corinth (2 Cor 11:9), who could easily have supplied Paul's need if it had been in their hearts to give.

For the pastor or teacher to not ask for support as a test of genuineness doesn't address the need that the Christian, the parishioner, has to give out of both prosperity and poverty while the Christian can; for again, the day is coming when there will be nothing to give from personal stores. The resources of this world will be exhausted. And people will want to die rather than live.

I have little to add to what Paul wrote: it is absolutely essential that the Christian develops the habit of giving now, while he or she can. It is essential that the Christian continues this habit of giving up to and a little beyond the Christian's means into and throughout the seven endtime years of tribulation.

Money is easy to give. Time is not. Advice is easy to give. A helping hand is not.

Love is not easy to give to the person who refuses it ...

After having lived many years in rural Alaska, the opening lines of Robert Service's poem, "The Cremation of Sam McGee," still echo within my mind: "There are strange things done in the midnight sun, / by the men who moil for gold; / The Arctic trails have their secret tales / That would make your blood run cold" ... during the endtime years of tribulation, there will be strange things done by Christians and non-Christians, and the person who gives now, while he or she is able, will find that this person has the ability to give later, when even receipt of a glass of water will be appreciated by the peoples of today's industrialized world. Again, to give now begins or reaffirms a habit that will be continued into and throughout the endtime years of tribulation—and to give requires that the person has something to give, with knowledge of Christ being the ultimate gift anyone can give or can receive.

*

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright ©2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

* * * * *

[[Current Commentary](#)] [[Archived Commentaries](#)] [[Home](#)]