

1104 The Myth of Giving Thanks for Food - The Bible Doesn't Say So
(Verses refer to those in NASB95 unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)

We have seen Christians practice the teaching of thanking God before eating, thanking God for the food on earth. If you do it willingly and truly thank and praise God in your heart, and don't regard thanking the meal as a ritual, it will be a thank-you offering accepted by God. But you must know that the Bible does not require Christians to say thank you for meals in this way, it is just a convention. If we want to thank God for food, we should at least thank and praise God according to the teachings of the Bible!

Someone's first reaction might be, how could this be? Isn't this what the current churches do? Isn't it because the Bible teaches us to give thanks for meals? No, the current form of giving thanks for meals is just a convention, so please listen to our explanation and see what the Bible says.

To understand this, we must believe that what God tells us through the Bible is consistent. We must understand that the consistency of the Bible does not refer to the consistency of words. If it did, we would see obvious contradictions in the words. If we believe that what God tells us through the Bible is consistent, we will see what God wants to tell us through this obvious contradiction, which doesn't imply a wrong inspiration or a printing error. Therefore, the first thing we must look at is the fact about what God tells us through the Bible is consistent. Second, we use this biblical consistency to see what the Bible actually says about daily bread in the Lord's Prayer. We also discuss Jewish tradition and issues related to manna. Third, there is a lot of wrong information on the Internet. We must not accept it all without thinking. We must use the words of the Bible and the concepts contained in it as the absolute standard to distinguish. We point out where we can find such a previous article with a testimony about this. Regarding the concept of the Bible, we mean that, like the word Trinity, this word is not used in the Bible, but there is definitely a concept of God as a Trinity. We also used the Bible as the absolute standard to discuss the right and wrong of foreknowledge and predestination. We saw that Satan used a mixture of right and wrong words to seduce people, explaining why he said such words to Eliphaz the Temanite. The Bible promises that Christians will be filled with the Holy Spirit if they ask persistently, but it does not say when. What we should pursue is to be full of the Holy Spirit like Stephen. We also observe that as long as people open their hearts, everyone will have an opportunity.

1. What God tells us through the Bible is consistent

When a person truly believes that what God tells us through the Bible is consistent, he may see some things that others cannot see. I will give an example of what happened to me to illustrate this point. During a fellowship meeting, a sister mentioned a question I had before, that is, these two scriptures below seemed to be contradictory! First, God said to Noah, "And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female." (Genesis 6:19) Then He said, "You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the

animals that are not clean two, a male and his female."(Genesis 7:2) From these two verses, particularly in Chinese Union Version, we will naturally ask, were the clean animals that entered the ark one male and one female, or seven males and seven females?

Another sister replied that the former is talking about the kind as the added word says, and the latter is talking about the actual number entering the ark. For this issue, this sister believes that what God tells us through the Bible is consistent and knows that it is not an error due to inspiration or printing, so she sees things that we do not see. Afterwards, I also realized that this was in line with the words of the Bible, because the former went on to say, "Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive."(Genesis 6:20) This is indeed talking about species. The latter is indeed talking about the actual number. Otherwise, how could there be "Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar."(Genesis 8:20) If there were only one male and one female that went into the ark to be clean, wouldn't the clean animals become extinct because of this?

Let us mention another scripture, "Who knows that the breath (H7307, spirit) of man ascends upward and the breath (H7307) of the beast descends downward to the earth?"(Ecclesiastes 3:21) The original text here uses the word spirit. We will naturally ask how can animals have spirits? That's right, beasts have no spirit, only when man was created there had the breath of life from God, "Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."(Genesis 2:7) The first verse that mentions that humans have a spirit is here, "Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.""(Genesis 6:3) I believe that what God tells us through the Bible is consistent. I know that this is not an error in the Bible, but I think that in Hebrew, soul and spirit can be used interchangeably. In the Chinese tradition, spirit and soul are only spoken together, so the Union Version often does not distinguish between spirit or soul. To see the distinguish, one must read it in English or the original text.

We have previously discussed this point in detail in "2. The consistency of the Bible means that what God tells us through the Bible is consistent" in "1096 Yu Hongjie's Discipleship of Newcomers – Unbiblical Places (1)," and gave an example of an obvious contradiction in the Bible, and discussed what God was trying to tell us through such a contradiction. Those who are interested can go to the website "<https://a-christian-voice.com/>" and click "Understanding of Spiritual Life" to find this article.

2. What does the Bible say about bread?

The Old Testament says very clearly, "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD."(Deuteronomy 8:3) This was also quoted by Jesus

when He was tempted after His baptism, "...‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’"(Matthew 4:4) Yes, the Bible says that Christians do not live by earthly food alone, but also by spiritual food, both of which are indispensable.

