

The Words of
Eternal Life

visionone
visionone.org.au

The words of eternal life

Victor Hall – Brisbane Christian Fellowship

1st Edition October 2008

Published by **visionone**

© Vision One inc. 2008

c/- Toowoomba Christian Fellowship
10 Old Goombungee Road
Toowoomba Qld 4350
Phone +61 1300 885 048
Email: info@visionone.org.au

For a full catalogue of our Christian music & publications,
please visit:

visionone
.org.au

Introduction

My plan in this booklet is to discuss something of the nature of the life that God is giving to us; the *zoe* life from above. This will involve an examination of what our lives will be like in the new heavens and new earth.

Clearly, there is much to understand and I will focus particularly on the apostle John's account of this life. In fact, we will see that John documents the discussion by Christ Himself on how this life is appropriated. John records this in his Gospel and epistles. This is truly the gospel proclaimed throughout the New Testament and this is the gospel that God is opening up to us here and now. We're looking at the appropriation of life from above, and we should keep this focus as the background to our lives from week to week.

The resurrection body

In other studies, I and others will be examining the eschatology of the resurrection body. The resurrection is, at this point in time, a prophesied event. No one has moved into a resurrection body, a body of immortality, except Jesus Christ. He was with the church for forty days after His resurrection and He was there 'on spec', as it were. Jesus was saying in effect, 'Handle Me and see, for this is what you will be. This is how it will be for you in the new heavens and new earth.'¹ And that body can eat fish, enjoy barbecues and drink wine. Yet it also has other food and doesn't depend on natural food and drink. It is completely physical, completely natural;

¹. Luke 24:39

but completely supernatural. And it has varying degrees of glory to it. That's what we're looking at when we're looking at the nature of the resurrection life expressed in a resurrection body. But for the purposes of this present study we will be confining ourselves to receiving the life from above in our mortal bodies.

Hindered from receiving resurrection life

What hinders us from receiving this life from above? As we will see, it's all to do with 'yeast' (called leaven in the Scripture) as a picture or a symbol.

We must be careful not to put the *wrong* yeast into the dough – the yeast of unbelief and disobedience. The presence of these elements in our lives will cause us to foam up and become sour. Consequently we will not be able to become part of the 'bread' of God.

The genuine zoe bread of life

On the other hand, the right strain of yeast is that of faith-obedience. When this yeast is mixed with the 'word of you' and has the fire of the Holy Spirit applied to it, the genuine *zoe* bread of life that is Christ, is produced. So we become firstfruits of it, having the firstfruits of the Spirit.

Three steps – Passover to Pentecost

This is the story from the Feast of Passover to the Feast of Pentecost. There are three blocks there: we join Christ our Passover in keeping that feast, His feast, and are born again. Then we have the feast of purging out leaven for seven days. This is the story of our lives – the Feast of Unleavened Bread –

bringing us to Pentecost where the word of our lives, the word of our sonship, is mixed with the yeast of faith.²

Worthy houses being developed by purging leaven

We should note that during this time of our lives, a time we have associated with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, worthy houses are being developed as the leaven of malice and wickedness, of unbelief and disobedience, is purged out. Then the true leaven of faith is being added and demonstrated. The believer, as a ‘worthy house’, participates in the body of Christ and begins to keep the Feast of Pentecost, able to make offering, presenting himself or herself a living sacrifice.

Able to priest and sacrifice to the fullness

This Christian is then able to priest and sacrifice again and again to the fullness of number seven. Remember, there were seven male lambs, two rams and a bullock.³ It was a whole burnt offering for the whole process (the principle of number seven) of the church age bringing us to the Feast of Tabernacles and then to the day of resurrection and the second coming of Christ.

