

1st PETER BIBLE STUDY

1 Peter 2:1-10

Lesson #8

Introduction

Speak briefly in recap of previous verses. Lay foundation for these first verses of chapter two.

The Cornerstone and The Temple

1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. 4 And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For this is contained in Scripture:

"Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed." 7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner stone," 8 and, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. 9 But you are a chosen race, A royal priesthood, A holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 for you once were not a people, but now you are the people OF GOD; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:1-10 (NASB)

As is our custom I'd like to treat this group of verses in smaller subsections, according to their particular thought. So let's start at the beginning and work through these verses a few at a time:

Verses 1-3:

1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

At this point in this epistle we have already completed Chapter 1, and Peter has presented the gospel, and God's plan and purpose for mankind very succinctly. And so he uses the term "Therefore" at the beginning of this next sentence. His use of this word acknowledges that he is speaking to genuine believers, who had been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God, and were in the process of sanctification and obedience to Christ Jesus, through the work of the Holy Spirit. If this be so, then there are visible characteristics, which include these attributes which Peter goes on to describe. There is a putting aside of malice, and deceit, and hypocrisy, and envy, and all slander. There is a new appreciation for righteousness, and heartfelt regret for a previous life of sinfulness.

Unless this attitude prevails in the individual then there has been no regeneration of heart and spirit. This is what regeneration is from a subjective viewpoint, it is having our heart attitude regenerated, renewed, transformed, and sanctified such that we willingly and desiringly obey Jesus Christ. It is being freed from slavery to our love of sin and made obedient from our heart to that new body of teachings to which Christ Jesus has introduced us. (Rom 6:17-18) Unless this characterizes our heart attitude then there is no going on from here. Any and all spiritual maturity, sanctification, and acceptable worship must proceed forth from this heart attitude. Unless we are severed from our love of sin, and our practice of sin, then there is no sanctification, there is no spiritual maturity, and there is no acceptable spiritual worship. Therefore, everything Peter says from this point on assumes that the readers have reached this point.

I hope you all know that the holy Scriptures were written for believers, not for unbelievers. The Bible is a book for God's chosen, for those who believe, and will have either no effect, or worse, a negative effect, on unbelievers, as we shall see in the forthcoming verses. Perhaps among the most reliable tests, if there be any reliable tests, of the authenticity of one's profession of faith is how they react and relate to holy Scriptures.

Peter said in verse two "like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation." This is a very apt analogy. A newly born Christian will have a natural innate desire to hear the word

of God. And not just to hear it but to obey it. Peter is absolutely correct, a new Christian has as powerful a desire for the word of God as a newborn baby has for its milk. There simply isn't any substitute for the Scriptures. In his second epistle, chapter 1, verse 3 Peter writes:

3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

What this "divine power" has granted us is His holy scriptures, and it is these which provides us with everything necessary pertaining to life and godliness, brought to us through the true knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and excellence. This knowledge doesn't come by osmosis. It isn't simply intuitive. It doesn't just grow on us all by itself day by day as we get older. The only place we get the true knowledge of the One who called us is through the study of his Word, as it is made clear to our minds and impressed on our hearts by the work of the Holy Spirit.

No healthy baby refuses to eat. If it does, something is seriously wrong, and the parents would recognize this and take corrective action, they wouldn't just simply ignore it and hope everything works out okay. It's obvious that if the baby doesn't eat it will die. And let me tell you that this analogy is closer to literal than we might think. Just as a baby will literally die without food, so the soul of man, without the word of God, will spiritually die. Do we remember the words of the Lord Jesus when He was at the well in Samaria and his disciples asked Him if he wanted some food, and he replied "*I have food to eat that you don't know about*"? (Jn 4:32) And then told them: "*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work,*" (Jn 4:34)

Now here we do have to acknowledge a difference. The Lord Jesus was fully aware of the will of his Father, and didn't need to read it or be taught, but not so for us. The only way on this earth that we have to know the will of God is either for him to tell us himself audibly, which I wouldn't recommend waiting for, or to accept that He has recorded it for us in a book, and expects us to diligently study it and faithfully obey it. For a baby that has been born healthy, and for a human being that has been reborn of God, there is no need of inducement of nourishment, both will naturally crave and desire this life sustaining nourishment, and if they don't something is seriously wrong and it must not be ignored.

