

To the 7000:

Rarely do we think about the process by which a piece of meat gets from our plate into our body. But this process portrays an incredible object lesson. A piece of meat is not only too large to get down our throats, but far too coarse to do us any good. So, it is severed into bite-sized portions with my knife. When my incisors tear it enough for my molars to crush it; these molars destroy the muscle fiber. From thence the broken (notice the simile...) fibers are mixed with *my* saliva (a second simile) into a semi-fluid. The mess is then swallowed. Once in the (dark, hidden) stomach, further breakdown takes place when the acids and enzymes in my stomach, triggered by the anticipation of something coming down my esophagus, attack the liquefied “meat.”

This chemical action now destroys the original physical makeup of the “meat” and dissolves the remaining muscle fibers to where they no longer resemble the original piece. From thence the liquefied mixture, called chyme, enters the small intestine, where it is dissolved even further, as the stomach acids, enzymes and other gastric juices continue the digestive process. From there, the mess is introduced to bacteria, which breaks down the “meat” even more.

Various molecules of the physically, chemically and biologically altered “meat” are transferred through the intestinal walls where the essence of the “meat” is picked up by the blood vessels. Even the soupy mess in the intestines never comes in contact with, nor has access to, the blood; the essence has to be filtered through the walls. Once the blood vessels in the small intestine assimilate the nutrients that are beneficial to the body, they are transferred to the individual cells via the system of blood circulation. *At this juncture, and only this juncture, has the meat attained its original purpose. It then becomes us.*

The “meat” or protein, as it once was called, is now molecular and without form or resemblance to its former state; nor is there any residuum of its former character. The meat has been *transformed* into something altogether of a different state. It has been *metamorphosed* from one form into a completely different form. There is nothing of the former physical properties of the piece that survived the trip from the knife through the intestinal wall, ***absolutely nothing***.

In a word, it has been eaten, as we say. The unusable portion of the original physical piece of “meat” is expelled. It stinks, and is useless (don’t forget this little tidbit...).

I wish to note here the overall process to get from point A to point B is one of violence. It is also transformation from one state to a completely different state. Yet daily we go through this forgotten process as if it were (and it truly is) completely normal. It is accepted without thought or analysis.

Let us now take a dialectic leap to something that was said a while back. In the course of His dialogue with the disciples and others who cared to listen, Jesus said the following:

“For the true bread of God is that which comes down from Heaven, and gives life to the world.”

“... I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”... “I am the bread of life. Your fathers *ate* the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from Heaven, that a man may *eat* of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from Heaven; if any one *eats* of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.”

“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 you. He who *eats* My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day; for My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who ***chews and gnaws*** My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who ***chews and gnaws*** Me will live because of Me.....he who *eats* this bread will live for ever.”

Many of his disciples said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”

“Do you take offense at this? ...It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; ***the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.***”

But He said to them, “I have food to *eat* of which you do not know.” So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him food?” He answered them. “My ***meat*** is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.”

(7/1/14; in proof-reading this, I am struck by the similarity of present-day reactions to Biblical truths to those of His disciples...)

Now at this juncture I would like to bring in a seemingly unrelated writing which I hope will unlock the meaning of the transition.

“Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed (metamorphosed from one state to another state) by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the *will* of God...”

This latter writing is cross-referenced to another which reads, “...be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature created after the likeness of God, true righteousness and holiness.”

Renewed here means to completely change, to replace, to renew, have your life and thoughts go in a different course, to go in another direction, as does the writing above, “renewing of your mind.”

When we are born again by the Spirit of God, we receive a new spirit, and become, by being reborn, a son of God. By virtue of that rebirth, we have the essence of God within us, and by *re*-birthright, become a son of God, therefore an heir to all He has. In other words, we are given, by virtue of that rebirth, all the genetic makeup of God Himself.

Our minds, however, remain as they were before the time of spiritual rebirth; else why would Paul say we needed to have our minds renewed? All the old emotional tapes of rejection, hurts, embarrassments, humiliations, wounds, robbery, assaults, real and perceived imperfections, etc., are what make up the contents of our minds. They are filled with bad teachings, traditions, myths, family habits and familiar spirits, eating and health practices that went into the makeup of our formative years.

Just as we are taught to talk, walk, eat, drink, behave, handle situations, manage and discipline ourselves when we are children, we also go through those same processes in the renewing of our minds.

So how do we go through this process? The similes of the first paragraph regarding eating give us clear, simple understanding. As you couple this with Jesus teaching on what He said about Himself and His food, we should be enlightened on how to help our new, re-born spirit grow and change the thought patterns of our mind.

Jesus was not being coy in using the words “gnaw” and “chew” interspersed in and among the other words for “eat” (few translations make this distinction). Just as we would be silly to try to take a piece of steak and swallow it whole, or try to inject it into our bloodstream, so we are equally silly in thinking we can merely *read* Jesus’ words and expect them do us any nutritional good, spiritually speaking.