A fresh appraisal of Passover – Pentecost

This proposition is for us a fresh appraisal of Passover and Pentecost. Using the symbol of leaven, we’ve been able to

2. Matt 13:33; Heb 4:2;6:5

3. Lev 23:18

show a negative element for Passover which is the purging out of what is wrong and false. Then, following on from that, as our participation in the Feast of Pentecost, we have a mixing of the word of our sonship with the proper and real leaven of faith and the application of the fire of the Holy Spirit to make a 'new lump'⁴ of *zoe-fied* bread. That's what we are to be.

Why He came

In the first eight chapters of the apostle John's account of the gospel, he presents to us Christ's own explanation of why He came. He came to be the bread of our life. Firstly, so that we could be born again in the inward man and secondly, so that He could be for us the 'bread', the actual material substance, of our resurrection body on *the* day when He ushers us into the new heavens and new earth.

Faith is needed

These early chapters of the Gospel of John concern the issue of faith; that is, believing to become sons of God. Jesus demonstrated what a son of God is and what each one of us can be if we 'look' at Him, for He is the very image of God.

Seeking a sign – not of faith

Jesus came as the *Zoe* Son, demonstrating signs, wonders and working miracles. Not only did these declare His sonship, but they also highlighted why He was such a terrible stumbling

4. 1 Cor 5:6,7

block to the Jews.⁵ He emphasised that the sign of an adulterous and unbelieving generation was that they sought only signs and wonders.⁶ If you are ‘following a sign’, it proves you’re adulterous and unbelieving.

Signs following

On the other hand, if a sign is following *you*, then it is a demonstration of *zoe* life from above operating. However, it’s not a question of dispensing altogether with signs and wonders. In fact, we’re moving into a stage in the body of Christ where there will be mighty signs and wonders, *following*.

The problem with the Pentecostal movement as it has proceeded, is that we began to pursue signs and wonders. In fact, signs and wonders were supposed to follow; but we weren’t as clear as we should have been on the ‘*zoe* proposition’, as I call it. We need to establish a balance.

And we can actually do this because the apostle John provides us with direction on how to establish this equation in a balanced manner. It makes great reading to go back and study the beginning of the Gospel of John to obtain the full picture.

They believed in Him

Jesus performed His first miracle during a wedding at Cana of Galilee,⁷ and before this He appointed His disciples.

5. 1 Cor 1:23

6. Matt 16:4

7. John 2:11

Everything was, at that point, 'lovely in the garden'! Jesus was with His mother, His brethren and His disciples.

Jesus 'manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him'. So, in John chapter two verse eleven, we have recorded the first of His signs and how He handled that issue before He began to come into conflict with the religious authorities over the matter of 'sign seeking'.

It sounds alright, but if we start preaching the gospel from John chapter two as if this is the whole story and don't read the whole book, we will be in trouble. Even before the end of chapter two, He had a problem with the authorities over this issue. And yet He was the one producing the signs and wonders and demonstrating the *zoe* life of the age to come. The glory of the age to come is the glory of the *zoe* life of God that we're to have. The glory of the Father, the glory of the age to come,⁸ the glory of resurrection power, everything that Christ was after His resurrection, was being demonstrated in mortality. And they believed in Him.⁹

'After this He went down to Capernaum, He, and His mother and His brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there for a few days.' John 2:12. Everything appeared happy in their relationships at that time. However, the issue as to who Christ was and what He was about to declare was soon to break upon them.

8. Heb 6:5

9. Matt 17:2;2 Peter 1:16-18

When belief turned to unbelief

We find that progressively in John's account, from the Feast of Passover to just before the Feast of Booths (which is part of the Feast of Tabernacles), more and more people were *not* believing in Him.¹⁰ So this means that in seven months, as far as many of them were concerned, Jesus had completely lost the plot! And of course Judas was already marked out as unbelieving.¹¹ Peter was still counted among the believers but his faith was weak. Jesus prayed for him that his faith would not fail.¹²

Many believed in Him and then turned away from Him. All this came to a head and ended in conflict. This is related to us in chapter six of the Gospel of John.

Let's now consider this issue of signs and wonders versus the 'coming of the word', for this will enable us to understand why they turned from believing in Him.

