

# The Milk of The Word

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I was kind of curious when Les was giving the sermonette how he was going to introduce himself. He just waded right into it. There's really not a good way to do that. I've done that a number of times.

Anyhow, we use that glass of water to kind of transition from the announcements to the message. And in this case, I wish I had a big glass of milk because I could take a big swig of that glass. I'd have a nice white mustache here, but then, we'd have a problem. You would probably be more embarrassed than I would as I tried to clean that off.

But that's what I'm going to talk about—the Scriptural use of the word "milk." The Old Testament, we know that they certainly used milk. It literally, the Bible talks about it literally. They certainly had cow's milk, goat's milk.

Camel's milk? Did they have camel's milk? If they had camel's milk, can you drink camel's milk? I'm not sure about that. I never looked into it.

Sometimes it's used metaphorically. We have the term "land of milk and honey" that we see in the Old Testament. And it's used also symbolically in the New Testament. And I'd just like to look at a couple of places where that's used so we can grasp the context of what I'm trying to get at here. We need, like Les was saying in the sermonette, we need to kind of get the context to see the original intent, the intent of the word, and in the end, more importantly, the application for us today.

So, the first place I want to go is to Paul's use of the word to the Church at Corinth. So, if you would, turn over to 1 Corinthians chapter 3. And I'm going to be using the New King James, unless I state otherwise. (I do that for the benefit of the lady that does our transcription. Hello, Karen!) But in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verses 1 through 3 where Paul's teaching and we're breaking in on the context here because we know they had multiple problems in the Corinthian Church. Their behaviors are bad, some of what Les talked about in the sermonette, but beginning in verse 1, it says:

**1 Corinthians 3:1.** *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.*

*2) I fed you with milk and not with solid food; (NKJ)*

I believe the King James says, in place of solid food, says "meat."

**1 Corinthians 3:2b.** *... for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able;*

*3) for you are still carnal. (NKJ)*

"Of the flesh" or "fleshly" some translations will say. Basically, it is talking from a human standpoint. That's what he's telling them. But continuing the last part of verse 3:

**1 Corinthians 3:3b.** *For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? (NKJ)*

I like the Complete Jewish Bible translation of that where it says, well, just to repeat verse 2.

**1 Corinthians 3:2.** *I gave you milk, not solid food, because you were not yet ready for it. But you aren't ready for it now either! (CJB)*

Verse 3 is what I'm getting at here.

**1 Corinthians 3:3.** *For you are still worldly! Isn't it obvious from all the jealousy and quarrelling among you that you are worldly and living by merely human standards? (CJB)*

And that's what Les talked a little bit about in the sermonette—about God's standards for us. He holds us to a higher standard.

But everything that they were doing that was causing the fighting and the division here was being calibrated off their human carnality. In other words, godly values were not their motivation. It was their own—they wanted their own way. They weren't getting closer to God. They were moving farther away by their behaviors.

And, also, we need to note that this division was in the Church. It's unlike today where we can because of the modes of transportation and all the other things that we have where we can kind of if we don't agree with someone, we just go somewhere else. We will separate ourselves geographically.

They couldn't do that then, but they had division within the Church. They were arguing. They were carrying on with one another. They were misbehaving spiritually. [It's] certainly not the way that Christ wanted them to do!

We can look back on some of the problems whenever Worldwide started to break up. There were arguments over who would be host, who would do this or that. And in some cases, it seems like hosts almost gained the status of an ordination! People would argue who got to be the host, who got to make the coffee, who got to make the rules and all that!

But what Paul was telling them there, and also for us today, was that they were spiritually immature wanting their way and not doing things God's way. He was also telling them that while they were in that state, they were not growing spiritually. They were, in fact, reverting to their initial state.

When we're initially called, God gives us the opportunity to be changed, to be regenerated from that carnal approach and attitude in everything that we do. He gives us that opportunity. We're spiritual babes at that point, just like it says there in 1 Corinthians 3 and verse 1. So, we used to call that being in the spiritual embryos when we were spiritual babes. And then, we would grow from that.

But he's telling them there at that point because they were acting like that, they needed "milk." And he's using that term symbolically as opposed to the "solid food" or the "meat." [He's] telling us what we really need there is the spiritual "meat" to be growing from that. If we're not maturing as Christians, then we need spiritual "milk." And it just means we're kind of holding in that pattern there and we're not growing like we should be.

Again, this was shown by their behavior—what they were doing to the Church, how they were treating each other. We know that we can look back and see that because of the things they were allowing, the sin they were allowing, in the Church, the local church, at Corinth that they were, in fact, liberal—we would use that term today—in their approach to things. It was a very—it's been compared to almost as modern a society as ours is today. But they were very magnanimous in permitting this sin to go on in the Church.

And we can kind of wonder how that would work, but if we would look at the political climate in our country today, we can compare how liberals and conservatives view different behaviors. On the one hand, people will tolerate a certain behavior and on the other hand, they won't do that. And liberals tend to overlook bad behaviors as long as that person agrees with their ideology, as long as they have the same political agenda and all that is promoted.

