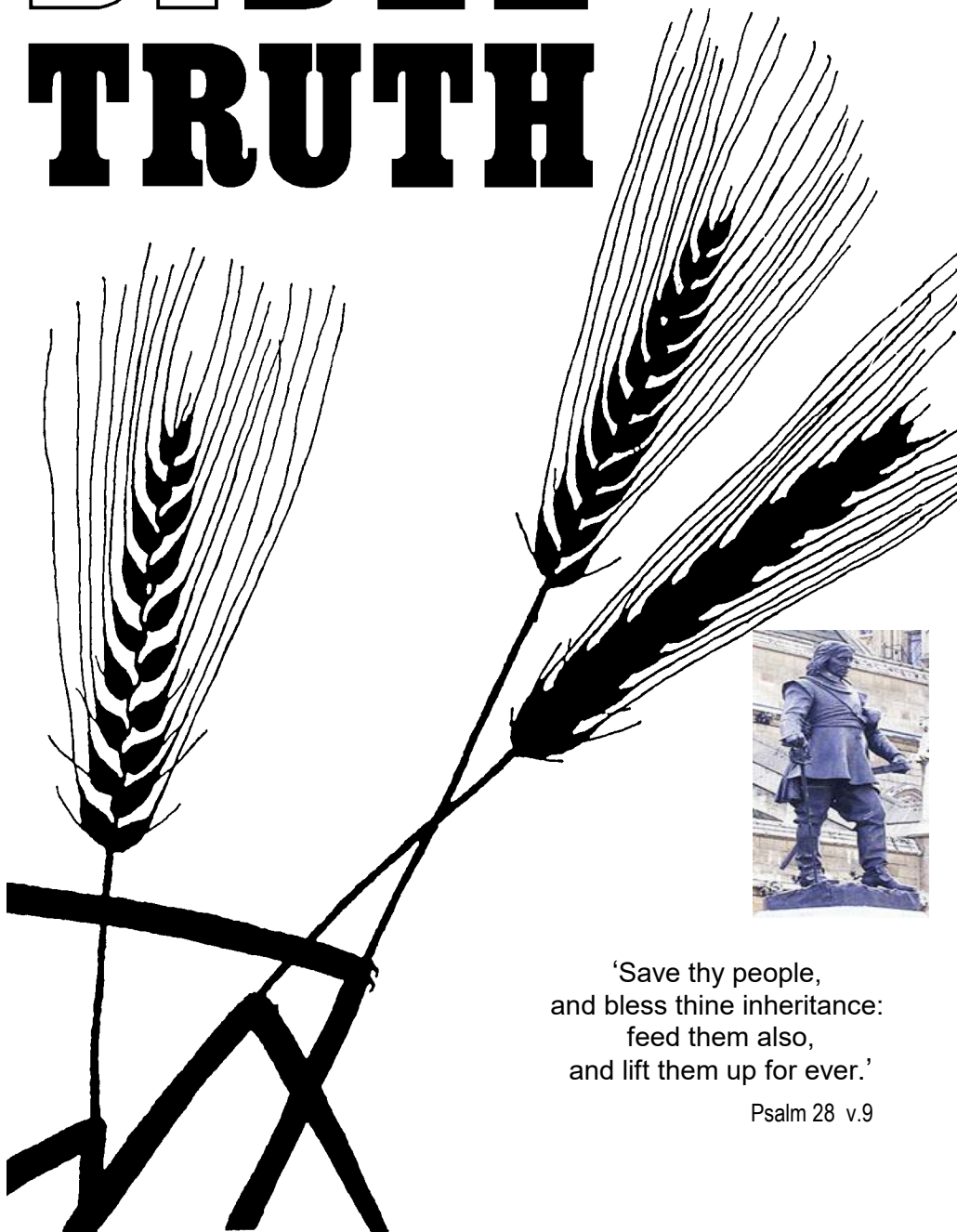


# BIBLE TRUTH

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‘Save thy people,  
and bless thine inheritance:  
feed them also,  
and lift them up for ever.’