For those of you who have heard me relate this story before I hope you'll forgive me for telling it again. When I first got saved I came from a family that was not Christian. I had no experience growing up in a Christian home, or how Christians behaved. Immediately after I was saved I had an insatiable appetite for the Bible. I would get up early in the morning every single morning and spend hours reading the Bible. No one told me to do this or suggested it to me, it was as natural as the above example of the baby and the milk. I honestly thought that everyone in the church did exactly the same thing. To me this was natural Christian behavior. At the time I came into the church another young man came in very shortly thereafter and we became kind of friends. Time went by and eventually after about three years in this church I and some other brothers were standing around talking about the Scriptures. This young man who came in the church the same time as myself made the statement that he didn't know the answer to our question because he had never read the Bible. I was genuinely astonished at the statement. I honestly assumed that everyone in that church was an avid Bible reader, and had been through it countless times just as I had. After asking around I found out that this young man's experience wasn't unique at all, but actually commonplace.

I will never forget that day and how it impacted my perception of Christianity. This was an extremely eye-opening experience. It immediately explained the diversity of opinions, and behaviors that had been taking place in our church. It explained why so many things were said and done that clearly violated the Scriptures. You cannot obey the Scriptures unless you know the Scriptures, and interpret and understand them correctly. I had obviously spent three years paddling down the river of denial. When churches and their leaders do not behave in accordance with the word of God there has to be a reason. When churches and their leaders completely miss the whole point of Scriptures, and go off on a tangent pursuing a program or a scheme there has to be a reason.

Every one of those people in that first church, and several others since then, carried a Bible under their arm every single week when they came to church, and I was childish enough at that time to believe that they were actually reading it. The obvious truth is that they were not. Some probably were genuine Christians who had simply never been properly trained, but the vast majority were simply cultural Christians, virgins hanging around with the group but having no oil in their

lamps. Matthew seven Christians who say Lord, Lord with their lips, but make no serious attempt at knowing and doing the things that He commands. Just as in the early church, where diverse heresies such as Gnosticism, and antinomianism were introduced, and wreaked havoc on the churches, so today the intrusion of Pelagianism, and Arminianism have reshaped our entire gospel presentation, to the point that we now accept professions of faith as genuine that are actually based upon nothing more than maudlin sentimentality, or a brief moment of emotional stimulation.

We tell people they can become Christians anytime they want, all they've got to do is say "yes" to an altar call. And when they show absolutely no signs whatsoever of regeneration, or transformation of heart attitude and behaviors, we say this is perfectly okay. It's like the newborn baby that refuses to eat and we just stand by and say "no problem" they'll be fine. Will a newborn baby that persistently refuses to eat be just fine? Would we simply ignore this and say no problem I'm sure it's perfectly healthy? I should hope that we would not, but this is the common practice among most evangelical churches. Up to 90% of the membership has never read the Bible, but we declare them perfectly healthy Christians. Denial is not a cure for anything, it is a recipe for eventual disaster. But rather than deal with this problem, our solution is to ignore it and baptize another dozen pseudo-Christians next month. It's like we're shooting with a shotgun, if we baptize 100 people, maybe one of them might really be a Christian. And it seems that we are perfectly satisfied with this approach, and if you openly criticize it you're labeled as some kind of evangelism opposer. But it is cruel and unconscionable to mislead people into thinking they are Christians, and they're bound for heaven, when they clearly lack the appropriate evidence to substantiate it. (2Cor 13:5)

You see in verse two our sentence goes on to say that this innate longing for the pure milk of the word is that by which a genuine believer may grow in respect to salvation. What does it mean "grow" in respect to salvation? Isn't one either saved or not saved? Does the Scripture expect someone who is saved to grow? Yes absolutely, does anyone expect their newborn baby not to grow and mature? I mean isn't the baby either alive or dead, why does it have to grow? Isn't a person either saved or not saved, if so why do they have to grow? Because obviously neither a newborn infant, nor a newborn Christian is born fully mature. They are both born helpless and completely dependent on nourishment. The baby child on its mother's milk, the Christian on the pure milk of the Word of God. Neither will grow, or even survive without it.

I understand that the present-day concept of salvation is a simple black-and-white concept. And I acknowledge fully that there is no such thing as partial salvation, but what we seem to be willing to accept, is that very minimalistic and partial evidence of regeneration is sufficient to claim absolute assurance. If someone will simply walk down an aisle and say they believe in Jesus, we'll gladly pronounce them bona fide Christians, we'll baptize them next week and tell them to never again question their salvation, because to do so would be an insult to God. But this is absurd. It completely violates every principle of Scripture. As we said earlier, the entirety of Scriptures is written to believers, not unbelievers. The Scriptures are God's word to those who believe Him, and they instruct us in how we are to grow in this saving relationship that He has established with us. Certainly Scriptures speak of evangelism, but only in the minutest percentage, the vast majority of Scriptures concerns the life and behavior and maturity of believers after they have come to faith and belief in God. By in large the Scriptures take for granted that they are speaking to believers, not unbelievers.