A good example is one of our recent presidents. And I won't use his name! But at the time of those things were going on and it became a national disgrace. But at the time most liberals would overlook what he was doing. They would even excuse his immoral sexual behavior because that's—he was being sleazy—as long as he stood for the things that they stood for. Some women-lib types even ignored his demeaning treatment of women. As long as they got their women's rights promoted, they would go along with that. In fact, rumor is that one prominent women's-lib type said that she would also engage in things with him—I'm putting that gently and kindly—as long as she got her agenda promoted.

So, that's kind of the way they were doing things in the Corinthian Church.

On the other hand, conservatives, then and even today, tend to be turned off by and unsupportive of someone that displays bad behavior because these things, these values mean much more than shared ideologies to conservatives. They have a low tolerance—again, some of the things Les talked about. They have a low tolerance for the perversion that we see in our leadership today.

And that's what Paul was telling them here. He said their behaviors, what they were liberally allowing in the Church at that time and the way they were behaving towards one another, were unbecoming of a spiritually mature Christian. They were not living by God's standards and were, in fact, evidence that they were not producing godly fruit, which we see in Galatians 5. We're very familiar with that.

So, Paul was using this term "milk" here negatively to make a point with the Corinthian Church. But, in contrast, let's turn over to 1 Peter 2 because Peter speaks of another kind of milk. Over in 1 Peter 2 and verse 2:

**1 Peter 2:2.** *as newborn babes, (NKJ)*

And that's what we are when we are first called.

**1 Peter 2:2b.** *... desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, (NKJ)*

So, here is the positive use of that word. And again, it is used symbolically.

Putting that with what we just read back in 1 Corinthians 3 and again I'll repeat that. (That's one of the perks of old age! You get to repeat yourself. And one of the reasons for that is you may have forgotten what you just said five minutes ago!) But 1 Corinthians 3 again, you don't need to turn back there. It's just in reference. I'll repeat that, 1 Corinthians 3 verses 1 through 3.

**1 Corinthians 3:1.** *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. (NKJ)*

And this is a derogatory term. He's calling them "babes" as opposed to what Peter said when he said they were babes, "as newborn babes. [These are] two different ideas. Verse 2:

**1 Corinthians 3:2.** *I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; (NKJ)*

They just weren't going anywhere. Verse 3:

**1 Corinthians 3:3.** *for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? (NKJ)*

So, this latter milk, the pure milk that Peter was talking about here, is the milk that we need. It's the one that we need to grow and to mature with.

Wherever we are spiritually, and God always knows where we are. We tend to make these judgmental things about each other. "That person may be converted or not converted. Or they're not acting right or they doing one thing or another." We tend to do that as human beings to one another. But God always knows exactly where we are.

We start at that point as newborn babes, spiritually, and then we grow from that point. Sometimes, if we were to graph that out, it would be kind of like a saw-tooth thing, but hopefully those peaks would gradually go up because we would be growing. We would be doing what we should be doing.

But He always knows where we are at spiritually. And we're exactly in the Church, whether we believe it or not, no matter where we're scattered, what point of compass or what place on the globe we find ourselves, we're where God wants us. And we all have a function in the Family because we're called into a Family. That's what we've been called to be a part of. Les alluded to that a little bit in the sermonette.

But the point, again, is we need to be nourished and fed from that point. We need that pure spiritual milk.

I heard someone point out recently—that thinking back to Paul and the Corinthian Church—that at that point in time, the problem was amongst the Brethren. They were going through all these things. They were fighting. They were basically being immature. They weren't growing in that state at all.

Whereas today, the problems are generally amongst the leaders; they can't get along. They're feeding the Brethren milk. In a sense, it's not allowing them to grow as we should. I think we've all experienced that to some degree or another. You can kind of think of Ezekiel 34 and that where it talks about the unjust or the irresponsible shepherds who feed themselves and don't feed the Brethren, like they need to be fed. We've seen that in some groups that put a focus on the leader. They become dependent upon the leader. They're focused on a Place of Safety and all of those kinds of things instead of Jesus Christ who is able to provide that pure milk that we need.

And we'll talk a little bit about that later, but it's just pure, it's unhindered milk that produces fruit for God because that's what we should be doing. And what is it talking about when it talks about this purity and the term "pure milk" of the Word here? If you look in a Greek dictionary, it would just tell you that "pure" here is just referring to [the fact that] it's unadulterated. There's no admixture in it.

Where we live we get our water—well, it's kind of a rural area where we get our water from wells. So, we get a statement every year on the purity of that water. And it will have some real yuckies in it, but they're going to try to feel good about the water they're providing and charging you for. So, we get a list every year. I just got one recently and it talks about the natural bacteria. Yuck! But if you get water out of the ground, you're going to have natural bacteria in it. It talks about the nitrates. There is a part per million of nitrates. The chlorine, the fluoride, the lead, the arsenic—all of those things are in there. It's got a lot of stuff in it. We're drinking that stuff every day, even when we filter it. So, it's not pure is the point that I'm trying to make there.

But God's Word, if we take it as it's given to us, it is pure. It's filtered through God the Father and Jesus Christ. That's how we got it. So, how does this work. Again, let's continue in 1 Peter 1. I don't think I moved from there, 1 Peter 1 verse 1.

**1 Peter 1:1.** *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia [primarily to the scattered Jews, the diaspora],*

*2) elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, (NKJ)*

God knew He was going to call us. He knew where he was going to place us. He knew what He was going to give us.