Someone may ask, didn't Jesus say in the Lord's Prayer, "'Give us this day our daily bread.'"(Matthew 6:11) Yes, but notice that Jesus went on to say, "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; ..." (Matthew 6:31-32) If the bread refers to earthly food, wouldn't this be a contradiction for Christians? But we believe that what God tells us through the Bible is consistent, so the bread here does not refer to food on earth. Jesus' words will not contradict each other. The only logical explanation is that this bread is as mentioned above, including food on earth and spiritual food. In fact, we can also see that before this verse of the Lord's Prayer, everything talks about heavenly things, and after this verse, everything talks about earthly things. This verse in between talks about both heavenly and earthly things, which is very reasonable.

According to Jewish tradition, they will give thanks for meals, aren't they based on this scripture? "When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you."(Deuteronomy 8:10) Before this verse, it was clearly stated that people do not live by earthly food alone. They are just thankful for earthly food alone, and apparently that is not all! More importantly, we cannot say that Jewish customs are correct. If this was the case, Israel would not have been destroyed for so long before being restored, and Jesus would not have judged the Pharisees so harshly in the New Testament. We really need to use the words of the Bible as our absolute standard for discernment!

We know, "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, ..." (Deuteronomy 8:3) Let's look at a verse in the Old Testament regarding manna, "They gathered it morning by morning, every man as much as he should eat; but when the sun grew hot, it would melt." (Exodus 16:21) Based on this scripture, some people say that this is a spiritual principle. We must go to receive spiritual food early in the morning, otherwise it will be disappeared. It is good to encourage people to get up early and use the best time in the morning to read the Bible and pray, but the Bible never says that spiritual food is only available in the morning! And this also assumes that everyone's best time is when they get up in the morning, but some people's best time is not like this. Furthermore, it is very inappropriate to teach people to keep the law in the New Testament era.

What is then the teaching of the New Testament era, "Do not quench the Spirit." (1 Thessalonians 5:19) And it says, "pray without ceasing." (1 Thessalonians 5:17) If prayer is not done in the morning but is inspired by the Holy Spirit in the other time, can't we get spiritual food? Absolutely yes, we can get it! Don't forget, God has absolute sovereignty, "For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.'" (Romans 9:15) In fact, there are many things in the Bible. This has been mentioned in various places, and now we look at one more verse,

"But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills."(1 Corinthians 12:11) Looking at the context, we can see what all this means here? What I want to emphasize is that the Holy Spirit is one of the Trinity. Doesn't this scripture say that He has absolute sovereignty since it says "just as He wills"? In the New Testament era, as long as God is willing, we can receive spiritual food anytime and anywhere. It is not in line with the Bible to teach people that they need to get up early to receive spiritual food!

3. Use the words of the Bible as the absolute standard for discernment

We know that "All Scripture is inspired by God ..." (2 Timothy 3:16). When Paul wrote this sentence, the New Testament such as the Book of Revelation did not yet exist, so what Paul said was absolutely not referring to the entire New Testament. But Christians believe that the entire Bible is inspired by God, thus Christians must have faith. When a person completely believes that the Bible is inspired by God, he will not discount the words of the Bible or change the words of the Bible to suit his own theory just because he does not see it. He will know that it is our fault, not God's. It is not easy not to discount the words of the Bible! Let's look at an example of this below.

The Bible says very clearly in this verse that it has both foreknowledge and predestination, "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren." (Romans 8:29) So foreknowledge and predestination are two sides of the same coin, like a coin that has a head and a tail, but it is still the same coin. Martin Luther only saw foreknowledge, while Calvin only said there was predestination. They both discounted this verse and fell down on this point! In short, they are both wrong at this point according to the Bible.

In fact, the Bible makes it very clear that when a person who is recognized as spiritual makes a mistake, the impact will be very great. Let's look at an example. Solomon should have been a recognized spiritual man when he built the temple, but "For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods...Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods." (1 Kings 11:4-8) The high place he built was not removed until the reign of Josiah (see 2 Kings 23:13-14). At that time, Judah was about to be destroyed. We can see the impact of this mistake. How big! What now? Many people are debating whether foreknowledge or predestination is right. According to the Bible, neither is right!

Let's take a look at some examples of people, who says that thanks God for meals is correct on the Internet. Someone quoted this scripture, "When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them (the two disciples on their way to Emmaus)." (Luke 24:30) So their conclusion is, didn't Jesus want to thank God before eating? If we continue to look at the following verse, "The two men related what they had met on the road and how they had recognized them when they were

breaking bread."(Luke 24:35) We know that blessing is only for breaking bread, not for giving thanks for meals.