A house of merchandise

The Passover of the Jews was at hand and Jesus went up to the temple with His mother, brothers, sisters and others. We find that He made up a whip and turned over the tables of the money-changers and He opened cages and let the doves fly loose. And then He drove them out of the temple saying, 'Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business'.¹³ In other words, He was saying, 'I am against this

10. John 7:5

11. John 6:71

12. Luke 22:32

13. John 2:16

merchandising'. I also have a concern about that sort of thing for we're a heave offering people and that is the source of our provision.

So, as He was doing all these signs, the temple authorities began questioning Him. 'What sign do You show us as Your authority for doing these things?' John 2:18. It's interesting that the first question about a sign had to do with authority.

Calvary is the only sign

So Jesus spoke to them of the sign of the prophet Jonah. 'Destroy this temple, and in three days [and after three days and three nights in the heart of the earth ... the sign of the Son of Man in the true sense ... the real sign of Calvary] I'll raise it up.' John 2:19.

That's the sign, in fact the *only* sign that the Lord is interested in. That sign and the preaching of the word of the cross is the means by which *zoë* life comes to the sons of men. So right here in chapter two of the Gospel of John, He is proclaiming how it will be.

Moved from believing signs to believing His word

'But He was speaking of the temple of His body. So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture.' John 2:21,22.

But it was said earlier in this chapter that they believed the signs! God has to move us from believing the signs to believing the Scripture. And more than that, there is to be a believing in that specific word of a messenger to you, where

the word of God takes priority over a sign from heaven.

He had no confidence in their ‘faith’

‘Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing [Can you see the divisions coming now? He’s doing all these signs; they were believing these signs.]. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them.’ John 2:23,24.

So He was not believing in them. He was not becoming part of the national fabric. He was not becoming a national treasure! He was not becoming one of the prophets. He was not being greater than Moses. He was not being any of this even though He’s all of it and more, ‘for He knew all men’. He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man. So He was going to bear testimony of man and make man a negative sign and wonder in their dialogue with Him because they refused to believe.

Exhorted to seek true food

‘Jesus answered them and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal”.’ John 6:26-28.

False doctrine – a puffing up

The Jews adhered to a doctrine of the need for a sign to demonstrate true religion. As far as their doctrine was

concerned, God would support true religion with a sign from Himself from heaven. The Jews wanted a sign to demonstrate true religion and then to compare Him with Moses or other of the Old Testament prophets. They had developed a theology on this. Jesus highlighted the falseness of their doctrinal position. It was a false kind of leavening, a false word, a false kind of teaching. It was a false kind of faith that had no substance to it. It could not give them life. It would only turn 'sour', for sign seeking is an expression of unbelief and disobedience to the word of life.

The true bread of heaven

Jesus directed the Jews to understand what it was they were craving. Why were they seeking Him? They were seeking Him not for signs, but for life.

He gave them natural food and He then told them that He was able to give them spiritual food. He had the words of eternal life. He is the true Bread that came down from heaven which gives life to the world.¹⁴ Jesus was really suggesting to them, 'You're not coming to Me for a sign, you're coming for life'.

An evil generation

But there's something strange about this seeking for signs and it's symptomatic of a problem.

'The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.' Matt 16:1.

14. John 6:32

‘ “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign and a sign will not be given it except the sign of Jonah”. And He left them and went away.’ Matt 16:4.

And then He said, ‘Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees’.¹⁵

The good news of our sonship

Christ has come to us, bringing to us the word of our sonship. The Jews didn’t really understand that. Let *us* be careful lest we miss the point as well. This is a major focus of the Gospel of John. Christ is bringing to us the word, or the gospel, of our sonship. Because we are mortal and are perishing, we come to Christ to find life. But He says to us as He said to the Jews, ‘You didn’t come for a sign. You came, you ate bread and were filled; you found life.’

