

SOMETHING SPECIAL

“Sweeter than honey” Psalm 119:103

SMALL DIFFERENCES

I was recently reminded about something that happened back in my school days. I had turned in a paper and had spelled a word wrong. I had written desert when I should have used dessert. My teacher taught me a trick to help me not make this mistake again. She told me to commit to memory the idea that the two s’s in dessert stand for ‘something special’ and that would help me remember the spelling difference. It worked and I have always remembered it.

DESERTS AND DESSERTS

Though there is only a single letter difference in the spelling of desert and dessert, there is a significant difference in their meanings. I think most would agree that a desert is a place that is hot and dry and inhospitable. A dessert indicates something that tastes good, brings pleasure and is inviting.

IN THE BIBLE

While the word desert appears many times in Scripture, the word dessert does not. However, there are several mentions of fig cakes and many times the word sweet is employed especially concerning the pleasing taste of honey. But the idea that one is undesirable: the desert, and one to be embraced, dessert, is present in the Bible as well. We see that by people’s reactions. When God’s people found themselves in desert places Scripture teaches they often behaved poorly. They rebelled against Him, provoked Him, grieved and tempted Him. They viewed the desert as a place to be avoided if at all possible.

GOD’S PERSPECTIVE

But how does God feel about that way of thinking? It is clear He sees it differently as at times He led His people into desert places. His motivation is clearly stated. Deuteronomy 32:10 informs that He views the desert as a place of instruction. It is in the desert that He desires His people to learn to completely trust Him. He desires that in desert places, where it looks like our provision will go lacking, or our care will suffer, that there we will learn that He is able to provide and take care of us in spite of our surroundings or circumstance. And in gaining that knowledge about our immediate needs, we can then learn the higher lessons. After all it was in the desert, Jesus reminded His disciples, that God’s people were fed with manna from heaven (John 6:31). And that is something special that can be found even in the desert.