**1 Peter 1:2b.** *... in sanctification of the Spirit, (NKJ)*

That's what we get. We get sanctified. Upon repentance and baptism, God gives us His holy spirit and sets us apart.

**1 Peter 1:2 continued.** *... for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.*

*3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us [likened to a physical birth] ... (NKJ)*

Again, when we're first converted, we're like newborn babes.

**1 Peter 1:3 continued.** *... us again [has begotten us again] to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

*4) to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled [More purity!] and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

*5) who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (NKJ)*

I heard someone point out one time that there is a whole bunch of really good stuff right here. And just a short bullet list:

- Peter said that he was an apostle. If we go back to the very beginning of 1 Peter there, he said that he was an apostle—one sent of Jesus Christ. It didn't mean that he was an apostle—self-appointed apostle. There was no claim to preeminence over anyone. We can't find that anywhere in the New Testament. That preeminence is a Catholic concoction.
- Begotten spiritually, that's what it's telling us also here in the context. In a process, we're babes—newborn babes. We grow to maturity. We grow up into Christ as we'll see later in a Scripture.
- We have the hope of the resurrection. Christ led the way to that. He was the first One resurrected from the dead.
- We're also called to Jesus Christ by the Father, as referenced here, to an inheritance—co-heirs with Christ! We just read back there in verse 4.

- And it all involves salvation with eternal life in God's Kingdom. There is a whole bunch of stuff right there. In other words, Peter and all the apostles preach the gospel which includes all these things mentioned here. It's a complete package contained in the pure Word of God. It's not bits and pieces. That we'll talk about a little bit later.

So, how does this incredible package get impurities in it? How does that affect us? Let's turn over to Ephesians 4. And you might hold your place here. I'm coming back to 1 Peter. Ephesians 4 beginning in verse 11.

***Ephesians 4:11.*** *And He [Christ] gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,  
12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying [the building up] of the body of Christ,  
13) till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (NKJ)*

That's the goal! Again, there is the analogy of a family there—God's [Family] in this case. There is the begetting of children. There is a growth process over time to become a fully mature, spiritually, adult, but this won't happen in our lifetime. Will it? I'm going to mention more of that later, but let's go down to verse 14 to continue here.

***Ephesians 4:14.*** *that we should no longer be children [as babies as Paul might say], tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine [blown one way or another], (NKJ)*

I was sitting out on my patio behind our house a while back and we get these— And we have these cottonwoods that live upwind—big ones! So, we get all these things flying through the air. Our garage gets full of them. They get in everything else. But I was watching one of those one day and it just blew through the patio because they're lighter than air. Well, maybe they have enough little fingers or whatever they are to carry them through just the air currents.

But that's the way, sometimes, the teachings can be. Or we can be bounced around like that from teaching to teaching. We've done that a little bit, unfortunately.

But continuing the verse here:

***Ephesians 4:14b.*** *... by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, (NKJ)*

And sometimes, I personally, my own personal opinion is sometimes that's not even intentional. Satan is working in the background there too. So, we'll be fooled sometimes inadvertently.

Verse 15:

**Ephesians 4:15.** *but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— (NKJ)*

And the context of these last two verses is pretty important. That verse 15, when is a doctrine, again, the trickery of men? It is talking about men's agendas. And we have seen some of that too. Not God's agenda according to His gospel which is, again, the complete package and that's where the purity lies. If we pollute that, if we put an admixture in there of men's ideas and try to mix that in there, then it's not pure anymore. Verse 15, where it talked about holding the truth in love and note there that is *agape* love. That is God's love; in other words, it is pure words of godly truth, taught, spoken, acted upon with the same love God has. We can't do that in an impure fashion. We just can't do that! We need that pure milk to grow by, to use it because that's what God's agenda is. It is love. It's His Kingdom headed by Christ as King. That's His agenda.

So, if somebody comes along and starts emphasizing a particular doctrine that becomes their focus, exclusive of the rest of the gospel, and their agenda is to teach and promote apart from the rest of God's Word, in other words, they don't use the whole package—and we've fallen into that. All of us have been affected by that to some degree or another—the purity of God's Word becomes adulterated because men's agendas are always self-serving. There is always self-serving. There is always politics there. Men may want a following. They may want recognition. It's all based on carnal vanity.

I know some people are probably thinking, "Oh, whoa there Jack! You've slung out a pretty broad brush there." But I think if we are honest with ourselves, we have all seen this in the past and unfortunately, many times some of us have been a part of that.

Now I heard someone mention recently that whenever someone achieves fame, celebrity status, it takes on the properties of a narcotic. And anyone that gets addicted to a drug that potent doesn't give it up easily. They want to hang onto it. They're going to run with it. It works in politics. It works in entertainment. It works in the Church. We've seen it!

We can take a look at the example of prophecy. I heard someone mention this recently, but they said that sometimes people would rather hear about prophecy than they would rather hear about love! Again, it's a whole package. Sometimes prophetic speculation is interesting. We can look at some different events. We can kind of speculate how they might come about, but we need to be really careful with that. And sometimes people have used that and kind of strung us along with that.