The sign of feeding the 5000

The critical question is, ‘What is the nature and quality of eternal life?’ In the book of John chapter six, Christ begins to explain to the Jews that He is the source of their eternal life. Christ is personally demonstrating the kind of life that He is wanting to bring to them. And the Jews were saying, ‘Keep functioning in the Moses mode. You are giving us better food than manna.’ Israel had become sick of manna. What they had here was fish and unleavened bread enough to feed more than five thousand. He fed them on miracle food; this was supernatural food. However, this was also perishing food fed to people who were mortal and perishing. It was an amazing

15. Matt 16:11

scene. Not since the time of Moses had Israel witnessed such a miracle. Christ worked a mighty sign and wonder among them. Not since Moses had multitudes been fed with bread like this.

Another bread – another life

So He was giving them life. And the questions for us, as it was for them, are, ‘What kind of life are we seeking? Are we only seeking God’s provision in this world?’ Christ says, in effect, ‘Don’t seek this miraculous natural bread that I have given to you. There’s another bread I want to give to you and it’s the bread that comes down from heaven, it’s the word that comes down from heaven and if you have it, you will live forever.’¹⁶

He has come to give us His life so that we can live the life of a son of God. Do we want the life that He gives or do we want Christ to be a resource so that we can live *our* life and fulfil our *own* agenda? It is this proposition that is the subject of the discussion in John chapter six.

A religious person seeks a sign

So why does a religious person seek for a sign? Why do *we* as religious people seek for a sign from heaven? Stop and think about yourself. Are you a religious person today? Well, we hope we are more than religious; we hope that we are believers, sons of God. But we *can* revert back to being simply religious.

And why does a religious person seek for a sign from heaven through a messenger of God?

¹⁶ John 6:32

Authority and supernatural capacity

What is a sign about? Firstly, it's about authority. We read that earlier. 'Tell us by what authority you are doing these things?' John 2:18. Secondly, it's about supernatural capacity.

Jesus was talking about receiving everlasting life, and they were beginning to understand the point that He had come to give them life.

'And the Jews said, "What shall we do so that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you may believe in Him whom He has sent". So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You?" ' ¹⁷ In other words, 'What work do You perform?' Again I make the point: in effect, the Jews were saying, 'Show us a sign to demonstrate your capacity'.

Put in a good word with God

To the religious person, a sign proves that the messenger is a 'holy man' or a saint. Religion will recognise holy men, saints and gifted messengers; the production or manifestation of a sign proves that the messenger is a holy man or a saint in touch with God. He is therefore in a position to deliver to us the life that we want. And by working a sign for us, he is demonstrating that God is favourably disposed toward us, and that he, as the messenger, is in a privileged position with God. He is able to put in a 'good word' to God on our behalf.

¹⁷. John 6:28-30

When I'm involved in funeral services I hear people talking of the dead in that manner. 'He was a good Christian. I hope he'll put in a good word to God on my behalf.' They often say to me also, 'Will you put in a good word to God on my behalf?'

Theology of leaven

So, from the Jews' perspective, the messenger had to be able to verify their agenda; that's what it came down to. They were, in effect, saying, 'The sign shows to us that we are still God's chosen people. Moses gave us that; we're the chosen people, we're the favoured ones. So, what sign do you (Christ) work? We can adjust our thinking somewhat to accommodate you. We will put you into our fabric as a nation.' In other words, 'You will serve our agenda. We have our theology to cover it all.'

And this theology was their leaven!

Jesus challenged their theology by suggesting that, if they had been able to truly hear Moses, they would now be able to hear Him.¹⁸ They were saying, 'If the messenger works a sign for us, then we will believe in Him and become His followers'. And Christ would have been relegated to another sect of the Jews – the Nazarenes.¹⁹ And that is what they said He was. But He was not that. He was their Messiah. He had come as the Word of God from heaven; He was the Bread of life.

