

FORBIDDEN HONEY

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King Saul made some pretty stupid decisions during his reign. One such decision is recorded in 1 Samuel 14. The Lord had just saved Israel from the Philistines. However, the men in Saul's army were feeling faint that day, because Saul had put them under oath, saying, "Cursed be the man that eateth any food before evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies." As the hungry soldiers marched on, they came into a wooded area with honey all over the ground. Jonathan, Saul's son, had not been in camp when Saul pronounced his curse on anyone who ate before evening. Being totally unaware of the ban on eating, Jonathan dipped the end of his staff into a honeycomb, ate some honey, "and his eyes were enlightened."

One of Jonathan's fellow soldiers told him about Saul's oath and curse. Jonathan replied, "My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found? For had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

Like Saul, some people in positions of leadership make selfish, stupid decisions which are of no benefit to anyone, and cause the Lord's people to suffer needlessly. Some leaders exploit, abuse, and manipulate their followers for selfish reasons. Saul's concern was not for the glory of the Lord or for the well-being of God's people. He simply wanted to deprive his soldiers of food until *he* could be avenged on *his* enemies. Saul didn't even think of the Philistines as God's enemies and the vengeance upon them as God's vengeance. Saul's obsession was "that / may be avenged on *mine* enemies."

Spiritual leaders sometimes make bad decisions that deprive God's

people of honey which enlightens the eyes. You may be wondering, "What does the 'honey that enlightens the eyes' represent in this story?" Let me answer that question with a question. What, according to the Scriptures, is "sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb" and "enlightens the eyes"? The answer is in Psalm 19:7-10:

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb."

The honey which enlightens the eyes is God's Torah, with its statutes, commandments, and judgments. Sometimes a Christian innocently does what Jonathan did. He dips his staff into the honey of God's Torah, tastes its sweetness, and his eyes light up. Then along comes another Christian who says, "Hey! That Old Testament stuff isn't for us! Didn't you hear the order? We're not allowed to taste the sweetness of the Sabbath, the Feast Days, and things like that. You can *study* about those things, but you aren't supposed to *do* them. You can look at the sweet honey drippings all over the ground, but don't touch or taste the honey. Cursed be the man that tasteth the honey of the Torah. That's what our leaders said."

Sorry, but it's too late to tell us that now. We have already tasted the forbidden honey of the Torah, and our eyes have been enlightened. And we have the testimony of the Scriptures that the Torah is a blessing, not a curse. "Blessed is the man... [whose] delight is in the law of the Lord" (Ps. 1:1f). We have read Yeshua's testi-

mony about the Torah in Matthew 5:17-19. We know from the Scriptures as well as from personal experience that the Torah is a sweet blessing, not a bitter curse.

The way that some Christian leaders view the Torah reminds me of Archie Bunker in the 1970s sit-com *All in the Family*. In one episode (which I did not see, but heard about), Archie was at the funeral of a Jewish man. He stood up to say a few words about the deceased, and said something like this: There's nuttin' wrong with bein' a Jew. As a matter of fact, Christ was a Jew. Until his Father said, 'Hey! No more of *that!*'

Christians who have not yet been indoctrinated with the "you can't do that" theology are more likely to experience the sweet honey of God's blessings than are those who have been told that the honey is not for them. This is true not only of the honey of the Torah, but of other blessings, too. Sometimes uneducated, untrained preachers can reach people who were considered unreachable by the preachers whose educators and trainers told them that those people were unreachable.

Sometimes people who haven't yet heard the news that "God stopped doing miracles" pray for miracles and receive them. Years ago I read a book by a former Jehovah's Witness. His baby daughter was born crippled. Some Christians prayed for her and she was supernaturally healed. When the happy father told his cohorts at the local Kingdom Hall what had happened, their response was, "But we don't believe in faith healing." Needless to say, he left the Jehovah's Witnesses Club.

People who have not yet been indoctrinated against speaking in tongues usually receive and experience this phenomenon easier than people who have been warned against it. I personally know two people who experienced praying in tongues as

new believers before they had even read or heard of the phenomenon. They were just praying intently and the tongues spontaneously poured out. They did not even know what they had experienced until after they told Christian friends about it. If they had been in a church which taught that praying in tongues is not for today, they might never have experienced it.

Sometimes the impossible task gets done by people who haven't been told that it's impossible. I once heard about a college student who missed the final exam of his advanced mathematics class, and had to make up the exam. The teacher handed him the test (it was a take-home final), but forgot to tell him that the last equation on the test was "just for fun." It was an equation that expert mathematicians had been unable to solve. The student stayed up half the night and solved it. He didn't hear that it was unsolvable because he had been isolated from the rest of the class, just like Jonathan didn't hear that the

honey was forbidden, because he was isolated from the rest of the camp.

And by the way, where was Jonathan when Saul declared the ban on eating? He was away from the main camp fighting against the Philistines, while Saul was sitting in the shade under a pomegranate tree doing nothing! This is how it often is today. Many Christian leaders sit in the shaded ivory towers of Mainstream Christianity, and do little more than criticize the common, grassroots believers who are outside the Mainstream Camp fighting the battles of the Lord.

Having said that, let me also say that it's important for us to remember that Jonathan and Saul were still on the same side. So it is with us and our born-again brothers in Mainstream Christianity. We don't want to fight against our brothers. We just want to persuade them to taste the forbidden honey of our Father's Torah, because our Father is not the one who has forbidden it. It is only misguided men

who forbid it. So if you have never tasted it, do like Jonathan did. Put forth your staff, dip it into the honey of God's Torah, taste and see - begin doing it - and your eyes will be enlightened.

Once you have tasted it, you will know that it is right. You will realize, like Jonathan did, that the reason so many of God's people are faint is because they have been deprived of this honey by the anti-Torah teachings of misguided leaders. And you will also realize, like Jonathan did, that there would be "a much greater slaughter" of the Lord's enemies in the spiritual realm if all of the Lord's soldiers could feast on the honey of the Torah.

And by the way, it is also important to mention that Saul wanted to kill Jonathan for eating the forbidden honey. So don't be surprised if you experience some opposition and persecution from honey-haters for feasting on the eye-opening honey of the Torah.