

Revelation 10:8-11 Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth." 9 So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth." 10 Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. 11 And he¹ said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings." In the Name of Jesus

Our text raises a question that can gnaw unrelentingly as we toss in our beds: **WHAT CAN I DO FOR THIS UPSET STOMACH?** "Alka-Seltzer to the rescue" or Pepto Bismol? But the apostle John's stomach was not upset from eating rich - spicy foods. It was bitter from eating the Word of God's judgment on sin and experiencing man's rejection of God's grace. The LORD's Prescription: **TASTE AND SEE HOW GRACIOUS THE LORD IS!**

Rev. 8,9 pictured two hundred million horses with lion's heads snorting sulfur from hell and multi-serpented-tails stinging like scorpions. We may indeed sigh with relief that we are not under this judgment of God on all the blatant ungodliness and impenitence in the world. But God shows us this trumpet blast is meant to rouse also the Christians to repentant trembling at our violations of God's holy law, to rouse those calling on Jesus to turn away from the wretched sinfulness that infects our thoughts and desires, and to rouse those going to church to turn from every satanic substitute for real repentance. Jesus tells us that there is another sin just as bad as the blatant immorality and homosexuality of Sodom and Gomorrah. It would be far worse Jesus said for the people of Capernaum, respectable religious folks who assumed: "We are O.K. Compared to Sodom and Gomorrah we're pretty good. We're God's people. We don't need to repent." Jesus called those following this philosophy, "whited sepulchers" and calls us to turn from this peril of self-righteousness and live in, on and for Jesus.

Many are the prophets of the world that say the solution for any such bitterness, the Alka-Seltzer to the rescue, is to, "respect the basic goodness in yourself." How sweet and loving the worldly teaching sounds: "be confident in your own self esteem." Positive thinking proclaims: "with religion and a little self-discipline you can stay away from real wickedness, be a good person worthy of God." But Jesus says, "Repent!" If we are never trembling at the wretched sinfulness that by nature infects our very thoughts, then we are not digesting and applying

this book of God's Word. Like the mountain climber who says: "It's cold out, why not just stay by the fire," we can always think of reasons why we don't need to examine ourselves in the bitter cold work of repentance - we can always think of reasons why we don't need to take time this week for God's word. Yet, the moment we thus coat over or cover up our sin, our need for repentance, with the Pepto Bismol of considering our self better than others, deserving God's favor, we are in that way stepping away from Christ where there is no peace no hope in the world. Because we would rather not toss in bed at night with a bitter, upset stomach, how often have we grabbed some Alka-Seltzer-excuse to coat over, cover up our sin? Because we would rather not toss in bed at night with a bitter, upset stomach, how often have we grabbed some Alka-Seltzer-excuse for not speaking to a sinning brother with the loving call to repentance? When the Prophet Nathan was sent to call King David to repentance, he trembled not only for David's impenitent soul but also for his own life. Nathan's "you are the man" hit the target square yet in such a spirit of gentleness (which God calls for Gal. 6:1), that David shot the arrow at himself. We are all the flies, who so often get caught in webs of temptation. None of us likes to shoot that arrow at our self and feel the deep, penetrating pain: "I am sinful and unclean. I have within me a sinful nature so wretched it is in itself hopeless, I am by nature so selfish God needs to protect me, my friends and family from me."

"It's necessary," Jesus says, "to eat and proclaim His word so we have His help to remove the log beams from our own eyes and His help to remove the speck from our brother's eye" (Mt. 7:5). Jesus feet v.1 are like pillars of fire condemning our sinful uncleanness and squashing to ashen embers all who do not turn from sin to the forgiveness that is in Him alone. Yet, His face is the Sun of Righteousness sparkling with the billion diamonds: your sins are all forgiven. For He remains the Mediating Angel of v.1 comforting those who repent with His word that is sweeter than a honeycomb: "I have loved you and washed you from your sins in My own blood and made you kings and priests unto God and My Father." 1Jo 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1Jo 2:1-2 And if anyone sins, we

have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. 1Jo 1:7 and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. Those who just want to avoid the cold, the cold, hard work of repentance, who stay inside in the rocking chair substitutes for repentance, also don't experience the joyous exhilaration of this brilliant Sun of grace sparkling on the frost like a billion diamonds. Rom 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

Yes, eating the Word of God's judgment on my sin and experiencing man's sad rejection of God's grace can indeed cause an upset stomach. But Jesus wants us to taste and see those sparkling diamonds grace and to establish the brilliant rainbow of His peace from one end of our life to the other. Taste and see how gracious the Lord is.