It is *not* the faith of sonship that comes from the word of God when we attempt to gain faith from a sign. If we seek for signs to find faith we will definitely be lead astray. There has to be a

18. Luke 16:31

19. Matt 2:23

word that comes to us, that produces faith in us. This faith then produces its own sign.

Only Spirit gives life

Jesus tells us that to eat physically of His flesh and blood would be of no value. But the words that He speaks are spirit and life.

'It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. But there are some of you who do not believe.' John 6:63,64. Then He talks about some of His apostles and disciples. He talks of Judas.

His covenant initiative

God has taken His own covenant initiative toward the human race. The Father, Son and Spirit said, in effect, 'We have an initiative toward the human race'. He, sovereignly from Himself, has brought to us His own life and He's done this in the Son, giving His life to us as our life. It is a life that we can have and live for eternity. This life given to us, the Bible calls 'eternal life'. It is the bread of God, the food by which He lives, that comes down from heaven, and it gives life to the world. This life comes to us as a word from God. 'The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.' John 6:63.

The word has faith in its own capacity

And this 'word' comes calling to us, beckoning us to come and choose it as our life. As we are obedient to accept the word and its kind invitation to be joined to its life, the word illuminates our understanding, enabling us to believe that

what we have understood, we can realise. The word is the life and it defines the life that we shall live. So the word that calls to us also comes with the faith capacity required to live the life that the word is bringing to us.

The bread of God is the word of God that comes down from heaven ²⁰ and as we receive and are joined to it and it becomes part of us, it gives us its life. *This life*, which is God's life, we now live in the world.

Faith belongs to the life of the word

The faith of the word is that part of the word that has its own power of motivation. The faith of the Son of God by which we live, is that part of the word (and He is the Word), that has its own power of motivation. Faith belongs to the life of the word. It is able to express its own form of living.

Let's think of a practical example. 'Today I'm going to the beach. I've been invited by a friend to go for a picnic at the beach. What is going to get me to the beach? It's going to be faith in the word that my friend proclaimed to me. And because I have faith in that word, I'm going to enjoy the fruit of faith, which is the word that he spoke. That word will become substance in the fine food and wine I am served. The word is the life and the living. And the faith is that motivational element that encouraged me to go to the beach to have the party!'

When we look at the word, it is substance. And when we look at faith, it is substance. So they've something in common.

20. John 6:50

Faith allows us to enter the substance of the word

'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.' John 6:29.

So, you believe in the word; you received the message. And the message came with its own power of faith in it. That's the beauty of this proposition. The word is bringing the life, and part of the life is the power of that word which enables us to live the *zoe* life that is born from above. So I don't try to believe to live *zoe* by my natural faith. I live it by the faith that came with the word. So, when the word was joined to me (or I was joined to the word), along with the word, came the faith *of* it. This then allowed me to enter the substance of such a word.

The faith of God motivates

And every day, that same faith of God, as it were, wakes me up and motivates me to go to my office to sit down at my desk, pray and write these notes. The faith of God is motivating me.

When you think of the gifts of the Spirit that motivate, and all the things that God does that motivate, that which comes from the *zoe* life within you is the faith of God motivating you. Just move with it!

Working the works of God – the result of faith

We join God in doing the work that He does when we believe

His word, receive His life and do the works that are an expression of His life in us.

The accomplishment of the works that proceed from the life of God in us, as we cooperate with that life, is the result of faith. The life that springs from the faith motivation of the word has become our faith because the life of God is now our life. We believe the word that defines our life and work. The faith of the word is seen in the expression of the new life that we live, which is the life of a son of God.

Faith from a word, not a sign

This is our thesis in relation to the word, over against a theology of signs and wonders as a means to faith.

The point that Christ was making to the Jews (who had witnessed and participated in the sign Christ performed when He multiplied the five barley loaves and two fish so that five thousand men, plus women and children – maybe twenty thousand people – ate and were filled) was that faith to receive and live the eternal life that God gives, comes from a word that proceeds from the Father, and not from a sign from heaven!