Of course it is the Scriptures that present the gospel, and it is the gospel through which the Holy Spirit imparts saving faith, but then it goes on to teach us how we are to grow in respect to that salvation that we have received through the gospel. And from God's point of view, what happens after evangelization is what His holy Scriptures are all about.

What is the point of all this? It is that growth and maturity are as essential in a newborn Christian as they are in a newborn infant. Growing in respect to salvation means growing in maturity. Salvation itself means being saved from our sins, and growing in salvation means growing in our daily life ability to cease from sin and become more and more Christlike in our thinking and behaviors. The mortification of sin, and the transforming of our minds, and our way of thinking into conformity with Christ is the daily business of every Christian, and the whole point of God in making us Christians.

If you think that the death of Christ Jesus, and the presentation of the gospel, is all about keeping a few people from going to hell then I have news for you, that's not what it's about it all. It's about God, from before creation, specifically

choosing a particular people upon whom He has set His eternal love and from whom He will accept eternal worship. The Scriptures describe the relationship between God and his chosen people as much more than just a judge who has exonerated some pitiful criminals, it describes a loving Father who has sacrificed immensely for the redemption of his beloved children. And from the children's point of view, it involves certain and specific characteristics. Acknowledgment of, and repentance from, sin is nonnegotiable. (Mat 7:21-23) Those who are saved must work out that salvation day by day with fear and trembling (Phi 2:12)

Growing in respect to salvation is essentially the same thing as working out our salvation. Human beings learn by experience. You will not get better, or more proficient at any task by simply hearing and speaking about it, or even by watching someone else do it. One grows in respect to salvation by making continuous volitional effort to walk in a manner that is worthy of our calling. (Eph 4:1; Col 1:10; 1Th 2:12)

This now brings us to verse three: *3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord*. You see the motivation for putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, and the motivation to long for the pure milk of the word and to grow in respect to salvation, is that we have actually tasted the kindness of the Lord. Obviously no one wants to suffer in hell, no one wants to experience the wrath of God, but it's obvious that these alone do not motivate mankind to obey God. For unbelievers, the simple truth is they love their sin more than they fear God. Warnings and threatenings simply are not an effectual means to motivate humanity. God sent profit after profit to Israel to warn them of impending wrath but in every case it was to no avail. They insisted that they believed in and loved God, but at the same time they refused to repent of their sins.

Nothing has changed since those times concerning humanity's behaviors. Yes we do have multitudes of atheists who simply don't recognize God at all. But we also have multitudes attending evangelical churches, and every sort of other churches, who will claim they believe in and love God, but are not willing to live according to his commandments. Why is this? Why do so many people who claim they love God have no desire to obey him. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus when he said *"why do you call me Lord, Lord, and then don't do what I say?"* (Lk 6:46)

The answer to this is plain enough if we wish to see it. Those who called him Lord, and really believe it, both in their minds and in their hearts are those who have tasted the kindness of the Lord. Those whose hearts have been captured and whose minds have been transformed and renewed. Those who have first hand experienced the relief and great joy of knowing that their sins have been forgiven. In reference to the word "tasted" this is a great example. One might be told how deliciously a certain food might be, but no amount of words or description can possibly come close to actually tasting the food yourself. And likewise, no amount of descriptions and words concerning the loving kindness of God can even approximate having actually firsthand experienced it in your own heart and your own mind.

When one has truly first hand experienced, "tasted" the kindness of God, through his gift of saving faith and forgiveness of sins, it is not without a very visible effect on their whole life, their whole attitude, their whole set of affections and appreciations, that manifests itself through words and actions. Which words and actions are joyfully in conformity to his commandments, because now this becomes the highest desires of one's life. It is no longer a set of warnings and threatenings, but a joyful and voluntary obedience that is from the heart. If this be so, then what has happened that has invoked such an enormous change? Well, very much has happened. Jesus said this was being born again. It's also called regeneration, and sanctification, and transformation, and many other terms.

But even in addition to this, it's called a transferring from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, a rescuing from the domain of darkness and a transfer to the kingdom of God's beloved son. (Col 1:13) But not just a transfer of location. This transfer involves much more. It involves a complete change of ownership, a complete change of family membership. CONTINUE HERE WITH THIS THEME OF ADOPTION INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD

19 And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd.20 And it was reported to Him, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see You."21 But He answered and said to them, *"My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."* Luke 8:19-21 (NASB)

27 While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, *"Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed."*28 But He said, *"On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."* Luke 11:27-28 (NASB)

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.11 He came to His own , and those who were His own did not receive Him.12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,13 who were born , not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
John 1:10-13 (NASB)

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