

Do Not Just Taste Salvation

2 Timothy 2:12

(continued)

“In 2004 the state of California ordered a chain of private schools in the state to stop handing out phony diplomas. Authorities seized the assets of the alternative high school program and asked a judge to stop the company's 30 schools from handing out ‘*high school diplomas*’ to students seeking a better life through education.

“Authorities contend the company charges it's primarily Latino students between \$450 and \$1450 for a ten week course, based on a 54 page book that is filled with errors. **The book** teaches students that Congress has two houses, the Senate for Democrats and the House for Republicans. **The book FALSELY CLAIMS** that the flag of the United States has not been updated to reflect the addition of Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico to the ‘original’ 50 states, giving the US a grand total of 53 states.

“**The book** also says World War II was fought between 1938 and 1942. **The truth** is the Second World War was fought between 1939 and 1945, though the United States did not enter the fight until 1941. **All 50 states** are represented on the flag. Puerto Rico is a territory, not a state.

“Though two other states are joining California to block the company from claiming their diplomas are "official," the company claims 78 locations nationwide and says it will continue to actively expand.”¹

Teaching lies can ruin the lives of the uninformed; and many liars take advantage of these people by devious means, **convincing them** that the lies are true and that those who actually teach the truth are liars.

Our text for today reads:

2 Timothy 2:12:

If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

¹ Jim Wilson, “TEACHING,” in *More Fresh Illustrations*, (Austin, TX: WORDsearch Corp., 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "TEACHING".

We will be focusing particularly on the last half of the verse, "*If we deny Him, He also will deny us.*"

The most dangerous people who lead others to deny Christ are the "*false teachers,*" and there are many within the Church, as well as outside the Church. There were false teachers in the **first century Church** and there are many more in the **twenty-first century Church**. They can lead many people to deny Christ and accept their lies, and it does not matter whether the person comes from Yale or comes from jail, from Park Ave or a park bench. These false teachers are cunning and can appeal to those who want to create their own god.

In this way they can have for themselves a god who does not demand anything from them and will allow them their favorite sins.

2 Peter 2:1:

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

To those who claim to belong to God the Father and deny Christ the Son. John says:

1 John 2:22-23:

²² *Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.*

²³ *Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.*

In the present text, however, Paul's warning could include those who once claimed Christ but later **deny Him** when the cost of discipleship becomes too high.

John 6:66:

As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

The writer of Hebrews has this to say about such **false** Christians:

Hebrews 6:4-6:

⁴ *For in the case of those who have once been **enlightened** and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made **partakers** of the Holy Spirit,*

⁵ *and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,*

⁶ *and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them*

again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

We should note that this passage makes no reference at all to salvation and eternal life. Those who have once been enlightened, which simply means they have been informed about the truth of the message of God and Christ, are not referred to as being born again, made holy, or made righteous. None of the normal New Testament terminology for salvation is used here.² Being enlightened could be compared to someone who comes to Village Church and hears the gospel message which tells them how they can receive salvation and eternal life in Heaven, as well as what will happen to them if they reject it.

The *"enlightenment"* that we just read about in Hebrews 6:4 has to do with the teaching of biblical truth, God's Word. It means to be mentally aware of something, to be instructed, informed. IT CARRIES NO SUGGESTION OF EITHER BELIEF OR DISBELIEF.

When Jesus first came to Galilee to minister, He declared that He had come to fulfill a prophecy (prediction) of Isaiah that was made about 700 years before the coming of Christ. That would be like someone back in the 1300's making a prediction regarding our world today and having it come true. That would be quite remarkable, would it not? Here is the prophecy of Isaiah which Jesus fulfilled:

Isaiah 9:1-7 (NLT):

¹ *Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when **Galilee of the Gentiles**, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory.*

² *The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.*

³ *You will enlarge the nation of Israel, and its people will rejoice. They will rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest and like warriors dividing the plunder.*

⁴ *For you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders. You will break the oppressor's rod, just as you did when you destroyed the army of Midian.*

⁵ *The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned. They will be fuel for the fire.*

⁶ *For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,*

² John MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Hebrews*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 141-149.

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD will make this happen!

“On Glasgow Green, a few years ago, at the conclusion of a gospel address given by a Christian, a man in the crowd asked permission to say a few words. Liberty having been granted, he spoke somewhat as follows: ‘Friends, I don’t believe what this man has been talking about. I don’t believe in hell; I don’t believe in a judgment; I don’t believe in a God, for I never saw one of them.’

