



THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

"The BSV Bible – Bitter-Sweet Version"
10:8-11

A few of guys in the Bible have to eat God's Word:

- Ezekiel was commanded to eat a scroll (Ezekiel 2 & 3).
- Jeremiah said he found God's words and ate them (Jeremiah 15:16).
- So is John in our text in the Revelation.

It's a simple illustration. You are to take-in the Word for yourself, then give it out.

The Word of God is powerful, it is alive, it does not return void. God uses it despite the failures of His servants. He even uses it in the mouths of nonbelievers.

Ideally, however, we are to ingest God's Word, be nourished by it, then grow in order to provide an example to go along with our exposition and exhortation.

It's like those ads for NutriSystem (in a sense). There is a before and after. The product has a sufficiency, but you want to see it have real results.

If Mike Golic says, "Eat NutriSystem," but looks just the same after as he did before, you're less inclined to sign-on.

If God's Word isn't changing us – why would folks sign-on?

In verse seven John was told **the mystery of God would be finished**. A Bible mystery is something that cannot be known unless and until God reveals it. The mystery being revealed is that God will establish His kingdom on earth after a long delay.

John was the first century disciple called upon to reveal the mystery to the world. While you read his experience with the word of God, consider that **you** are God's twentieth century disciple who is called upon to reveal the mystery to the world:

- In Matthew 13:11 and Luke 8:10 Jesus tells His first century disciples that **To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God...**
- Then the apostle Paul tells you in First Corinthians 4:1 that you are **servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God**.

As we ingest and digest God's Word for ourselves it strengthens us to give it out to others, inviting them to the table, so to speak.

Revelation 10:8 Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth."

God calls upon John to become a participant. Up till now he had been a spectator. The direction you want to be going in is from spectator to participant.

Have you ever been asked to participate in something for the Lord for which you felt totally inadequate? If I were John, I'd have been blown away just to be a witness of these things. God does and will ask you to participate in ways you feel totally inadequate. He wants to be your strength and sufficiency in those things.

Revelation 10:9 So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth."

The word of God is often compared to food. You might say there are four spiritual food groups:

- It's like bread - **Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord** (Deuteronomy 8:3).
- Honey - **How sweet are your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth** (Psalm 119:103).
- Meat – **I have fed you with milk, and not with meat...** (First Corinthians 3:2 KJV). (See also Hebrews 5:13-14).
- Milk – **As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word that you may grow thereby** (First Peter 2:2).

The Bible nourishes our spirit the way food nourishes our body.

The description of the Word as bitter-sweet surprises us at first. But it is always that way. John himself was experiencing the sweet joy of having Jesus revealed to him, of seeing the future rule of Jesus on earth. Yet he was exiled on the Island of Patmos, being persecuted for the word of God.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ is inherently bitter-sweet. It is full of beasts and bowls and battles while simultaneously promising a blessing for reading it. Everything in it reveals God's mercy towards Christ-rejecting men but also His wrath against sin and His judgment upon it.

All of God's servants were called to this bitter and sweet experience.
You will be no exception!

John's experience will be yours if you follow his example:

Revelation 10:10 Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.

Exactly as promised. There are many wonderful promises in God's Word. Some of you have some sort of promise box from which you can draw a promise from God's Word each day. Very few of them have bitter promises, like, **In the world you will have tribulation, or, If the world hates you, know that it hated Me before it hated you.**

Revelation 10:11 And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."

John had been told (in verse four) to **seal up** a portion of the revelation he was receiving. Eating the little book was a dramatic event. He may have thought his visions were coming to their end.

Nope! There was a lot more to come. We're only at the mid-point of the Tribulation. We haven't met God's two witnesses; or the antichrist; or the false prophet. We haven't seen the global, cashless economic system; or the attempt at a one-world government and religion. We haven't seen the rise and fall of another mystery, Babylon, as both a city and a system.

Most importantly we haven't seen the return of Jesus Christ in His Second Coming to establish His kingdom on the earth. Or the final disposition of the saved and the lost to Heaven and to Hell for all eternity.

Warren Wiersbe suggests that the illustration of eating the Word is also intended to remind us to make the Word flesh; to make it incarnate for others to see.

How do turn the Word into something others see in us? I see three things in John: God's word was his priority, it gave him his perspective, and it is what he proclaimed.

You know that you need food to survive. In the same way, the Bible is necessary to spiritual survival. It is even more necessary than your daily food! Job said,

Job 23:12 I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary *food*.

When I was first saved I heard a radio Bible teacher say, “No Bible, no breakfast!” It’s a good attitude to have – one that tends to fade over time.

We often think in terms of intellect rather than ingestion when it comes to the Bible. Thus I read and study and feel I am storing-up the Word. I am; **Thy word have I hidden in my heart** is a true assessment.

But I must also think of the Bible the way I think of food. I can’t eat for a month all at once!

Nutritionists, in fact, tell you to eat several – as many as six – small meals each day.

The priority of the Word is foundational. Next, God’s word gives you perspective for living. As we said, your life will be both sweet and bitter.

Two verses that give you a good overall perspective for living are Romans 8:28 and Philippians 4:12.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

We know means we understand that because God has begun in us a good work He will continue to perform it every day until He completes it when our bodies are redeemed. Thus **all things** – not just some things – **work together**. God is sovereign and is managing the universe in such a way as to complete His work in us.

All things is a lot! It involves **all things** in the material universe as well as **all things** in the supernatural realm. **All things** are

innumerable and reveal that God is capable of limitless providence on our behalf.

Even when **all things** include bad things they **work together for good**. God can use them to grow us, to further us, to mature us.

Think of Joseph in the Old Testament. Hated by his brothers... Thrown into a pit by them... Sold into slavery by them... Thrown into jail by his Egyptian master... Forgotten in the jail... He eventually interpreted Pharaoh's dream and became second ruler of Egypt. God used him to save his family, and the line of the Messiah, from the drought and famine. He would say of it all, "You meant it for evil but God meant it for good." It worked together for good.

The only ones who can claim that life has such purpose are **those who love God... those who are the called according to His purpose**.

Those who love God in this context refers to believers in Jesus Christ. The apostle John wrote, **we love, because He first loved us**. He loved us on the Cross and died to forgive us our sins. We must realize and respond to His love. Only when we do are we **those who love God**.

The next phrase, **the called according to His purpose**, is going to be expanded in the following verses. It is the teaching of God's election and of His predestination. Big subject. Short answer: Once you are among the elect of God, you are predestined to be like Jesus Christ.

Which brings us to Philippians 4:12,

Philippians 4:12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

In verse eleven Paul says he had learned, whether abounding or being abased, to be content. Everything, then, is working together for your good. Whatever end of the blessing-buffeting spectrum you are on you can have the perspective it is God working to complete in you the work He started of making you like His Son.

Next, you are to proclaim the word. John was told to **prophecy again**. **You** are similarly told,

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

- **Convince** has to do with delivering the message.
- **Rebuke** has to do with personalizing the message.
- **Exhort** has to do with applying the message.
- All of this is done in the attitude of **longsuffering** as you **teach**.

Teaching" can be the formal teaching of the pastor; but it also refers to the informal sharing that all of us do with everyone we encounter.

This is the work of *every* believer: To share the gospel as God gives the opportunity, wherever you might find yourself. The gospel is the supreme need of every man, woman, and child.

Regular meals with God's Word on the menu will result in priority, perspective, and proclaiming.

Your life and ministry will be bitter-sweet until the coming of the Lord for you. You are the BSV – the Bitter-Sweet Version.

In the future, after the events of the Revelation are finished, it's all peaches and cream!

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