

The Corn of Canaan

by H.J. Vine

The Corn of Canaan is a type of Christ, representing His sinless perfection and His suffering and perfection through death and resurrection, and is the proper provision for the support and sustenance of believers.

Scripture: John 12:24

Topics: "Christology", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the significance of the Corn of Canaan in the Bible, drawing parallels between the miraculous manna provided in the wilderness and the natural corn grown in the land of Canaan. He emphasizes how corn symbolizes Christ, the heavenly One, who is the 'Corn of wheat' and 'the firstfruits' in resurrection. The sermon delves into the spiritual nourishment and growth believers receive from feeding on Christ, the Corn of Canaan, and the importance of meditating on Him through the Word for flourishing in grace and knowledge.

Transcript

"The children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn (or produce) of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn (produce) of the land" (Joshua 5:10-12).

In a former paper we have pointed out the miraculous character of manna--the corn of heaven, the meat of the mighty--given by God to Israel for their journey through the wilderness. The corn of which Israel ate in the land of Canaan was different from that, in that it was not then given miraculously but grew and multiplied naturally, in the ordinary way, in suitable soil. And yet there is that which is miraculous about corn, for it is not found in a wild state like other cereals which can be developed by cultivation, neither is there any grass which can be regarded as its parent form. Naturally speaking, if Joseph had not with God-given wisdom stored up the precious grain in Egypt, wheat would have disappeared from the earth altogether. Its place in nature has been unique, since the beginning when God first gave it in that once most favoured East; for with it came the knowledge to those whose life was dependent on it, that to let it go out of cultivation was to lose it, so that through seed time and harvest it has been reproduced and its place maintained in the earth as the true staff of life. Its vital element none can explain. Still it is; and in it--given of God--we have a remarkable type of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the heavenly One, and heaven is His home. Of this Canaan speaks. He is "the Corn of wheat" (John 12:24), and He, even on earth, was "the Son of Man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). And with the heavenly harvest in view in resurrection He is spoken of as "the firstfruits" (1 Cor. 15:23).

The Spirit speaks specially in Scripture of corn as signaling the blessing of God. When Isaac blessed Jacob his son, he said, "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine" (Gen. 27:28), and again he said, "Yea, he shall be blessed . . . with corn and wine have I sustained him."

The heart is impressed with the singularity and beauty of this remarkable type. The Lord spoke of Himself as "THE corn of wheat" (R.V.). He stood alone in His heavenliness, until through His death others should share His life and character. He was the One who only answered to the promised blessing of God, and He was divinely provided in an exceptional way for us; but His death was an absolute necessity, or we could have had no part in Him or with Him. In all His singular and solitary heavenliness and beauty He would have remained eternally beyond our reach, as He said, "Except the Corn of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone" (John 12:24). But, blessed be His Name, in His great grace and love He has been into death; He has died; and much fruit is the happy result, even according to His own word. "If it die, it bears much fruit." Therefore, in risen life, He is not only our food; we not only participate in Him, we also participate with Him, in the heavenly character, and in the out-of-death life, which is His as the risen Man. Praise God! our part is now in Him and with Him for ever! He is the Firstborn from among the dead! He is the Firstborn of the many brethren, and God has predestinated these brethren to be conformed to His image, to the image of God's Son.

"Thou wast alone, till like the precious grain,

In death Thou layest, but didst rise again;

And in Thy risen life, a countless host

Are 'all of one' with Thee, Thy joy and boast."

"Corn shall make the Young Men Flourish"

The Corn of Canaan is for the blessing and sustaining of the soul in the strength and energy of the resurrection life, which is the life of all believers as identified with Christ, but it is also that which God has given to cause us to flourish in heavenly things. He says, speaking of Israel when they shall be associated with Christ in the promised land, "They shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land. For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty! Corn shall make the young men flourish (or grow)" (Zech. 9:16-17). We are distinctly told that grace and peace are multiplied to us in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; and we are encouraged to grow in grace and the knowledge of Himself.