In fact, the whole sign of multiplying the bread is pointing us towards another sign. That's what He's talking about: 'Do not work [labour] for the food that perishes but for the food that endures to eternal life.' John 6:27.

He is saying that faith comes from a word and not from a sign. Don't chase a sign, chase the word. Don't be a sign chaser; be a word chaser!

Substance bearing testimony of substance

He is saying that the word comes looking for us. It is sent from God through a messenger, a preacher of the word. When we hear, believe and receive the word as a living seed, then the signs that follow and confirm the truth of what we heard is the reality of germination and the multiplication of God's life in us.

The sign is the substance bearing testimony of the substance. That is, 'You will know them by their fruits'.²¹ In other words, the fruit of eternal life in us is the only sign we need. 'Test yourselves to see that you are in the faith', the apostle said.²²

An eternal conundrum

When a person does not believe (and I mean, understand, receive and obey) the word that proclaims and gives to them the life and inheritance of eternal sonship, then they become an eternal conundrum; an eternal confusion, an amazement. They become a negative sign and wonder.

We look with amazement at the illogicality of eyes that see and yet see not, and ears that hear and yet hear not²³ because of a heart hardened against the word of God.²⁴

Hard hearts – not predisposed to hear truth

Now we're digging deeper. Why do eyes see and see not and ears hear and hear not? It is because of a hard heart toward

21. Matt 7:20

22. 2 Cor 13:5

23. Jer 5:21

24. Heb 4:7

God. Jesus asked the Jews the question, ‘Why do you not understand what I am saying?’²⁵

I’m going to ask you the same question: ‘Why do you not understand what I am declaring to you?’ Jesus answered His own question by saying, ‘It is because you cannot hear My word’.²⁶ Did they need hearing aids? No, it’s just that the word did not proceed from the ears to the heart. It encountered a hard heart. The seed of the word could not enter the ground of their heart. They were not predisposed to hear the truth. Are *you* predisposed to hear the truth? Jesus said to them, ‘Because I speak the truth you do not believe Me’.²⁷

He came speaking the truth and they were not predisposed to truth. There was something fundamentally wrong inside. They were not compatible with ‘the truth’.

Predisposed to believing the lie

Jesus said that they were predisposed to hear something else and they wanted a sign from heaven to verify what Christ said.²⁸ They were predisposed to hear and believe a lie. A lie was more compatible with their nature. They did not belong to God’s family. Jesus made it bluntly clear to them.²⁹ They did not belong to God’s family for their fatherhood had come from the devil. And the devil does not love the truth; there is no truth in him. He has no desire for, or capacity to believe

25. John 8:43

26. *ibid*

27. John 8:45

28. *ibid*

29. John 8:44

and stand in, the truth. When he speaks, he speaks from his own nature and from his own resources, so he can only father a lie. That has the devil mapped out pretty well! Everything from him is pretence; it's hypocrisy and a lie.

And that's the doctrine of the Pharisees: hypocrisy, a lie. It has no life in it. We test something by its life, not its theology or its commentary.

Blinded to the true light

These Jews were perishing because they did not have the life of God. They knew it and that's why they came to Him. But they came asking for a sign. He said, 'You don't want a sign, you want life'. But it is obvious they could not hear that. What a conundrum; what a sign *they're* becoming. They were unable to understand, believe and receive the word that could give them life, because Satan as the god of this world had hardened their hearts against the word so they would not believe. And then he blinded their minds so that no illumination could come to them when the light of the gospel of sonship was portrayed to them and exemplified in the person and face of Jesus Christ; when it shone upon them. I'm quoting from the second book of Corinthians Chapter four verse four where Paul commented on this.

Jesus stood there as the *zoë* revelation of their sonship, portraying everything they were to become. He was a demonstration of the life they could have. It was all portrayed in His person and face. It was shining upon them. That's why He talks of Himself as being the light of the world. Christ's sonship was made evident to them through the signs and wonders that He demonstrated. He had shone upon them and

demonstrated to them what He wants us to be in the coming age.