“Then another man asked to be allowed to speak. Permission being obtained, he proceeded as follows: ‘Friends, you say there is a river running not far from this place, the River Clyde. There is no such thing; it is untrue. You tell me that there are trees and grass growing around me where I now stand. There are no such things, That also is not true. You tell me that there are a great many people standing here. Again I say that is not true; there is no person standing here save myself. I suppose you wonder what I am talking about, but I was born blind; I never saw one of you; and while I talk it only shows that I am blind, or I would not say such things. And you,’ he said, turning to the infidel, ‘the more you talk the more you expose your ignorance, because you are spiritually blind, and cannot see.’”³

—*Prophetic News*

“ALL WHO SAW AND HEARD JESUS SAW THIS *‘great light,’* BUT NOT ALL WHO SAW AND HEARD WERE SAVED. Seeing God’s light is one thing, seeing God’s light and accepting it is another.

Those people in Galilee, as all people who hear the gospel, were to some extent aware of who and what Jesus was; but few of them believed in Jesus. They had factual information. They saw Christ, they heard His message from His own lips, and they saw His miracles with their own eyes. They had firsthand opportunity to see God’s truth in the flesh,⁴ an opportunity that only a few thousand people in all of history have had. **The Light of the gospel had broken in on their darkness.”⁵**

John 12:35-36 (NLT):

³ Walter B. Knight, *Knight’s Master Book of New Illustrations*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1956), s.v. “Light,” WORDsearch CROSS e-book.

⁴ God took the form of human flesh and came to earth in the man, Jesus.

⁵ Op cit., MacArthur.

³⁵ *Jesus replied, "My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in **the light** while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going.*

³⁶ *Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light." After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them.*

"Life for them could never be the same again." Their lives were permanently affected by the impression Jesus must have made on them. Yet many did not believe in Him.

John 12:37-40 (NLT):

³⁷ *But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him.*

³⁸ *This is exactly what Isaiah the prophet had predicted: "LORD, who has believed our message? To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?"*

³⁹ *But the people couldn't believe, for as Isaiah also said,*

⁴⁰ *"The Lord has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts— so that their eyes cannot see, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and have me heal them."*⁶

"In spite of all the clear evidence that was presented to them, only a few actually believed and accepted that truth. The 'arm of the Lord' had been revealed to them in great power, yet they closed their eyes to the truth. They had heard the message (report) and seen the miracles, and yet would not believe."⁷ They had the knowledge but were not saved. Consequently, they were in danger of losing all opportunity of being saved, and of becoming apostate.⁸ It is of such people that Peter speaks in his second letter.

2 Peter 2:20-22 (NLT):

²⁰ *And when people escape from the wickedness of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then get tangled up and enslaved by sin again, they are worse off than before.*

²¹ *It would be better if they had never known the way to righteousness than*

⁶ When a person starts to resist the light, something begins to change within him; and he comes to the place where he cannot believe. There is "judicial blindness" that God permits to come over the eyes of people who do not take the truth seriously. (This quotation is found in a number of places in the New Testament. See Matt. 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; Acts 28:25-27; Rom. 11:8.) It is a serious thing to treat God's truth lightly, for a person could well miss his opportunity to be saved. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isa. 55:6). Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary – New Testament, Volume 1*, (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2001), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 343.

⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary – New Testament, Volume 1*, (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2001), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 343.

⁸ A person who forsakes his faith.

to know it and then reject the command they were given to live a holy life.

²² *They prove the truth of this proverb: "A dog returns to its vomit." And another says, "A washed pig returns to the mud."*

Because of their unbelief, the light that was given to save them became a judgment against them.

John 4:10:

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and HE WOULD HAVE GIVEN YOU LIVING WATER."

Jesus was speaking of **the gift of salvation**, the "living water" that leads to "eternal life."

John 4:13-14:

¹³ *Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again;*

¹⁴ *but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."*

"Those who drank it—not sipped it or just tasted it, but drank it—would be saved." Listen again to the words of Jesus in:

John 6:51:

"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

John 6:35:

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."

