

THE BREAD OF ANGELS

(also in 'God.Version 1.0' CD & book)

1997. For the August student service we had chosen the theme from Psalm 78:25 “They ate the bread of angels; he sent them all the food they could eat.” The gospel for the day was John 6:24–35, focusing on “the bread of life, the true bread from heaven”. Through cross referencing in my Jerusalem Bible I was led to Wisdom 16:20–29, and the central theme of the song emerged: “You gave them the food of angels, from heaven untiringly sending them bread already prepared, containing every delight, satisfying every taste. And the substance you gave demonstrated your sweetness towards your children... ..so that your children, Lord, might learn that the various crops are not what nourishes humankind, but your word which preserves all who trust in you.” Not a quick song, it required a fair bit of editorial assistance from Dorothy. She suggested one note change in the last line of the verse which picked up the melody considerably. She was also unimpressed with some of the words I had. Only verse 5 remained unscathed from Mark 1 of the song. Pastor Bob Kempe was the chief culprit behind the theme of this verse — he preached on 'The Compassion of God' (Mark 6:30–34) the week before. The musical beginnings of the song — its structure and overall style — started to develop after I heard Dylan's 'Knocking on heaven's door', though it's hard to see a connection in the final result. Dorothy and I both detected a borrowing from an old hymn we have affection for 'Now rest beneath night's shadow'. Dorothy's Dad always used verse 4 of the hymn after baptisms: “...let angel guards sing o'er me: this child of God shall meet no harm.”

1. You're like the sun that warms
me,
with wind and clay you formed me,
and yet we touch and taste you
here,
you are the bread of angels.

2. You are the heart of laughter,
the beauty we're all after,
the perfect joy in every dream,
you are the bread of angels.

In the desert they defied you,
they protested, they complained,
“Give us banquets, keep us happy,
entertained.”

3. Can any book contain you?
No system can explain you.
How can a myst'ry be defined?
You are the bread of angels.

4. But here you are before us —
to comfort and restore us.
With heaven's host we praise and
sing:
you are the bread of angels.

We are hungry in our desert.
You can give us what we need —
you alone are satisfaction
guaranteed.

5. Compassion is your nature —
no gift was ever greater.
Your blood and body feed us all,
you are the bread of angels.
(repeat last 2 lines)

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