

## Bitter Sweet

Joe Slater

In one of John's visions in Revelation he saw an angel holding a little book in his hand (10:1-2). The angel instructed John: *"Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey on your mouth"* (10:9).

One can scarcely miss the connection between John's experience and that of Ezekiel many centuries before. *"And He said to me, 'Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you.' So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey for sweetness. Then He said to me, 'Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them'"* (Ezekiel 3:3-4). In like manner John was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, tongues, nations, and kings" (Revelation 10:11).

God's word is both sweet and bitter. It was bitter for Ezekiel because thousands of his contemporaries from Judah would shortly join him in captivity in Babylon after innumerable others were slaughtered and Jerusalem was destroyed. It was bitter for John because Christians would be harshly persecuted even to the point of death.

But it was sweet for both prophets because the faithful would ultimately be delivered and God's holy will would be accomplished. Satan and his minions would be soundly defeated. God's team wins!

God's word is still bitter today. The way is difficult and narrow, and few are those who find it (Matthew 7:14). Yet it is sweet because Jesus' blood washes us from sin, we have a wonderful family in Christ, and an eternal inheritance awaits us.

Let us proclaim God's word in its fullness, the bitter along with the sweet!

## Glorifying God

*"Then Moses said to Aaron, 'This is what the LORD has said: "Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" (Lev. 10:3 ESV).*

My attempts to stress the greatness and grandness of God, and the seriousness of the term "glorify" as it relates to God, makes me feel so inadequate. I simply cannot find words to describe the glory that is due God.

Do we really stand in awe of God as we often proclaim? Do we fully understand the magnitude of what it means to stand in awe and to glorify God?

My late wife was employed at a large bank in the Chicago area. Once she and a group of other employees were lounging in the break room. A well dressed, important looking man walked through the room. My wife said, "Good morning, Shaw." He smiled and returned the greeting and chatted with her. After he left, and out of earshot, the other ladies swarmed around my wife. They were quaking in their shoes as they asked my newly employed wife, "Do you know who that was?" "Yes" she responded, that's Shaw Reeves." They said, "He's the vice president of this bank!" Little did they know that Shaw was a good friend as well as a member of the church that we were affiliated with. The point is, those ladies were shaking in his presence.

When we stand before God, knowing who He is, that there is none greater, do we feel any sense of shaking in our shoes?

It is true that we cannot look fully upon the fullness of the glory of God (Ex. 33:17-19), but we can stand before His greatness as did the Israelites (Ex. 24:16-17), as they stood before Him in fear (Ex. 20:18).

The ladies at the bank stood afar off and trembled in Shaw's presence, knowing that he was a man of power in the bank. My wife drew near and spoke with Shaw as a friend, but also with the respect he was due as vice president.

I admit my inadequacy to convey my feelings on the subject of glorifying God and the magnitude of the subject. As we stand before God, we ought to tremble in our souls that we are in the presence of almighty God, but at the same time, standing before Him as a friend who loves us and cares for us deeply.

God's holy nature demands our profound respect as we strive to glorify Him. Let's do our very best to not fall short.

--Roy Crutcher (Mt. Carmel, IL)

## The Daily Grind

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them" (Revelation 21:3).

Just about anyone who knows me knows that I enjoy McDonald's coffee. For years, my morning routine has been "a medium cup with one cream." One morning, I stopped by and placed my daily order. A few moments later (down the road), I took the first sip. It tasted like a milk shake! I checked the label and found it contained twelve sugars and twelve creams. I had been given the wrong order. A friend later commented, "Imagine the look on the other person's face." True!

Such mishaps are just part of everyday life. Anyone breathing has either made a mistake or has been on the receiving end of someone else's blunder. For example, an order at a restaurant may not be exactly to our liking, or a mail order item may have been the wrong color, the wrong size, or the wrong item altogether. At times, mistakes may be monetary. Dave Ramsey, a financial guru from Nashville, describes his financial mishaps as "having zeroes at the end." Ouch!

I'm delighted to know that brighter days lie ahead. In the book of John, Jesus describes His mission to a group of imperfect, mistake-prone disciples. That mission? To go and prepare a place for believers (14:3) – an eternal home. In this home, there will be no death or mourning or crying or pain... not even tears (Revelation 21:4). Also, *"the old order of things has passed away"* (4). Praise God that Jesus is preparing a place for faithful but imperfect believers – this writer included!

--Kenny Westmoreland (Celina, TN)