There are certain things we know are going to happen, but to say it dogmatically that there is a certain date attached to that—this event is going to occur this or that time—that's when we get into trouble. Leaders get into trouble telling us that. We get into trouble listening to that—following those ideas. I'll use an example later on that kind of illustrates that because we have seen that happen.



Christ says that He appoints His prophets, His apostles, His teachers. We just read that. And where are they today! We've seen false prophets! Fortunately, we have the internet. We can go out there and look. We can see different Churches of God with different leadership that are not right. Basically, they are leading people astray. That's not purity is my point again.

Let's go back to 1 Peter 1. Hopefully, you've kind of saved a place there, but back in 1 Peter 1. And the point I'm trying to make here is that we can speculate, we can play with prophecy and all that, but we don't know. Scripture is going to tell us we can't know exactly when these events are going to occur. But in 1 Peter 1 verse 10:

**1 Peter 1:10.** *Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, (NKJ)*

Again, hold your place here in 1 Peter. There are all kinds of prophecies in different places, but I'd like to go over to Daniel. Remember something about Daniel—he wanted to know what all the visions and things meant! But what did God tell him? He says, "You have to wait." He says, "These things are going— You go your way, Daniel. These things are going to happen way, way, way down the line. You don't need to concern yourself with it. You have enough problems!"

But in Daniel 2 verse 44:

**Daniel 2:44.** *"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom... (NKJ)*

God's always had a Kingdom. He is a Royal Kingdom Family with love, humility, meekness, a total attitude of caring for all of His creation and He kind of demands that we be the same way. A little bit of what Less was talking about in the sermonette.

But continuing the verse here, verse 44:

**Daniel 2:44b.** *... which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. (NKJ)*

We know that's going to happen! Verse 44:

**Daniel 2:45.** *"Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold— (NKJ)*

Referring to the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream and it represented all of man's empires and that entails, how they have been carnal, self-serving and all of that—totally unlike God's Kingdom! Totally unlike God's attitude and approach!

But continuing the last part of verse 45:

***Daniel 2:45b.*** ... *the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure." (NKJ)*

But it just doesn't tell us yet when it is going to happen!

So King Nebuchadnezzar had this dream. One of God's servants interpreted the dream and basically told him that the Kingdom of God is really all that is going to matter in the end. It's not all this other stuff, man's kingdoms, man's empires, man's rule have thought have been so important. It's just not going to be there in the end because God really owns everything and eventually He's going to replace it. He's going to destroy it, get it out of the way. And then, God the Father and Jesus Christ can go on to do what they have planned to do from the very beginning. It's always been there.

Do you remember that— One of the first Scriptures that we ever heard—we took the old Correspondence Course, and that kind of dates me way, way, back (us, my wife and I)—but back in Mark 1 verse 14. The context there shows John baptized Christ. Then John was in prison and Christ came to Galilee doing what? "Preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God", again, the whole package! And it is a pure package when it's altogether, unless the pieces are pulled out of it and it's used in a wrong way. That's adulteration.

And this prophecy about God's Kingdom also includes the grace of God with the experience. Let's turn back to 1 Peter 1. In the past, we never heard too much about the grace of God, but actually this is pretty interesting. And this is not the purpose of my message today to talk about grace, but I need to inject it here. 1 Peter 1 verse 10, repeating again.

***1 Peter 1:10.*** *Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, (NKJ)*

And, in reality, God extends that grace to all mankind, but especially to those who are called now, that have answered that calling. In other words, that grace has given us an opportunity to have a relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father. And the whole story behind grace, as we know—even though we were never taught much about it in the past—it's not a free ticket, but it does include that spiritual opportunity. I like to look at it in the way of that popular commercial that talks about "My family to your family" where they're selling spaghetti or something. In that case, they want something from us, but God doesn't! We don't deserve what God has graciously given us. It's from His Family to us! And God's grace does not change us as an individual. It just gives us that opportunity to have that relationship with Him.

In a sense, we've been called into God's Family, into His Kingdom now. Not that the Church is His Kingdom. I'm not promoting that kind of an idea at all, but it's interesting, the whole subject of grace is interesting. If you want to check it out, turn to Revelation

22 verse 21, the very last words of the Bible. The very last words in Scripture we have: "May the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord be with you all!" Some translations say, "with the saints."

But back to 1 Peter verse 11. And remember in verse 10, the prophets searched carefully for these things. Verse 11:

**1 Peter 1:11.** *searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who [or which] was in them was indicating when [it] testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. (NKJ)*

The sufferings of Christ—Isaiah 53, Isaiah recorded that.

And there were a lot of prophecies concerning the Messiah, but did he know when that was going to happen? He didn't know that. He just recorded that it was going to happen. And all the prophets searched; they wanted to know all the specifics about the events surrounding and regarding the Messiah. They wanted to know that.

The Greek here for "manner of time," which it says in that verse, just means a season. It's not a specific time frame. And we know kind of what that's talking about, but we won't see it until it happens. We don't know. We will just know and recognize it when it does happen.

The whole prophecy about Jesus Christ being born of a woman, dying for all of man's sins, being buried, resurrected, ascending to the Father, all those things were prophesied, but nobody knew when it was going to happen till it did. But we see that now. It's been recorded for us. But the prophets prophesied of that hundreds of years before that.

