

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

THE TASTE OF GRACE

If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

I Peter 2:3

One thing that is made abundantly clear throughout the word of GOD is that the Kingdom of GOD cannot be received by natural men, in the state in which they are born from their mother's womb. Paul said, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." (1Cor 15:50) He is, here, commenting upon the resurrection of the dead and the manner in which those who are raised from the dead come forth into the state of incorruption which the saints shall enjoy for ever.

Yet this picture of the resurrection at the last trump, is a vivid illustration of that which the LORD JESUS told Nicodemus. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) Even as the saints of GOD are given a new body in the day of the resurrection, so too must a man be "born from above" (i.e.; partake of a spiritual birth) in order to "see" (i.e.; experience or enter) the Kingdom of GOD in the present time.

Man in his natural state does not perceive nor can he benefit from those things which are spiritual in nature which only exist in this Kingdom which is not made with hands. While his senses (i.e.; sight, taste, hearing, touch, smell) are operative in the natural realm into which all men are born by natural birth, he is devoid of the same senses (which operate in the spiritual realm) apart from the occurrence of the "new birth"

Unless a man is blind he can look at his surroundings and describe what it is that he sees. Unless he is deaf he can hear the sounds around him. As well, his sense of touch and smell all form a very basic function which adds to his awareness of his surroundings. It is his sense of taste, however, that adds the greatest dimension of enjoyment to his life.

Man needs basic nutrition in order to survive, but it has pleased the LORD to guide HIS creation to eat not simply to exist but to enjoy what it is that is eaten.. Even hogs and chickens, which will eat almost anything, will balk at the taste of certain foods. Among mankind, it is primarily the taste of food that gives man the impetus to eat it and to desire the things that he consumes. This sometimes works to his detriment, such as is the case with donuts, cake, cookies and ice cream. Yet it also works to his benefit as he learns to appreciate the tastes of many other foods which are beneficial and useful to the body.

Very few children really like to eat vegetables unless they are taught to do so. In time however most grow to have fondness for them when they are exposed to them and they are encouraged to eat them. As we observe by the foods of different cultures, we come to understand, that the taste of those things which we prefer is largely because we eat them regularly.

Yet the reality is that some, naturally, prefer certain "tastes" while others may find the same ones offensive. Some folks really like oysters. They get excited about the prospect of opening one up and sucking up the slippery contents with great abandon. On the other hand someone like myself wonders why anyone would ever eat such a thing, much less find them desirable. They are said to have a "taste" for them, which I do not possess. No amount of persuasion,

enhancements (hot sauce, crackers, etc.), or descriptions of their “deliciousness” can change my perspective. I simply have no “taste” for them.

This is exactly true when we consider the things of the “Kingdom of GOD”. Unless and until a man is given a “taste” for the food of that kingdom, no one can cause him to desire it. Yet when the LORD is pleased to give a man new “taste buds”, by visiting HIM with a heavenly birth, and he has thereby “*tasted that the LORD is gracious.*”. he then will desire to feed at HIS table continually. This is what the LORD described, when HE said, “*I have meat to eat that ye know not of.-----My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*” (John 4:32-34)

Peter is setting forth both an exhortation and a declaration in this passage of scripture. He says, “*As newborn babes, desire the sincere (i.e. pure and unadulterated) milk (i.e. essence) of the word that ye may grow (i.e.; be strengthened or enlarged) thereby.*” (1Pet 2:2) A newborn infant comes forth from the womb with a desire to eat but not just any food is suitable for him. The LORD designed the milk of his mother’s breast to be the perfect food for a newborn and HE has instilled in that child an instinct (or hunger) which can only be satisfied by it.

While we encourage a newborn to suckle at his mother’s breast, it is because he is given a desire to eat (by the simple fact that he is born) that forms his impetus to do so. In the same fashion we encourage those who are “born again” to “feed” upon the pure and unadulterated “WORD of GOD”, but it is the desire which is given them by the SPIRIT of GOD “*working in them both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure*” that causes them to enjoy that which is given to them.

In the natural realm, men have developed various “infant formulas” which are designed to mimic a mothers “breast milk”, but they cannot supply that which is most beneficial to the child. A child is best served when he gets his nourishment directly from his mother’s breast. So too, it is in the spiritual realm. It is good to have “teachers” and “instructors” who faithfully set forth the scriptures as they are recorded in the Bible, but only as the “newborn babe” receives that “WORD” directly from the SOURCE, can he be truly benefited. “*I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.*” (Psa 119:99) This is not a boast on the part of David, of his great knowledge, but rather a realization that only the LORD can impart true wisdom and apply that which HE might be pleased to send by the lips of a “teacher”.

Peter’s exhortation is given as an encouragement to the sons of GOD, to feed upon the “word of GOD” just like an infant desires his mother’s milk, knowing that it is there, alone, that he can find nourishment to grow in grace and the knowledge of the LORD, as he tells them in his second epistle (see 2 Pet.3:18). It is here that he warns them about those who would “adulterate” or “wrest” the word of GOD as he says, “*They that are unlearned and unstable wrest (i.e. twist or corrupt the meaning), as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.*” (2 Pet 3:16-17)

There are a multitude of “teachers” in the present day (as there were in those days) who walk in craftiness and handle the Word of GOD deceitfully. (see 2 Cor.4:2). They are those who have an agenda other than the preaching of JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified. They use the scriptures under the guise of teaching “life skills”, “how to keep the law of GOD”, “how to be positive and joyful”, have “power in prayer”, delving into the realm of angels and demons, signs and wonders, and many forms and schemes (too numerous to mention) of prophecies which supposedly apprise men of future things and coming events.

None of these things can truly profit the children of GOD who (as Peter makes his declaration) “*have tasted that the LORD is gracious.*” A man who has gotten a taste of grace, can be satisfied with nothing else but the clear and unadulterated “WORD of GOD” which declares that there is “*therefore now no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS.*” They grow in grace as they feed upon grace, grace, and more grace. This is the comfort of the sons of GOD. “*That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*” (1Cor 1:29-31) CHRIST is ALL. mam