

## The Land of Milk and Honey

By Jim Burks, Pastor of Trinity MBC

I live in the San Joaquin Valley, perhaps the most productive agricultural area on earth. It's variety of fruits, nuts and vegetables and other crops have grown California from the 7th largest to the 5th largest economy in the World. Everything one needs is here in the San Joaquin Valley. Of the numerous varieties of plants that are enjoyed here, the Tomato might be used to represent its crop diversification. It's a fruit, used as a vegetable but botanical, it's a berry. Often, the state capital is referred to as Sacratomato.

The San Joaquin Valley could be called the Land of Milk and Honey, but that title is already taken for God's people and reserved for the Promised Land of Canaan. Like the San Joaquin Valley, Canaan's produce was overwhelming. "(They)...cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff," Nu 8:23, as well as pomegranates and figs. This land was promised to Moses in Ex 3. Think about it! God takes His people from bondage and gives them a land that produces bumper crops. We must remember that milk and honey is how God described the land, but He was speaking of more than just crops. The terms are indicative of life that is ongoing. In Canaan, Israel enjoyed life more abundantly, physically speaking. Here, in this Land of Milk and Honey, Israel would REPRODUCE Herself!

Why, Milk and Honey? God may have wanted to whet the appetite of Israel, instilling action into them by these words. Or, God used Milk and Honey to reveal His care for His people. To Israel, we think that anything had to sound better than what Egypt offered.

There is tremendous production in God's meaning. Blessings, continuation and progress for His people, all fit into words, milk and honey. If we study the scientific processes of milk and honey, we may learn even more. We love those picturesque words, but we can't help ourselves, we must look further into God's promised provision.

First, let's see what the word 'honey' may mean. During each year the Honeybee pollinates the earth's flowers and trees, ensuring a great harvest. If you drive through the San Joaquin valley, boxes and boxes of Beehives cannot go unnoticed. The boxes are factories for the Honeybees. The Bee leaves the hive to pollinate crops, bringing back pollen to produce honey. Whether here or Canaan, it's a sweet deal for God's people.

The Bible is not a science book, so we don't find pollination or the need of cross-pollination because a tree is self-incompatible. But, the busy bee works itself to death fertilizing the crops by transferring pollen from the stamen to the pistil. What we find is larger fruit and more seeds within the fruit. You can Bee sure, the grapes the spies carried, were worked on by the Honeybee. But, the Bee works for honey, and perhaps honey is a symbol, a synecdoche, for all of Canaan, to represent a good and large land.

The phrase, Land of Milk symbolizes continuous life to be supported by the land through, and by the means of, PROCREATION. As a birth produces milk, so life is sustained by milk. The mother (land) is a wonderful care giver with plenty of nourishing milk. God's is saying He shall never fail to provide what is needed for His people.

Today, God's people have the promise of care by Jesus. Rather than physical milk and honey, we think in terms of spiritual provisions. Yet, we still ask, "Give us our daily bread," Mt 6:11. Jesus replies, "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, what shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" Mt 6:31.

However, on that day, the day Jesus returns to earth to establish His kingdom, we expect the land to once again be for God's people. "This land that was desolate is become like the Garden

of Eden,” Ezek. 36:35. Isaiah reports (62:4) that Israel’s name is changed from Desolate to Hephzibah (My delight is in her), “...and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighted in thee, and thy land shall be married. Until then, we seek God’s kingdom, which also produces a sweet and productive life, Mt 6:33.