And we also see that part of those prophecies we've seen some of these played out were about His return to set up a Kingdom. We know that we've been called into His Family to be part of that Kingdom. And we know that He's called us to be part of His Church, which just means His spiritual organism. It's not; again, we've said that many times—we're the firstfruits. We're part of God's Kingdom now.

So it's not a specific hour, a day that we need to be looking for these things and expending enormous amounts of energy trying to figure it out. Some do, they get fixated because they want to know those specifics at the expense of everything else. Examples are like trying to calculate certain events on the calendar or trying to calculate other things. We've heard things recently about if we can calculate the Jubilee year, and then we're going to know exactly when Christ returns. And just different things like that.

But let's continue here in 1 Peter 1 verse 12.

**1 Peter 1:12.** *To them it was revealed that, not to themselves [speaking of the prophets here], but to us... (NKJ)*

They prophesied of those future events. Some of which we've seen, but we haven't seen all of them yet. But continuing:

**1 Peter 1:12b.** ... *they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you... (NKJ)*

Ongoing with God's Plan completed, that's what is going to happen. That is going to be the end of it.

**1 Peter 1:12 continued.** ... *through those who have preached the gospel (NKJ)*

Again, it's all contained within that package—the Gospel about God's Kingdom.

The last part of the verse:

**1 Peter 1:12 continued.** ... *to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things which angels desire to look into.*

In other words, until it happens, angels don't even know when it's going to happen. They don't know when things are precisely going to occur. They just don't know. And yet, we see it all the time. People want to know when these things are going to happen. Prophecy is very popular—very popular messages. If we really knew when things were going to happen, what would that change? What would that change in our life? Sometimes, prophecy, if we can understand some things, if we can see things playing out that have been prophesied, that might give us some urgency to where we would be doing things better that we do now in a lot of cases.

But some just vainly try to figure all that out. They just want exclusive knowledge, evidently. And maybe they do have a self-serving agenda. I don't know. It goes right back to what Paul was talking about to the Corinthians there of self-righteous human nature.

A lot of people look at Daniel's visions along with Revelation and try to figure out precisely when all of those events will occur. We know what they taught and prophesied certain events about God's coming Kingdom. We know that. We've seen that. We've seen that in the Scriptures, but they didn't exactly know when it would occur. Again, they just knew pieces.

If we really think about that, God has graciously given us the things that we need. It's a pure gospel. If it is a complete package, it's pure. God has given us all, everything that we need and the grace that we need for salvation.

We don't need to have the knowledge of when all these things will occur. We just don't need that! If we would just learn to put our lives in the hands of Jesus Christ and grow in that love and grow in those things in that relationship with Christ and His way of life and just learn about those things and not worry and fret about when all these things were

going to happen because if we knew—Scripture tells us we won't know. We can't know when these things will occur. We can make some guesses. We can theorize about it, but one thing we should be theorizing and guessing about is our relationship with Christ. Again, we'll be aware of these things when they do happen. We will recognize them.

We also have people that worry about a Place of Safety. That we can somehow wind up in a Place of Safety and survive there. I don't know how many people that we have known (And we probably did it ourselves to a certain amount because of things that were being taught at the time.), but we've known a lot of people (and us included again) that have come into the Church to a large degree to save our skin. But the fact is that we will all die! Our bodies will die. And there is not a single thing we can do about that. There is no way that we can somehow flee and survive. If we think about that, it's just not logical. At some point, we will die.

I have to be a little bit careful with this because I had the opportunity to give this sermon in Prosser before I give it here and it goes out in the public—sorry. But I had the opportunity to give it and when I said that we will all die, I got a lot of hard looks, which kind of tells you again some of that conditioning in the past that we would go to a Place of Safety and we would somehow survive there.

But the point is we have to leave this physical dimension and enter a spiritual dimension. That's where we begin our eternal life! We don't begin it in a Place of Safety.

If we—yesterday I read through 1 Corinthians 15. And I think it is a good idea if we occasionally just do that. Have you ever considered that everything that Paul wrote about in 1 Corinthians 15 about our bodies being changed that was never put together before? That's not in the Old Testament. We've had some allusions about that. A little bit in Job, you know "my change" and all that. There are some vague references, but that was never put together the way that Paul did there in 1 Corinthians to the Corinthians in chapter 15.

When Nicodemus came to Christ, he wanted to know about that. Now, Nicodemus was a Pharisee. He was member of the Sanhedrin. He knew those Scriptures. That wasn't there. He wanted to know about this. He asked Christ, "How does this change happen?" He didn't understand it. "Can I enter again into my mother's womb and be born again?" He didn't understand it. So, again, we have to—going to a Place of Safety is okay and we kind of hope that we get to go or some of us do in any case, but that is not the goal! Again, that's actually not part of the package. The package is much, much more than that—way more than that!

So, again, we know all this, but we can't know when. At some point we know that we're going to be changed. We take that on faith that we will be changed. We can look back on it from that point and we'll have perfect understanding. In fact, there are some Scriptures that allude to that and say that we will have understanding. It will be clear. We'll know when it happens. We'll see all these events played out.

