

Eat God's Words

Joe Slater

When you confidently state your case, and it turns out that you are wrong, we say you will have to eat your words. Eating the words of God, however, is another matter entirely. God's word never fails. In Revelation 10, the apostle John had a vision in which he saw a scroll. He was commanded to take the scroll and eat it. While the scroll was sweet like honey in his mouth, it made his belly bitter (vv. 8-11).

Ezekiel had a remarkably similar experience over 650 years earlier (Ezekiel 2:9 – 3:3). Ezekiel's record makes it plain that the scroll contained God's words (3:4). No wonder it tasted sweet! The psalmist exclaimed, "*How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth*" (119:103). Pity the poor soul to whom Bible study is a burden! Both John and Ezekiel loved God and His word. You and I should, too.

Why, then, did eating the scroll turn John's stomach bitter? In short, because the news was not good. First, God's word revealed that His people (the church) would have to endure some of the most vicious persecution the world has ever seen. Multitudes would be martyred, especially by the Satan-inspired forces of Imperial Rome.

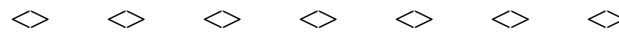
Additionally, God revealed in His word that He would inflict an awful judgment upon Rome due to her abuse of His people.

Ezekiel also received a bitter message of judgment upon sinful people. Neither receiving nor proclaiming a message of doom is pleasant; in fact, it will give you heartburn!

After eating their respective scrolls, both John and Ezekiel were to proclaim God's word (Ezekiel 3:4; Revelation 10:11). In both cases, their words would condemn the wicked while encouraging and strengthening the righteous.

Though we do not receive direct revelation from God today as they did then, we have His written word, the Bible. We ought to consume it (i.e. read it) with great enjoyment, for it is the sweet word of God. Then, like Ezekiel and John, we ought to proclaim that message to any and all. The sweet message of salvation has the power to save sinners from eternal condemnation, and to encourage the saved to persevere. On the other hand, the bitter announcement of approaching judgment warns the wicked to turn to God while there is yet time and opportunity. Thus, if they remain lost, they have no one to blame but themselves.

God's word is a balanced diet. Let us eat heartily, and let us share the feast with those around us!



Things Which Make For Peace

Thomas à Kempis observed, "All men desire peace, but very few desire those things that make for peace."

The fruit of peace is sweet. However, great effort goes into producing it. Sadly, many want the impossible: That is, they want the fruit without the work. To enjoy the fruit, we must "*follow after the things which make for peace*" and "*things wherewith one may edify another*" (Romans 14:19).

--Vern MacLellan (Wise Words and Quotes, p. 198).

Beholding

Recently I was in an airport people watching, which is an interesting hobby of many people. But what is so interesting is how so many refuse to look at each other unless it is absolutely necessary or there is considerable distance between them. I suppose it's a way to stay relaxed and to pass the drudgery of waiting for one's flight.

Occasionally, someone will catch you looking at him and say "hi," and a man just did, but it was intentional because he wanted to plug in his charger for his wife.

I once asked a preacher in Ukraine why people never looked at each other outdoors, but inside the university people were friendly. He said it was because of fear during the years when the KGB was such a threat under Soviet rule. Well, that made sense for Ukraine, but not for us in the good US of A!

This makes me think about the parable of the Good Samaritan. How could two of the most religious men of Judea turn a blind eye to a helpless, beaten, and robbed man? Although this is a parable, Jesus certainly wouldn't have misrepresented the callousness of many religious people then and even today.

Do you recall Jesus talking to the rich young ruler? When the man learned the cost of discipleship, he walked away because he loved his riches more than God. Luke said Jesus "looked" at him (Luke 18:24). When Peter denied the Lord the third time, Jesus "looked" at him (Luke 22:61).

Jesus warned people about "having eyes to see but seeing not" (Matthew 13). If we expect to follow Paul's admonition "as we have opportunity let us do good to all men...(Galatians 6:10), we must have our eyes open to behold them.

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)