As being risen with Christ, and as having mortified the sinful members which are upon the earth, we are shown in the Epistle to the Colossians, chapter 3, how the saints flourish as being of the new man, where Christ is everything and in all. They put on bowels of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance. The peace of Christ and the word of Christ dwell in them with divine love; whilst thanksgiving and singing with grace in their hearts to God, show how those flourish who feed on the true Corn of Canaan.

We cannot feed upon Christ in this way apart from the Word. Paul exhorted Timothy to give attention to this that he might flourish in the things of the Lord, "that his profiting might appear to all" (1 Tim. 4:15). He was also to meditate on these things, and be wholly in them. Many lose the power of meditation in the hurry and rush of the day. They destroy the bulwarks of their minds. They lose the ability to discern between good and evil. The Produce of Canaan, rightly assimilated, is the food needed for this.

The Corn and the Dew of Heaven

It is a noticeable fact that, as with the manna so with the corn, "the dew of heaven" is immediately associated with it. This speaks of God's presence by the Spirit. It is in the consciousness of this we feed rightly. Blessing, sustenance, strength and growth surely accompany this. In Hosea 14, where God tells us of the restoration, revival and prosperity of Israel, He says, "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon" (vv. 5-6). In a spiritual sense, those flourish who feed on Christ, the Corn of Canaan, in the power of the Spirit in the blessed presence of God, giving attention to the written Word.

God must have His Portion First

A very important feature connected with Israel's appropriation of the Corn of Canaan must be noticed here. No one was to eat of the precious grain until a wave sheaf of it had been waved before God. The divine statute reads thus: "When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord . . . Ye shall neither eat bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God" (Lev. 23:10-11, 14).

This striking statute teaches us in a most explicit manner that the fresh fruit of the heavenly country, the Corn of the heavenly Canaan, upon which those who are risen with Christ now feed, is in the first place appreciated in all its worth by our God and Father Himself; and is afterward given to us for our appreciation. In simple words, that our blessed risen Saviour is first for the delight of the Father's heart and then for ours. It is meet that this should be the ordered way. But what wonderful grace is here disclosed! We are called to find our delight in the same perfect One in whom God Himself finds His delight! Great indeed is the divine grace that outshines here! We, who once groaned under the oppressive power of darkness, under the authority of Satan, the prince of this world, as Israel did under Pharaoh, should, being redeemed in Christ through His blood, be brought in faith to the heavenly land, and there be given to feed upon the heavenly fare, the portion of our God and Father, and of the saints in light!

"Yes, He has made us meet

With Him in light to dwell;

And there we taste the fruit so sweet

Of love we know so well."

The Corn Awaited Israel's Entrance to Canaan

When Israel entered Canaan they did not bring the corn up from the wilderness with them. It was in the land before they were there; nor had they to labour to produce it. The precious produce, the fresh fruit of

the country, was grown, gathered and garnered, and awaited their approach and their appropriation. It is just so with our heavenly food now. Christ risen and ascended is the food which divine grace has provided and prepared for us at this present time. Christ is our life. Christ on the other side of death, Christ in heavenly glory, awaits the approach and the appropriation in faith of those who are His own. The Holy Spirit is the power for this; and in holy leisure and liberty our rejoicing souls may satisfy their new desires by feeding on the full provision which is ours in Christ the Firstborn from among the dead, the exalted One at God's right hand, the heavenly Man of God's purpose and providing.

We have not to get up and get down to gather this food, as with the manna in the wilderness; for, as we have said, the natural food of this heavenly sphere simply awaits our appropriation. It is the proper provision freely given for the support and sustenance of those who are dead and risen with Christ, stimulating and strengthening them in the sphere of God's purpose.