Let's again, save your place wherever you are at there, but over in Hebrews 11 and this talks about folks in the Old Testament who had faith, lived by faith and they didn't know any of the things that we know today. But let's notice something here. In Hebrews 11 verse 31, just picking up the last part of Hebrews chapter 11, verse 31:

**Hebrews 11:31.** *By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.*

*32) And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: (NKJ)*

Again, notice that the prophets also died in faith. It included everybody there! They didn't know what was going to happen later on, but they died in faith. They taught; they preached what God inspired them. And God gave His spirit to the prophets so they could teach these things. They would know these things in the first place and then, they could teach them, but they didn't know exactly when that would happen. They died in faith.

But let's go on in verse 39:

**Hebrews 11:39.** *And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, (NKJ)*

Faith in God and Jesus Christ that things would happen as they were told to preach!

**Hebrews 11:39b.** *... [and] did not receive the promise, (NKJ)*

They never saw the fulfillment of those prophecies—those things that they taught, preached about, wanted to look into—never saw! They couldn't figure out precisely when they were going to happen and they tried to do that, but they had to write about them. The point is they had to write about them from the standpoint of what they understood. They had to write about them in vague terms.

And that's kind of what we have today. That's why we don't the specifics. In the first place, God didn't want us to or we would.

I knew a man one time that he complained very loudly to me. He wasn't in the Church, but it's an individual that I used work with and liked to argue about Scripture and things like that. But he says, "Why isn't the Bible clear? Why doesn't it just specifically spell out everything that God wants us to do and wants us to know?" Well, it does! God never intended that at all.

Let's go to verse 40. But, again, He did inspire people to record, to write these things and to faithfully teach them. In verse 40:

**Hebrews 11:40.** *God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. (NKJ)*

Does that imply at some point that we will have perfect understanding? That's kind of my opinion. These individuals were prophesying about our time when Christ would come and we would have that opportunity to be called, to be part of God's Family, but this would fit the whole plan together. And, again, the whole plan is all the pieces but they couldn't understand that from their standpoint in history.

I had a—one time I ran across a history timeline. It was Bible timeline available on the internet. It was actually a wall size chart. It was made in a circular form, but it showed Biblical events. And, then, it showed at the same time—expanded out onto the curve—it showed historical events and how all those things corresponded down through the years. Actually, it was a pretty neat chart. I never bought one, but I should. It's kind of interesting. But all those things were synchronized and came together as a big puzzle. When you think about that, God knows all that. God's got all the pieces to the puzzle! We kind of worry about the little pieces that we can't figure out where that fits, but God see it all is the point!

That's what the prophets had. They just had the pieces that God gave them at the time and couldn't put it altogether. And when you think about this, if you followed my train of thought here, if we think about this, it is the same way with us today. What we know today and what we understand today, other people are going to see in the future after us. That may be down in the Millennium. That may be in years to come. We don't know, but we're kind of in the same boat as these people that died in faith—until all mankind has all this. And then God's going to show it to everybody. Everybody is going to have that opportunity to be in God's Family. Again, part of that big package, right? That's what the Holy Days—that's what the Feast is about. That's what it shows us. That's what the Last Great Day is about.

But the point being, we're not perfect yet. We don't know what it is really going to be like. We don't know when things are actually going to occur. And all of these prophecies happened, but no one knew a thing. So, we kind of have to ask ourselves "When are we going to learn that we just need to have this relationship with God the Father, with Jesus Christ?" We need to grow by that pure Word of God. We need to put the whole package in our lives and try to use as much of that package as we can. Just live and walk in faith! Just like these individuals that we talked about there in Hebrews 11. And when it is time for everything to come together, it will come together! God's plan will happen. It is like it said there in Daniel, "the interpretation is sure." It is going to happen.

But we still can see people insist on knowing when the future is going to happen, what's going to happen in the future. I remember back in the seventies. We came in the Church in the early seventies and the big deal then was 1975, right? Everybody was going to flee in 1972. We thought it was too late for us. We actually came in right at that point, although we had known about the church. We had studied the Correspondence Course. We had done different things in the late sixties. We weren't able to be baptized until 1973. But we thought '75 was—in '72 everybody was going to flee to a Place of Safety. Three and a half years later it was all going to be over and blah blah. Unfortunately, that mentality—there are still people looking for 1975 today!

At one time, you know—and I don't mean this in a derogatory way—AC was known as the "School of the Prophets." You remember years ago, all those PT articles, every little hiccup in the weather? Every little hiccup in Europe, especially if there was a name popped up there of Hapsburg, Otto Van Hapsburg. (He just died recently, by the way. So, that wasn't the answer.) Every little thing that happened in the Middle East that became part of prophecy. Actually, it was a diversion in a lot of ways. And, unfortunately, we kind of fell into that, you know. "The end is coming. It's urgent that we get the work out. Send more money." And it's unfortunate.

We knew a man one time that we used to give him a ride to services. Back in those days, we had a number of widows. We had a van at that time. We would pick up a number of widows and we picked up this one man. He would subscribe to *U. S. News and World Report*, and he would very laborious go through every article in that—underline, highlight, exclamation marks—because it all meant something to him. That's what he was taught and that's the way he looked at things. And we were taught to watch the news. Do not watch yourselves like we should have been doing! Watch what people were doing to us! We were to watch the news. So, that's what he was doing.

