



April 25, 2010

Little Bites

We have a saying, “Don’t bite off more than you can chew.” and we understand that means not to overdo things. Dieters try to take weight off too fast with chemicals, starvation and surgery and wind up endangering their health. People accumulate too much debt and then find that they do not have the resources to pay the bills. Others take on multiple tasks and find their health endangered or they have no time to do well on all the things they have going on. God has given us examples of how to do things. As we read the scriptures that God performs things in stages and sometimes over very long periods of time. Creation (Gen 1) was done over a period of six days, Each day was dedicated by God to specific aspect of creation. God could have created everything all at once but he didn’t. He took it in smaller steps. When Israel was preparing to enter the land of Canaan, God gave them an explanation of the manner in which things would be accomplished. “***And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.***” (Deut 7.22). This makes sense and is a very wise strategy. Would humans have thought of the need to take things slowly so that the population of animal predators would not present a hazard? Maybe they would have but examining the scriptures reveals that God thinks about everything and plans ahead. The same is true of salvation. Paul reveals that the plan to save mankind was in the mind of God before creation (Eph 1.1-4, Titus 1.1-2). Why didn’t God just save man right after the sin of Adam and Eve? There are lot of possible reasons for this but not knowing precisely what God was thinking, any statement would be nothing but speculation on our part. However, God has given us the scriptures which reveal some things about God and the manner in which he works that also serves to teach us about patience. God’s wisdom is demonstrated in the way in which he brought things about. His power is demonstrated in the fact that he was able to make them happen. God revealed to Abraham that his children would multiply, be prisoners in a foreign land but return in the fourth generation (Gen 15.13-16). That is a demonstration of knowledge and wisdom. In verse 16 of this passage it also shows the ability to execute judgment. God reveals that the children of Abraham would be the instrument of punishment against the Amorites whose evil was not yet full. The passage that we cited earlier in Deuteronomy is evidence of the fact that after over 400 years, God was able to fulfill the promise that he had made to Abraham and now the children of the patriarch stood on the shores of their promised home. There are multiple threads throughout the scriptures that show that God has worked slowly over long periods of time to make things happen, and they have. Exactly as he planned. Christ came into the world with thousands of years of planning and preparation. He came at the exact time that God wanted him to (Gal 4.4). Christ died, as planned and was raised from the dead, as planned. He ascended back to his place at the right hand of God (Acts 2.33). God now waits for that time, that only he knows (Matt 24.36) when he will send Christ to judge the world and bring an end to creation. God works slowly over long periods of time. He does things in stages and while his power is unlimited he demonstrates that he is judicious in how he does things. What does all this tell us? The journey to the eternal home is one that will be accomplished in the little things that are done day by day. Changes in our lives will have to be done over years or perhaps the course of an entire lifetime. We will have to remind ourselves every day of our goal and face the challenges that present themselves. We will have to demonstrate patience in these things as we strive to acquire a knowledge of God’s word and identify what he would have us to do. It is a slow process and perhaps the reason why some people give up is because they don’t see any visible results. Many of the faithful lived and died never seeing the things that God spoke of (Heb 11.39-40, but they believed the Lord and had confidence in those promises.

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