

Read: Revelation 9:13-10:11

'So I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it; it was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.'

Revelation 10:10

Numbers are special in Revelation. The No.49 is my favourite. It corresponds to 'sweet and sour pork balls' at my local Chinese takeaway. In our reading today John gets his version of this Chinese delicacy, wrapped up in a scroll.

He's not the first person to eat this dish, the Prophet Ezekiel also ate sweet and sour scroll. It symbolised God putting His word inside Ezekiel. Ezekiel was given the hard task of taking God's message of salvation and judgement to a people who didn't want to hear (Ezekiel 3:1-9).

The same is true here. John is given God's word to proclaim. There is some hidden information which John is told not to proclaim (10:4). These things are above our pay grade to understand and we do well not to speculate about them. But John is to proclaim the mystery that is revealed on the scroll (10:7). This mystery is the gospel (Romans 16:25-26); Jesus Christ, God the Son made flesh so that He might die our death on the cross and be raised to the right hand of the Father to intercede for us.

It is a sweet message. Because of the cross, we who were God's enemies can be His friends. We were destined for judgement but now we have the sure hope of heaven. We were alone and lost but now God by His Spirit comes and lives inside us. How wonderful it is to know Jesus! How wonderful it is to tell someone else about Jesus!

However, it is also a bitter message. For those who won't listen to God it's a message of judgement. Sadly, people didn't want to hear Ezekiel and they didn't want to hear the apostle John, so they exiled him to Patmos (Revelation 1:9). In Revelation 9:20-21 people won't repent even after seeing the terrible effects of ignoring God. How hard it is to see someone walk away from Jesus.

Will we join Ezekiel and John, receiving and sharing this sweet and sour message? Let's pause and meditate on the sweetness of the gospel.

Who could we share this sweet message with over Christmas?

I wonder if the man who makes such delicious pork balls has heard the message of Jesus...

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