Now this is an individual—and I say this affectionately—even though this individual is a bit eccentric, he would do that, he had an extremely high IQ! This guy was a nuclear physicist, but he decided because he thought everything was going to be over so quickly, he decided to check out of society. He became a handyman and in the end couldn't even support himself. He's gone now. And again, I say that with great affection because he was a good friend. But that's what that did to him—looking at things like that!

Some groups still today tell the members to "Sell everything. It's time to flee." We have to realize too that most religious systems will do the same thing. They will use that same tactic for members. There is probably not a one of them out there that won't tell the members—their true believers—that they will survive some kind of an apocalyptic holocaust if they will do what they say. And "By the way, send more money."

We've had this example of this individual recently, this Harold Camping, that did all that stuff. Again, that's men's agendas. That's men's agendas. That's not the package. That's not the pure word of God, the Gospel that Christ taught that these prophets, these individuals prophesied about in the past. That's not the entire thing. That's a piece of it and they are using that—misusing that! That is the trickery of men.

We also know there is a tribulation. We kind of worry about that, we don't know when that's going to be. We don't know how severe that's going to be, but we're safe in Jesus Christ as it says in Ephesians 3. If I'm there or close to there, save your place again if you're somewhere in 1 Peter, but in Ephesians 3 verse 8 (again, yes, save your place in 1 Peter 1) verse 8:

***Ephesians 3:8.*** *To me, [breaking in on the context] who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, (NKJ)*



God graciously gave him [the apostle Paul] this opportunity, graciously blinded him on the way to Damascus, gave him this apostleship, did all of that. He didn't deserve that! No more than any of us deserve to be where we're at now where we're sitting today! Not a bit. This grace was given to him and he wasn't just saying that. He really meant it. He really knew he was the least of all the apostles. He knew that because of the things he had done. He lived with that every day. In some respects we should kind of feel that way too.

But going on here:

***Ephesians 3:8b.*** ... that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, (NKJ)

Now how could we vainly think that if they are unsearchable riches that we could search them and find them out? That we could know these unsearchable things beforehand, what would happen, when these events would occur?

Going on here in verse 9:

***Ephesians 3:9.*** and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God... (NKJ)

It is hidden, because it has only been revealed a piece at a time. We are seeing more of it now than they did in the past. People in the future are going to see more than we see.

***Ephesians 3:9b.*** ... who created all things through Jesus Christ;  
10) to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, (NKJ)

The point being that as these things come to light, they are known, recognized by us. We are aware of them, but not beforehand. Verse 11:

***Ephesians 3:11.*** according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, (NKJ)

[This is] all part of the plan, all part of the package.

***Ephesians 3:12.*** in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in [faith of] Him [as we know]. (NKJ)

The confidence, assurance actually, that everything God says will happen. That's what we have confidence in. That's what we have faith in. Verse 13:

***Ephesians 3:13.*** Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

14) *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*  
15) *from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*  
16) *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, (NKJ)*

That's how we even know the things about God's Family. That's how we even know there is a complete package. And grace is part of that package. Verse 17:

***Ephesians 3:17.*** *that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (NKJ)*

That's how we endure, not by what we know concerning a date or a schedule of an event. Verse 18:

***Ephesians 3:18.*** *may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—*  
19) *to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (NKJ)*

Where it talked about not losing heart there in Ephesians 3:13, kind of put that together again in going back to 1 Peter 1 and verse 12. And we don't want to lose heart when we don't see things happening. Verse 12, 1 Peter 1:

***1 Peter 1:12:*** *To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, (NKJ)*

Again, I'm repeating myself.

***1 Peter 1:12b.*** *... but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those... (NKJ)*

I've mentioned that already, but let's jump down to 13.

***1 Peter 1:13.*** *Therefore [because of those things] gird up the loins of your mind, (NKJ)*

We have heard that before. What that is referring to is that is a metaphor for a type of clothing that they had on at that time. They would basically bunch it up, wrap it around themselves so they could face what they needed to face. They could do what they needed to do. They could run, fight, do whatever they needed to do.

But the point of the metaphor there is to not lose heart over things that we don't see happening that you tried to predict. That's how we lose heart. And that's why if we get off focus, off the pure gospel, off Jesus Christ, off God's Kingdom, off God's Family, off those things that we have so much of in God's Word that tell us [what] we need to be doing, that's what happens. We start to lose heart.

When we listen to people that pretend to have all the answers, we lose heart when those things don't happen, or when something happens to that individual. We have our focus on the wrong things.

But the last part of verse 13, where it says, 1 Peter 1 verse 13:

**1 Peter 1:13b.** ... be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (NKJ)

So, we just need to rest our hope, knowing that when He returns we will experience something greater than whatever our lot has been in life now because we're going to be changed! We're going to have that face to face opportunity, that face to face relationship in a spiritual dimension when we are changed.

Verse 14:

**1 Peter 1:14.** as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; (NKJ)

That's what the Corinthians were doing! That's what Paul was scolding them about. And we don't want to stay in that ignorance of when we were a human being, because in that ignorance, we knew nothing about God. We knew nothing about God's plan. We knew nothing the package. [We] didn't understand a bit of it! We didn't even know there was a maturing process. We thought we were already there as long as we were grown-up and changed clothes, starting wearing adult clothes. We thought we were grown-up.