Stumbling at the word because of disobedience

The sign of a closed mind is evident when they continue to beg the question by asking for a sign so that they can overcome their hard heart. 'Give us a sign so we can get over our hard heart and believe and receive the word.' They kept stumbling at the word because of their predisposition to disobedience. They could not understand that the word of God from Christ, was bringing their sonship to them. They sought to establish their own righteousness by their own works aided by a sign from heaven. They wanted to keep the agenda for sonship in their own hands.

Word is substance

The word takes priority over a sign. The effect of the word is more than the effect of a sign, for the word is the substance of what it says. Why ask for a sign of the substance when we can have the substance by simply receiving the word? So here's the clash. God wanted these Jews to receive the word of eternal life that Jesus was proclaiming to them. He said that He was the bread of life and that He had come to give life to the world.

His natural provision

So we note again with amazement the great sign that Christ worked when He multiplied the five barley loaves and two fish. Not since Moses had this kind of miracle happened;

multitudes fed through the miraculous supply of food. Their minds should have been open to the point He was making when He demonstrated this great sign. Christ urged the Jews not to seek after the natural food that perishes even though He supplied it through a miraculous event.

His supernatural provision

He then explained to them that He was able to supernaturally supply another kind of food from heaven; one that does not perish in the process of eating but remains a continual source and supply of life for ever. That's the kind of food we want; we can eat, eat and eat of it and it is never destroyed. They ate the miraculous natural food that He broke to them and it was no more. But this bread that He gives, we can eat and it becomes an eternal continual source and supply of life forever.

Calvary – an eternal fountain of life

And He broke that bread on Calvary. His body was broken on the cross at Calvary as our bread, our 'meal offering'. He made available to us His flesh as the food that gives us eternal participation as 'members of His body, flesh and bones'.³⁰ When His blood was poured out, He opened a fountain of life that flows for eternity. The *zoe* stream began to flow from Calvary to all men, for eternity. It does not cease to flow but has become our life as He gathers us up as members of His physical body which is now the corporate body of Christ. He didn't gather His blood and put it back into His physical body when He was raised from the dead; it's an everlasting stream of life. It is now His life given for the life of the world.

30. Eph 5:30

Christ announced that He was ‘the Bread of God that had come down from heaven’. He was the food source that would supply life to the world. He said, ‘I am the Bread of life ... My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.’³¹

Alternatives to faith

Paul comments on the motivations of Jews and Gentiles that are alternatives to faith. The Jews seek for a sign and the Greeks search for wisdom.³²

Faith is not generated from a sign, and faith is not from science and is not science. Science is not the word. Science is the study of what already exists. There is religious science that replicates the word and is a counterfeit that we repudiate. We have natural science which is an explanation of how we live in this world of mortality. Food, bread and medicine and all of those things are the concern of science. It is in the realm of general providence.

Word – the substance of what we shall be

The universe and all natural life were supernaturally created. However, all such will perish. The word, on the other hand, creates. The word is the substance of what shall be. The substance of the word becomes ours when we hear, believe and receive the word. So we are not preaching science today; we are preaching ‘the word’. We are proclaiming the substance of sonship; that which shall be. This cannot be obtained in a laboratory. There is no compatibility between

31. John 6:48, 55

32. 1 Cor 1:22

science and the word at this point. A 'fact and faith' film will not give it to you. Only the proclamation of the word in the mouth of a messenger can give faith and eternal life to you.

The word defines our sonship when we are built together

The word now is defining our sonship. We need to be built together as members of His body so that we can come to an understanding of our sonship. The word is corporate and individual at one and the same time. The word is Christ, the body, the church. The word is the substance of what shall be when we hear and believe and receive it. The word comes with its own faith capacity. The faith of the word is its own volition to express the life of God. Faith is of the word and is the substance already within us of what we shall be.