Numbers - Commentaries by L. Douglas Nicolet

The Christian Shepherd: 2000, Editorial: Are You Hungry?

Article from https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb

“The children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes” (Num. 11:4-6).

I remember many years ago my mother would often call us to a meal saying, “Dinner’s ready. Are you hungry?” She was a wonderful and wise cook, fixing simple, nutritious food—food that not only tasted good, but was good for us. But all too often I was not hungry for that nutritious food.

Was there something wrong with the food or the way it was served? No! There was something wrong with me. The problem was my all-too-frequent visits to the snack counter at a store on my daily paper route. There I often found time during paper delivery to stop and enjoy a bottle or two of soda, a package of frosted cupcakes and maybe even a bag or two of chips—all tasty but worthless “junk food.” Arriving home after delivering the papers, I often had no appetite for the good food which my beloved mother had so lovingly prepared for me.

As believers, we need to be careful that such does not happen to us in view of the wonderful spiritual food which our loving God has prepared that His dear children might be fed and nurtured. Feeding on the world’s “junk food”—religious or natural—can quickly dull our “spiritual appetites.”

Among the Israelites there existed a “mixed multitude” of people who desired Egypt’s food. It was not very long before contact with them caused the people of God to lose their appetite for that heavenly, wilderness bread of God, the manna. They turned back to desiring that which sustained them when they were Pharaoh’s slaves. How sad!

From this we learn the vital necessity of separation from this present evil world (Gal. 1:4), whose children eat a diet wholly unfit for God’s redeemed children. Believers who get caught up in its ways quickly develop a taste for its natural and religious “leeks, onions and garlic,” losing their appetite for the sweet provisions of our God.

What an example we see in Daniel, who “purposed in his heart” that he would not partake of the king’s food. Rich and tasty—no doubt the best Babylon had to offer—still it was the food offered to idols, food that would defile and corrupt God’s dear people. Then it required purpose of heart in those who lived by faith to refuse to partake of Babylon’s “junk food”—and it requires the same today.

Developing a taste for the world’s “food” causes the rich and wonderful truth of God’s Word to become unappetizing to the soul. There is also a loss of appetite for and desire to read good ministry that is available. If filled with the dainties of the world, we find that God’s precious Word is no longer “sweeter than honey” (Psa. 119:103).

Let us also be careful of allowing a critical spirit towards the servants of God whom He may choose to feed His sheep and lambs. While servants are very responsible for how they serve the precious truth of God, His children are very responsible for how they receive and feed on that precious truth.

Another danger lies in developing a taste for one certain kind of ministry or for a particular style of presenting the truth of God. Isaac was fooled in this way. He developed a taste and love for a certain kind of food that Esau provided him (Gen. 25:28; 27:4). But his desire for that savory venison was used to deceive him. Having a taste for only one kind of ministry can also deceive, for it may cause us to despise other vital spiritual food that is provided.

The Egyptian servant of the Amalekite, whom David found in the wilderness (1 Sam. 30:12-13), expressed no complaints about the food offered him. That young man, left sick and dying in the wilderness by his former master, no doubt was very thankful for the life-giving food David gave him.

We find no record that those who were fed barley bread and fish by the disciples after the Lord’s blessing (Matt. 14:17-21) complained about either the kind of food they were served or the way in which it was served. They were hungry and willingly received what divine love saw fit to furnish them.

While we ought always to earnestly pray for those who minister the Word of God, let us also pray for ourselves—that we may have good appetites!

“He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away” (Luke 1:53).

Ed.