Verse 15:

**1 Peter 1:15.** but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, (NKJ)

Not just sometimes conduct, but our behavior all the time because it happens because of what we are inside. And, again, that's imparted through God's grace when He empowers us with His holy spirit.

Verse 16:

**1 Peter 1:16.** because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." (NKJ)

God expects us to be holy, unlike those Corinthians, unlike some of the things that we fall into sometimes. He expects us to be holy. Les talked about that a little bit in the sermonette.

Verse 17:

**1 Peter 1:17.** *And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, (NKJ)*

Judges not who you are, but what you are! What He sees in you, not what you pretend to be, but what is really there! What is shown and displayed in your conduct.

**1 Peter 1:17b.** *... conduct yourselves [continuing the verse] throughout the time of your stay here in fear; (NKJ)*

That's not a fear of what is going to happen because we think some event is going to occur or a fear of not being in a Place of Safety, but that is a fear of our awesome God! That is what that is talking about—that deep respect. We need to fear that way. And we need to have that faith.

If we have that proper fear and that love for God, fear dissipates. We don't have that. We're not fearful because of these things that are happening in the world and the other thing, because we know what is going to happen. We know things are going to happen. We just don't know when!

Verse 18:

**1 Peter 1:18.** *knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things [the debt that Christ paid for us], like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, (NKJ)*

Kind of hold your place there, but when it talks about tradition there, "tradition from your fathers," that's kind of interesting. If we go back to Ezekiel 20 and verse 12, it talks a little bit about these traditions.

**Ezekiel 20:12.** *"Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them. (NKJ)*

In other words, what it is showing there is what sanctifies us is God. It's not that we are special because we keep the Sabbath. It is because we use those things in a right way. In Ezekiel, those people were captive. Ezekiel was talking to the captives. They, because of their idolatry and breaking the Sabbaths and doing all those things, is why they were captive. He's telling them that they are—and they weren't converted yet but—they still needed to obey God. It goes on here to say in verse 18— I'm sorry. Let's jump down to verse 19.

**Ezekiel 20:19.** *'I am the Lord your God: Walk in My statutes, (NKJ)*

They were polluting what God had given them. What purity they had up to that point, they were polluting those things and they were sinning! They were doing things that God was very displeased with. That is why they were in captivity.

**Ezekiel 20:19b.** *Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them; 20) 'hallow My Sabbaths, (NKJ)*

They were inventing their own "Sabbaths" in some cases.

**Ezekiel 20:20b.** *... and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God. (NKJ)*

It kind of points back to what Peter was talking about there in 1 Peter—"Be holy as I am holy." Just live and walk, do things the way God tells us to do in that package, as part of that package.

But let's go back and continue in 1 Peter 1 verse 19.

**1 Peter 1:19.** *but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20) He indeed was foreordained [told about before] before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you (NKJ)*

When it happened, we recognized when it happened, but earlier, no one recognized it even though they talked about it. They preached and taught it in faith. They didn't know when it was going to happen.

Verse 21:

**1 Peter 1:21.** *who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. (NKJ)*

Not in these things that we can't predict; that we can't know. And that's what it is all about. It is not about knowing something special, not knowing which army is going to invade us and destroy us and take us into captivity and all those things. It's knowing that love, that grace, that peace, that joy, and everything that God gives us that He has called us into and given us an opportunity to have a part of.

Verse 22, 1 Peter 1:

**1 Peter 1:22.** *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth... (NKJ)*

And that's part of the pure milk of God's Word—the Truth! Isn't it? What does it say over in John that to worship God, we have to worship Him in spirit and truth? It's the only way it works. Not somebody's version of what the truth is. Not somebody's belief system. It is what is in God's Word—what is in the package!

Continuing the verse:

**1 Peter 1:22b.** ... through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, (NKJ)

And a lot of people would rather hear about prophecy than hear about love. But there is no greater thing than love. Remember 1 Corinthians 13? Prophecy and all things are going to fail. And we've heard that interpreted as "Yeah, it's going to be complete." But all those things are going to fail. Tongues are going to cease; knowledge is going to cease; all those things in a worldly sense, in a physical sense, but the love of God is going to be the only thing standing in the end. And God says that love passes all understanding. We can't really fully grasp it until we are changed.

In verse 23 of 1 Peter 1:

**1 Peter 1:23.** having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through [and I've inserted "the pure"] word of God which lives and abides forever, (NKJ)

The whole package lives and abides forever! Verse 24:

**1 Peter 1:24.** because "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, (NKJ)

Flesh has to be changed—again, Christ to Nicodemus explaining this, trying to explain this to him. Verse 25:

**1 Peter 1:25.** But [And again, I've inserted "the pure".] word of the Lord endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. (NKJ)

And that sums it all up perfectly by telling us the only thing that is going to matter in the end is going to be God's love. It is going to be everything in the package that God tells us is going to happen.

So, that's the essence of what the gospel is all about. And that is what the Pure Milk of the Word is about. Let's do like Peter says and is recorded for us there again in 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 2:

**1 Peter 2:2.** as newborn babes, (NKJ)

And we want to go beyond that baby stage.

**1 Peter 2:2b.** ... desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, (NKJ)