

“The Taste Test”

Amos 8:11-14

“You’ve got to taste this!” So said our mother as she thrust lima beans into our face. “You’ve got to taste this!” So says our mother-in-law who “found” a new casserole recipe. “You’ve got to taste this!” So says our “friend” who hid the habanero pepper in the cheese quesadilla.

But all this pales in comparison to the taste test conducted by a gourmet cook as she served dog food to her unsuspecting guests.

It all happened at an elegant reception near Denver. The dog food was served on delicate little crackers with a wedge of imported cheese, bits of bacon, an olive, and a sliver of pimento on top. It was hors d’oeuvres a la Alpo. The hostess had just graduated from a gourmet cooking class and decided it was time to put her skills to the ultimate test.

After doctoring up the dog’s dinner and putting it on a couple of silver trays, with a sly grin she watched them all disappear. One man just couldn’t get enough. When she broke the news to her guests, she was fortunate that they didn’t chase her down like a pack of wild dogs.

What a wasted opportunity. The woman was given all she needed to provide the best of food, and what she gave them really wasn't food.

Amos was a prophet of God living among a people hungering for real food and finding none. There was a famine of God's Word. Our world today is much like the world in which Amos preached, and the world in which Jesus preached. There were "religious" opportunities everywhere.

In Amos' day, there were "altars to the Lord" on every hillside – even though God only acknowledged and only desired the one altar at the Temple in Jerusalem.

In Jesus' day, the Pantheon of Roman and Greek gods offered a multitude of religious experiences, and for the Jew who desired to appear faithful, there was plenty of opportunity for false food in the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

People today line up to eat the empty calories of shallow sentimentalism, religious infotainment, or the feel good message of the theology of glory. "If you just believe enough, good things will happen to you." Even when you dress it up and put it on a silver tray, or on the silver screen, that food is not real food. Our life is continually filled with "Taste tests."

The enemy thrusts this junk food before us on silver trays and with a sly grin watches it all disappear. Filled to the brim with his miserable morsels our desire to regularly study, worship, learn, defend, trust,

believe, love, and live out this Word becomes a chore, a bore, a snore, and many say “no more.”

And there is a famine of the Word of God.

Jesus endured the ultimate taste test. Hebrews 2:9 says, “so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” Jesus tasted the demonic delight called death; the soldiers spit their cheap wine; blood and sweat running down His cheeks. But there was more. He drank the cup of the Father’s wrath, every last drop.

Yet Jesus not only tasted death, He swallowed it up, chewed it up, and spit it out. Paul says, “Death has been swallowed up in victory!”

This means that our famine and hunger has ended. The feast is here. The Passover Lamb feeds us with His own body and blood. The forgiveness, love, mercy, and salvation that was accomplished at Calvary is now present in the bread and wine by the power of the Word. The famine is ended. The feast is here. Amen.