"ETERNAL LIFE COMES FROM EATING, NOT SIMPLY TASTING, GOD'S GIFT OF SALVATION IN CHRIST."⁹

"One of the pre-salvation ministries of the **Holy Spirit** is that of giving the unsaved a taste of the blessings of salvation." This is part of His ministry of pointing people toward Christ. BUT TASTING IS NOT EATING. "**The Holy Spirit** will give us a taste, but He will not make us eat." God placed the blessing of salvation to

⁹ Op cit., MacArthur

the lips of these New Testament Jews, but they did not eat. The tasting was what they saw and heard concerning the Gospel, as many today have seen and heard about the transforming power of Christ through the Gospel, and yet did not believe.¹⁰

“These Jews had never possessed the **Holy Spirit**, they simply were around when He was around. It is possible to have an association with the Holy Spirit, to share in what He does, and not be saved. As we have seen in Hebrews 2:4, these Jews had heard the word and had seen and even participated in numerous signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. They were actually involved in some of His work.”¹¹

Hebrews 2:1-4 (TLB):

¹ *So we must listen very carefully to the truths we have heard, or we may drift away from them.*

² *For since the messages from angels have always proved true and people have always been punished for disobeying them,*

³ ***what makes us think that we can escape** if we are indifferent to this great salvation announced by the Lord Jesus himself and passed on to us by those who heard him speak?*

⁴ *God always has shown us that these messages are true by signs and wonders and various miracles and by giving certain special abilities from the Holy Spirit to those who believe; yes, God has assigned such gifts to each of us.*

“The Bible never speaks of Christians being associated with the Holy Spirit. It speaks of the Holy Spirit being **WITHIN** them. Here, however, are some persons who are simply associated with the Holy Spirit. Like perhaps most of the multitudes whom Jesus miraculously healed and fed, they partook of the Holy Spirit's power and blessings, but they did not have His indwelling. They did not possess the Holy Spirit, nor did the Holy Spirit possess them.”¹²

These folks had been taught some things about God. It is possible that they even attended church every week. They may have even listened and thought about what they heard. But **THEY COULD NOT SAY** with Jeremiah,

¹⁰ Ibid..

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

“Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.” (Jeremiah 15:16)

“They tasted but they did not eat, just like the nation to whom Jeremiah spoke many hundreds of years earlier. **Herod** was like this. In spite of the hard-hitting message of **John the Baptist**, including accusations directly against the king, Herod enjoyed listening to John preach.”¹³ It seems that he enjoyed sampling the message of God but never took it seriously. He later ordered John beheaded.

“When eating something new it is very common to taste it first. In Psalm 34:8 David said: *“O taste and see that the LORD is good.”* Everyone needs to taste the gospel before they accept it. The problem is stopping with tasting. Like so many who hear the gospel for the first time, these Jews were attracted to its beauty and sweetness. It tasted very good to them. But they did not chew it or swallow it, much less digest it. They just kept tasting. Before long, its appealing taste was gone and they became indifferent to it. Their spiritual tastebuds became insensitive and unresponsive.”¹⁴

Have you truly *“eaten”* the Gospel? Or have you merely tasted it?

Do you recall the illustration that we opened with? About how false teachers were teaching wrong facts, and then giving out high school diplomas to their students? That was bad enough, but think of how much more dangerous it is for false teachers to be dispensing their ideas about the Bible.

“After the cessation of conflict with the regular Iraqi army in April 2003, the U.S. found itself engaged in a guerrilla war against terrorists. The terrorists started making booby traps and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). These IEDs have accounted for a majority of those killed in Iraq. The IEDs are hidden in everything from rusty oil drums, to plastic toys, to dead animals, to heaps of rotting refuse.

“*‘A bomb can be hidden anywhere,’* said Captain Jean-Pierre Brown. *‘I have come to hate garbage in a whole new way,’* Brown said. *‘Everywhere else in the world, litter is unsightly and garbage smells. But in Iraq, it kills.’*

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

“The world is a ‘minefield’ of deceptive, garbage philosophies and religions. There is only one safe place and that is found in Jesus Christ.”¹⁵

God has a feast waiting for you. But you have to get past the appetizers and hors d’oeuvres in order to consume it. Salvation through Jesus Christ will assure you a place at the table when the wedding feast of the Lamb is served. Don’t miss it!

¹⁵ Peter Kennedy, *Preaching Illustrations Vol 1.*, WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 20.