How the Corn was to be Eaten

In Joshua 5:11 we are told of two ways in which this Corn of Canaan was partaken of by the Israelites. They ate "the produce of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn in the selfsame day." Both "unleavened cakes" and "parched corn" are explanatory of the previous words. Therefore it would seem that "produce" is the right rendering rather than "the old corn" of the land; for parching was a special treatment of the fresh corn of the land (see Lev. 2:14 and 23:14).

Leaven is typical of evil in the Word, and the unleavened cakes speak of the sinless perfection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The fact that the cakes were eaten on the same day as the parched corn reminds us that in feeding upon our blessed Lord in this day--"the day of salvation"--we are to remember that He suffered, being subject to fiery trial and testing, of which the parching or roasting speaks. In all things He was tempted and tried, but entirely apart from sin (Heb. 4:15).

We feed upon Him today as the ascended One, as the glorified One in heaven, the One who, full of heavenly grace, separated from sinners, is become higher than the heavens; nevertheless, knowing Him there, we are told to "consider Him well" who is there, and "who endured such great contradiction from sinners against Himself that ye be not weary, fainting in your minds" (Heb. 12:3). It is this food which strengthens and sustains the renewed mind of the believer.

Moreover the action of the fire had a very distinct effect upon the Corn of Canaan. Of our blessed, sinless, holy Saviour we read: "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make perfect the Leader of their salvation through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10, N.Tr.).

The Corn of wheat was perfect: Jesus was perfect. This suffering, however, tells us of that with which He had not been in contact before; but being so, how could it be otherwise than that further perfection should become manifest in Him? Not that the suffering itself added anything to Him, but rather that it became the means of manifesting His own perfectness. Wonderful indeed it is to ponder these further words of the Holy Spirit as to His suffering: "In the days of His flesh, having offered up both supplications and entreaties to Him who was able to save Him out of death with strong crying and tears (and having been heard because of His piety), though He were Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered; and having been perfected, became to all them that obey Him Author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:7-9, N.Tr.).

In this way, He who spake with divine authority, who commanded in supremacy unquestioned, came into testing circumstances, where the perfection of obedience showed itself in Him; as He, God the Son,

amidst fiery sufferings, learned this which was not previously familiar to Him; but being perfected--as Man having come through all in perfection--all now who obey Him who thus perfectly obeyed, find Him to be the Author of eternal salvation. This is indeed both blessed and wonderful.

This parched Corn, the Corn of Canaan, prepared by the action of fire, has a peculiar place in the Word. We might dwell long and profitably upon it; but in bringing this meditation to a close I will just indicate a little how it was used, so that we may ponder it over and "CONSIDER HIM WELL of whom it speaks.

1. In a very exceptional way it was a sweet savour to God Himself. A special meat offering to the Lord could be made of it; of "firstfruits of fresh ripe corn parched by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears" (Lev. 2. 14). Oil and frankincense were to be added to it.

2. It is the sustenance of the heavenly warriors, of those who are in the conflict of Ephesians 6. As typical of this, Israel ate it before their victorious warring in Canaan (Josh. 5:11). It was taken to the trenches by David to his warrior brethren who were facing the Philistines at Elah (1 Sam. 17:17). This incident sets forth for us the fact that Christ feeds those with it whom He is not ashamed to call brethren! Parched corn imparts strength and support to us. It also cheers and gladdens the heart. In a spiritual way God feeds the hearts of His warring' saints with Christ in glory who Himself has suffered and endured.

3. It is the food with which the blessed Lord satisfies those who are drawn to Him now, before they share in His glory above, as His heavenly bride.

This is beautifully pictured for us by the Spirit in the story of Boaz, that mighty man of wealth, who spoke kindly to Ruth, who afterwards became his bride, and set her, a poor and needy seeker after corn, at ease in his presence, and handed her with his own hand parched corn as she sat with the reapers, so that "she did eat and was sufficed" (Ruth 2:14). Yes, truly, Christ satisfies. He more than satisfies.

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,

More than all in Thee I find."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/hj-vine/the-corn-of-canaan/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net