Psalm 28 v.9

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# **OUR DAILY BREAD**

**by Arthur Eedle**

**'Give us this day our daily bread'**

Matthew ch.6 v.11 & Luke ch.11 v.3

Have you ever stopped to ask what this phrase means? The constant repetition of this prayer means it is in danger of becoming little more than a mantra, devoid of any meaning. Are you calling to the Lord to provide you with today's meals as though you were beggars, street tramps, homeless?

But Jesus also said these things. 'Do not worry', 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 'Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.' 'Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble' (see Matthew ch.6 v.34).

In view of this, why is it necessary to ask God for our daily bread? Or is that what it means? Time we did a little digging.

First of all, the Greek word 'daily' is most unusual. Grammarians call it 'hapax legomenon', Greek for 'only one instance recorded'. It is '*epiousios*', and has been a headache for scholars at least since the days of Jerome's translation of the Bible into Latin (AD 382-405).

'*Epiousios*' comes from '*epeimi*', a verb meaning 'to come upon', with the thought of 'that which follows'. Hence the noun is used for 'the coming day', as in Acts ch.20 v.15, 'And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios;' ('*te epiousē*'). This suggests '*epiousios*' be translated 'tomorrow', and this is favoured by a number of expositors. But an opposite opinion is held by many, based on an apparent contradiction with the Master's words quoted above, 'not worrying about tomorrow'. So how do we decide?

If 'tomorrow' is the true meaning, as I firmly believe it is, then what did Jesus mean when He asked us to pray, 'give us this day tomorrow's bread'? This is where I found expositors showing an amazing lack of mentioning the obvious connection with manna in the wilderness. The LORD said to Moses,

'... Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, ... on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily' .

Exodus ch.16 vv 4-5).

Then Moses said to them,

'... This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD:'

Exodus ch. 16 v.23

They were to gather twice as much on Friday, to ensure they had enough for Saturday's meals, because no manna would fall on the Sabbath Day.

The Hebrew for 'tomorrow' is '*Machar*'. Jerome wrote saying he had come across a Hebrew Gospel used by the Nazarenes in which '*Machar*' was used, 'give us today tomorrow's bread'. Likewise there is an Arabic Version of the Gospels where it reads 'our bread for tomorrow'. Furthermore, because expositors claimed they couldn't find the word in classical Greek literature, they called '*Epiousios*' 'hapax legomenon'. But in 1925, a classical philologist Albert Debrunner reported in a Theological Journal for 7th March, the word had been found in a Greek papyrus of a householder's account book listing the purchase of provisions 'for the coming day'. There can be no doubt therefore that '*Epiousios*' means 'tomorrow'.

Which leads us to ask, what did the Lord imply when saying, 'Give us this day tomorrow's bread'? What sort of bread was this? I suggest that 'tomorrow' is the 'Sabbath', and we are all living in 'Friday'. Jesus wants us to have an understanding of God's 'Millennial Sabbath Rest' before it becomes a permanent reality on Earth. The Lord Jesus wanted His followers to be fully equipped with knowledge of the coming Kingdom, thereby to know how to deport themselves in the 'Friday' of this world.

'There remaineth therefore a rest [sabbath] to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest [sabbath], he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief [as the Israelites did].'

Hebrews ch.4 vv 9-11

Words in [square brackets] indicate author's explanation.

'... To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.'

Hebrews ch.4 v.7

'... what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, ... .'

2 Peter ch.3 vv 11-12

'Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.'

Colossians ch.3 v.2

'Give us this day our daily bread' has therefore nothing to do with our daily food supplies. I'd like to conclude by quoting from Raymond Brown and Geoffrey Wainwright, two modern scholars who have also made a careful study of the Lord's prayer and especially 'epiousios' and found some 'hidden manna' (see Revelation ch.2 v.17).

***'Give us today the bread of tomorrow. Give us today the bread of the coming age, the bread that when you eat it, you can never die. What is the food of the coming age? It's God himself, God's word, God's Son, God's lamb, God's bread, which we already have here on earth, before the Second Coming. So what we're really saying is, "Feed us today with the bread of the coming age", because we are taught by Jesus not to seek the bread that perishes, but the bread that, as you eat it, you can never die.'***

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