The breaking of bread was instituted by Jesus Himself, as the scripture says, "And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.""(Luke 22:19) This is also a blessing first, and then symbolizes the breaking of the body for us. Others say that Paul thanked God before eating. They quoted what happened after Paul was shipwrecked. On the ship, "Having said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all, and he broke it and began to eat."(Acts 27:35) That he gave thanks is for breaking bread! The early church was also about breaking bread, as this scripture says, "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."(Acts 2:42) They also "...breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart"(Acts 2:46) There is no saying that we should give thanks before eating, but we should give thanks for breaking bread, remembering that the Lord Jesus broke His body for us.

People have free will. We don't know how many different opinions there are on the Internet. Even if we knew, it is probably impossible to answer all the questions in this article, so we will finally look at a mentioned question that someone quoted. Look at the verses related to the miracle of five loaves and two fish, "Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds, and they all ate and were satisfied. They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets."(Matthew 14:19-20) So they concluded, didn't Jesus have to thank the food before eating? Let us look at this matter based on what God tells us through the Bible is consistent.

First of all, we notice that the sign of feeding the five thousand is very important. It is found in all four Gospels, but the sign of feeding the four thousands is not in the Book of John. It's not that it's not important, but that the Book of John only selects seven signs according to John's selection criteria, "but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."(John 20:31) So he said very clearly, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book."(John 20:30) What sign is it in feeding five thousands?

We see that the reason why Jesus showed this sign was different from what everyone understood. "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 6:26-27) He said very clearly, "...I am the bread of life; ..." (John 6:35)

So in addition to providing them with food on earth, the main thing Jesus wanted them to realize was that He was the spiritual food given to them in heaven, which is also the thing

He would provide for them, but the crowd did not realize this. Because after some words the next day, "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore." (John 6:66) Here, looking at the sky to bless and breaking the bread is the same as the breaking of bread ceremony. It is not a thank you for the meal. Breaking the bread symbolizes that His body was broken for us and became our supply. When He was crucified, "And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." (Mark 15:37-38) His body was indeed broken for us! The Book of Hebrews says this, "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh." (Hebrews 10:19-20) Judging from the consistency of what God tells us through the Bible, blessing is not about giving thanks for food, but breaking bread is also about providing us with spiritual food. Really, only by using the words of the Bible as the absolute standard can we discern!

We especially emphasize not to fall into Satan's (devil's) tricks. Didn't the ancient serpent (the devil) tempt Eve with mixed words of right and wrong? (See Genesis 3:4-5) In the Book of Job, when Satan attacked Job in the spiritual realm by speaking to Eliphaz the Temanite, what he said to him was also right and wrong. He didn't recognize it and thought it came from God! When a person sees a mixture of right and wrong, he will often not notice that part of it is wrong, but will accept it entirely, thus falling into Satan's plan.

Let's look at why we say that Eliphaz received the visions of the night is a mixture of right and wrong. The scripture says: "Now a word was brought to me stealthily, And my ear received a whisper of it. Amid disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, When deep sleep falls on men, Dread came upon me, and trembling, And made all my bones shake. Then a spirit passed by my face; The hair of my flesh bristled up. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance; A form was before my eyes; There was silence, then I heard a voice: 'Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? He puts no trust even in His servants; And against His angels He charges error. How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, Whose foundation is in the dust, Who are crushed before the moth! Between morning and evening they are broken in pieces; Unobserved, they perish forever. Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them? They die, yet without wisdom.'" (Job 4:12-21)

We first look at how the spirit speaks with a voice. These words seem to be correct. Indeed, "Can mankind be just before God?" etc. But it is not entirely correct to say that "He puts no trust even in His servants," because that is only for those fallen angels like Satan. Take the angel Michael as an example. He said in the Old Testament, "However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince." (Daniel 10:21) The Book of Revelation in the New Testament makes it even clearer, "And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war." (Revelation 12:7) If God didn't believe Michael, do you think this would happen? Let's look at the angel Gabriel then. The Old Testament says, "When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, 'Gabriel,

give this man an understanding of the vision.'"(Daniel 8:15-16) In the New Testament, "... the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth."(Luke 1:26) If the God did not trust Gabriel, why would He let Gabriel deliver the message? In fact, Eliphaz should have known from the beginning that the spirit did not come from God. How could the Holy Spirit make his bones shake?

If we look at the final ending of the Book of Job, we will know that the spirit is Satan. Looking at the ending in reverse, we will also know that there is something wrong with what the spirit said. This is a bit like a researcher who first predicts the results and then sees if he can deduce the results. If so, he publishes the results in a positive way so that others can understand. Isn't this the same as seeing from the outcome that the spirit is Satan? Since what God tells us through the Bible is consistent, we know that those words must be a mixture of right and wrong, and then it will be easier to find the wrong parts. I'm not saying that the Bible is written like this, but if you think about it from a human perspective, you can often see things that you can't usually see. Of course, when doing research, you cannot deduce the predicted results, then you have to give up what you derive at least partially and start over.