“Gnaw” and “chew” connote specific physical differences in intensity between them and the word “eat.” We *eat* soft foods like bread, squash and green beans, potatoes and gravy; we *gnaw and chew* meat. Now gnawing and chewing involve a great deal more energy, time and strain than does mere eating. In other words, gnawing and chewing connote more work than just eating softer foods.

Jesus said the above regarding bread, meat, and so forth. He said if we are to live, then His words are bread; so eating His words gives life. Interspersed in that passage are the verbs “gnaw” and “chew,” which He means to really get down and study what He said. This means the opposite of listening, from which you will get precious little sustenance. Listening is sort of like swallowing a green bean whole, or a piece of meat; very little of the food will be absorbed by the body. Studying also means an action far more intense than reading, from which you will get only the soft parts of scripture. “Gnawing” and “chewing” on the words He spoke (and had written down) means to rip, tear apart, take down, analyze, cross-reference, study, ruminate, meditate, cogitate, and spend time digesting what He said and had written. *Unfortunately, the sensory imprints left by entertainment preclude meditation.*

I might add that it is important that we have a balanced “diet,” which is the *whole* word of God, not just selected “soft or hard” parts that fit our emotional makeup. Eating French fries, pasta, Diet Coke and donuts or strictly protein will yield an imbalance in our body. This imbalanced diet will make us fat, unable to function, and in the case of many, unable to reproduce. Our erroneous reasoning, emotional swings, and “bad feelings” are more often than not traced to a poor diet of Scripture. Our souls and spirits are literally starved. Eating a balanced diet does for our bodies what a “balanced diet” of the full counsel of God will do for our souls and spirits.

Jesus also said His *meat* was “to do the will of His Father which sent Him”; this means to put our own will down in subjection to His. In other words, Jesus was saying that in the doing of His Father’s will, He was being nurtured, just as a piece of meat nurtures us in the physical (provided we chew it...).

Just as the piece of meat goes through all its processes, finally into the blood, it becomes *us*.

So it is with the “gnawing” and “chewing” of the Word of God, it becomes *us*.

Like the piece of meat is *transformed* into a completely different state, the chewed and gnawed Word is *transforming us* into a completely different state. Its spiritual essence becomes *us*, and the residuum of the old “us” is passed on and eliminated.

In other words, “What we eat, we are.” What we eat becomes us. What we study of the Word becomes us. That coupled with the meat of doing what God wants, we are transformed into the image of God’s Son, being transformed into His fullness, and being changed from what we were into what **He is**. I become what I read; more specifically, what I study. If I do not study, chew, gnaw, and digest, then I remain as I was. Little of me is metamorphosed into the image of Jesus.

As an old preacher once said, “There is a good dog and a bad dog inside us (believers).” When asked which one grows, he replied, “The one I feed.” So if I feed the good dog, the part of me that is of God, then that one will grow. But if I feed the bad (natural) dog French fries, pasta and donuts, he will be retarded and unhealthy, no different than a baby who is fed milk for his entire life. At some point he must have solid food, and learn to chew for himself.

Like it or not, that is the essence for which God will look at the Judgment Seat of Christ--how much of Jesus has been formed in you?

This thing we have heard for generations of evangelical Christianity about “Jesus helping *me*,” and “Jesus being on *my* side,” and phrases of like ilk, do not agree with scripture. On the contrary, one scripture after another says just the opposite:

“until Christ *be formed* in you.”

until means it has not occurred yet

be formed is future

the letters of Paul are written to believers

“until we all *attain* the fullness of Christ,”

“as He (Jesus) *dwells in* you,”

“that you may *be filled* with all the fullness of God,”

“it is no longer I who live, but Christ who *lives in* me,”

“in Him do we *live*, and breathe, and *have our being*,”

“that they may be one, as we are one, *I in them*, and you in me, that they (we) may become perfectly one,”

“until we all *attain*... to the measure of the stature of *the fullness* of Christ,”

put on the new nature.”

This idea of the “us” and the “me” and the “my” being perpetuated is folly at best, and demonic at worst. The “I” is not to be retained, no more than the brown stinking residuum of the physical food is to be retained. As we saw in the physical food never touching the blood, so our old selves (souls) will never touch the Holy. We shall not carry our body into Heaven any more than we will take our old ways of thinking into Heaven. Nor shall we drag along our hurts, our unforgiveness, our traditions, or our old, traditional ways of looking at things that are contrary to His Word.

Our entire soul, mind, will and emotions that accompanied the former self will be eliminated as sure as the undigested beans, poorly gnawed meat, and unclean foods are passed on to the latrine. All the shallowness of our listening to poorly designed, non-germane sermons, and sloppy reading of the Word will come around full tilt to haunt us.

It is only that part of “us” that has been metamorphosed into the image of Jesus that will be accepted. That transformation from the old “us” into the “new man” is all that will pass into glory. All our good intentions and Pied Piper responses to following other men and their stinking traditions will be burned up like so much chaff. All our Babylonian habits that have been practiced for centuries will rise up and condemn us.

I shudder at the prospect of Jesus saying to me, “I never knew you...”

July 23, 2005

One of the Tribe of Issachar