

Peter contrasts the eternal life with natural life. Those that are born again by the word of God have eternal life, and may not even die bodily if they are alive when the Lord returns. Those who are not born again remain subject to natural death as children of Adam as well as the Second Death. He graphically illustrates the difference using a direct quote from the Old Testament scriptures.

*Isaiah 40:6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: 7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. 8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.*

Using that quote he also is reminding them of the context in Isaiah's prophecy which speaks of the long awaited time of blessing that the earth will enjoy under the reign of the coming King. Seeing the word of God will surely be fulfilled we can rely on the gospel which is preached to us now from that same word. Preached to be received now, not simply a prophetic word for some future generation. Once received it changed us, as verses 22-23 show us.

Receiving the gospel carries responsibilities. Some things are clearly unbecoming conduct for believers, and all those who claim to be Christians. Rather than issuing a list of commands, Peter exhorts us to lay aside some behaviors that characterizes the natural man. While laying aside these things he presses us to nourish ourselves upon the word.

Malice (11 verses in the New Testament) badness, i.e. (subjectively) depravity, or (actively) malignity, or (passively) trouble:--evil, naughtiness, wickedness.

Guile (12 NT verses) a trick (bait), i.e. (figuratively) wile:--craft, deceit, guile, subtlety. Later in chapter 2 Peter describes the Lord.

*1Pe 2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:*

Hypocrisies (7 NT verses) acting under a feigned part, i.e. (figuratively) deceit ("hypocrisy"): --condemnation, dissimulation, hypocrisy.

Envies (9 NT verses) ill-will (as detraction), i.e. jealousy (spite):--envy.

Evil speakings (2 NT verses) defamation:--backbiting, evil speaking.

There are many lists like this in the New Testament. Lists of unbecoming conduct, unexpected of believers. Indeed the world notices when one who professes to be the Lord's slips even once. The incentive with these lists is that the Lord's name is not dishonored, brothers and sisters in the Lord are not harmed, and the unsaved are not stumbled. Yet these lists are not presented as "thou shalt not ..." commands but as appeals to the new nature of the born again saint who is no longer under the power of sin (Romans 6) and the bondage of the Law of Moses

(Romans 7) but at liberty to voluntarily do the Lord's will in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

*Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

Having then been born again by the living Word of God now we are to desire it as our nourishment. Not with a "take it or leave it" attitude but as new born babies desire their milk (all too regularly for the parent's convenience and rest). Babies instinctively desire milk and so they grow. The new nature instinctively desires (intensely craves) the word of God so it can grow. It is described as the sincere milk of the word. The word sincere is literally "un-deceitful," the very opposite of "guile" mentioned in verse 1. The unadulterated word of God.

How can the word of God be adulterated? Eve added to it and in so doing tempted herself beyond endurance, making herself an easy prey for the deceit of the Serpent. Satan misquotes scripture frequently. He did so when tempting the Lord in the wilderness, leaving out a phrase, (compare Mt. 4:6; Ps. 91:11-12). Men frequently quote scripture out of context, leading themselves and others astray. We are seeing more of this nowadays, even in the secular world. Religious factions cite scripture prohibiting serious immorality and abortion. Men who resent these moral judgements, quote other scriptures attempting to show their inconsistency and discredit them if they wear clothes of differing thread sources. Scripture is adulterated by using them out of context in ways not intended by God. It has been said many times "one can prove anything by quoting scripture out of context."

Another serious issue is the increasing number of new translations now available. How does one know if these are all the "sincere" (unadulterated) Word of God? Few of us can read the original Greek or Hebrew language or know which originals are the most reliable. Some translations are based upon a limited number of original sources (KJV). Some translators attempt to adhere to literal translation as far as the languages allow. (KJV, NKJ, Darby, NASB). Others are more free to paraphrase (what they think is) the thought and intent of a passage, and are easier to read (NIV). Some have translated with a predisposition that distorts some passages. An example is the substitution of the word "church" in the KJV instead of the word "assembly." Total paraphrases such as the "The Living Bible" are useful more as a commentary by the "translator" than as the literal (unadulterated) Word of God. No matter which translation one uses, it should be used daily! It is essential for spiritual growth. Unlike our natural bodies the born again believer never stops growing and never grows old spiritually, although they do mature.

And the word also sustains spiritual health and enriches spiritual well being. Good food indeed!

By Ron Canner, November 17, 2004