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#28 The Little Book John Ate

“Then the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard again speaking with me, and saying, ‘Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land.’ So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, ‘Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.’ I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. And they said to me, ‘You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings’” (Revelation 10:8-11).

The book John saw in the hand of this Mighty Angel was the exact same little book John described in chapter five. John’s first peek at the book was when it was closed. But this time, it is opened in the hand of the ONE worthy to open it. This passage is much like what we see in Ezekiel:

“Then I looked, and behold, a hand was extended to me; and lo, a scroll was in it. When He spread it out before me, it was written on the front and back, and written on it were lamentations, mourning and woe” (Ezekiel 2:9-10).

“Then He said to me, ‘Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.’ So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll. He said to me, ‘Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you.’ Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth” (Ezekiel 3:1-3).

Just as Ezekiel had been commanded to go to the house of Israel and deliver His divine message, John was commanded to go and take the little book out of the hand of the Mighty Angel – both men were obedient. John is then told to EAT the book, which he does. John finds the taste of the little book to be the same savor as Ezekiel’s, sweet as honey. But the moment it hit his stomach, he became sick with bitterness. There seems to be a bit of a paradox here. As most know, there is nothing sweeter than the message of grace, redemption, and the peace of Jesus; but there is nothing quite as bitter as the judgment of God. *“To eat”* is a biblical term for taking ownership of a particular message or truth. When John eats this little book, he quickly realizes that the Word of God has been sweet up to this point. But something is about to change – the day of bitterness (Judgment) is upon all of creation.

As with Ezekiel, it is not all sweet to be a fully consecrated child of God – a child who does what he is told. Did John really eat this book? Since I work to stray from biblical symbolism and cling more to the mandates and absolutes of God, I say, “Yes.” If John was “commanded” to do something, be assured the beloved of Jesus did exactly what he was told. Yes, there is pain, suffering, bitterness, heartache, lamentations, and agony when we see and fully realize the Judgment God has warned us about for thousands of years. God’s message of Judgment is bitter; it brings on suffering and fear. But, needless to say, it **must** happen. As we study the remainder of the book of Revelation, it is critical we maintain the balance of knowing *God is Love*, as well as, an *all-consuming fire*. After all, the harsh realities of God’s warnings of His revenge and Judgment are what typically stop people from reading this magnificent book.

Jesus said in John 6:53:

“So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him’” (John 6:53-56).

Due to the fact that Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1), the John 6 passage gives us special insight into what John’s message in Revelation is all about. I believe that when John was asked to eat the Words of the little book, he was demonstrating, in *real time*, the truths of John 6. The Word was made flesh in order for us to eat of Him by taking Him into our minds and hearts. The Word is alive and those who eat it are sweeter than honey and those who eat it become bitter in the mouths of those who refuse to accept Jesus. All those who share the blunt truths regarding the harsh judgments of God, or His acts of revenge, should expect bitter responses.

John ate the little book. It was sweet in his mouth and bitter in his soul. Embracing the full meaning of this message and calling. The message is sweet and the calling not so sweet:

“And they said to me, ‘You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings’” (Rev. 10:11).

John certainly knew this was not going to go well. Prophecies can provoke gladness and sorrows, peace and violence. Even though the message will be sweet joy to those who want to hear the Truth – it also will be horrible news to those who do not want to be held in account.

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