Let's look at another sentence, "...They die, yet without wisdom."(Job 4:21) This is talking about everyone's death, but "Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His godly ones."(Psalm 116:15) Therefore, not all saints die without wisdom. We can find a counterexample from the New Testament, so this sentence is wrong. This counterexample was shown in Stephen, "But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he (Stephen) was speaking."(Acts 6:10) Stephen was a man full of the Holy Spirit.

Then someone may ask, why does the Bible say that Stephen was still wise when he died? Christians are to be conformed to the image of Jesus as Romans 8:29 just said, and we also know that "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, ..." (Colossians 2:9-10) And Jesus Christ lives in us in the form of the Holy Spirit, and His fullness definitely includes wisdom, so don't be surprised that Stephen is a wise man. Let's look at the scene when he died. "They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep."(Acts 7:59-60) Isn't this similar to what Jesus said on the cross? "But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." ..."(Luke 23:34) "And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." Having said this, He breathed His last."(Luke 23:46) So he was a person conformed to the image of Jesus.

If anyone still has questions, we can look at other scriptures, "But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.'"(Acts 7:55-56) Stephen was the first martyr for the Lord. Jesus stood to greet him. Normally, "... He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be

made a footstool for His feet." (Hebrews 10:12-13) Stephen is the only person in the New Testament who is greeted by the Lord standing up. Moreover, how can a person filled with the Holy Spirit lack wisdom?

So what we should pursue is to be full of the Holy Spirit like Stephen rather than being filled with the Holy Spirit at least one time. Regarding that, the Bible promises that we can do it as long as Christians ask according to the Bible, "For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened." (Luke 11:10) This refers to the one-time filling of the Holy Spirit, because a few verse down says, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Luke 11:13) So how do you ask for it? The Bible says this, "I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs." (Luke 11:8) Persistence is the key word, to the point even making people feel shameless, so some English translations will say that his friend is shameless when asking.

Why do we say this? If you look at the previous verses, you can see that the man had told his friend that he was in bed and didn't want to get up, and his friend made sure he got up! For us, we know that we are sinners and do not deserve to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but we can directly ask the Heavenly Father with persistence and He promises to fill us with the Holy Spirit. Please note that it does not say when it will fill us, because God has absolute sovereignty and has a time for everything. He will choose the time that He thinks is best to fill us. All we have to do is ask directly with persistence.

A brother has given such a testimony. After reading these scriptures, he knelt on the ground and prayed to God one day, saying, 'If You are not fill me today, I will not get up.' In the end, he had to get up. This is because he did not pay attention there was no promise of time, but he did fulfill the direct request with persistence. In the end, although I don't know when, he was indeed filled with the Holy Spirit, because he did foreknowledge that even Satan could not do, and only God could do. If Satan could have predicted it, he would not have intervened in Jesus' crucifixion to complete salvation. He did intervene, because the scripture clearly says, "After the morsel, Satan then entered into him (Judas, son of Simon Iscariot). ..." (John 13:27)

When it comes to being filled with the Holy Spirit, we must be discerning and not be filled with evil spirits and thus do the work of Satan that we are not even aware of, just like Eliphaz the Temanite in the Book of Job. The work of the Holy Spirit will definitely make you believe in the Bible more, because the scriptures say very clearly, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." (John 14:26) Evil spirits often make people inflate their egos, thinking that they have seen things that others cannot see. This is how the Book of Mormon came about.

Back to the brother mentioned, I believe that he has at least partially fallen because he does not do some things according to what the Bible says and will change the words of the Bible, which is wrong. In fact, God is at work and Satan is also at work. Isn't that what Peter

said? "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."(1 Peter 5:8) You can't say that I know it has always been this way before and just accept it from now on. This is really wrong. Don't be proud because you are filled with the Holy Spirit, but humbly pursue being full of the Holy Spirit, knowing that life can only come from God. As the scripture says, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth."(1 Corinthians 3:6-7)

Each of us has the opportunity, like the members of the worst church in Laodicea, which had no overcomers, in the Book of Revelation. They shut Jesus out, but Jesus still said this, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me."(Revelation 3:20) As long as we open our hearts, He will work in us. You must know that God is infinite, humans are limited, and everyone makes mistakes. But God gives us an opportunity to repent, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."(1 John 1:9) A person who teaches others that he can only speak what God wants him to speak during Bible study will be a person who is so proud that he cannot see his own pride. Such a person should really repent.

In "3. Methods to discern our old self" of "1092 Hearing ears, methods to discern spiritual matters and old-self ones," we gave a brief testimony on how to use the words of the Bible as the absolute standard to distinguish. Those who are interested in this topic can go to the website "<https://a-christian-voice.com/>" and click "Understanding of Spiritual Life" to find this article.