

The Perfection of Ketchup

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Malcolm Gladwell wrote in an article entitled “The Ketchup Conundrum,” “What was true about a yellow condiment that went on hot dogs was not true about a tomato condiment that went on hamburgers...I guess ketchup is ketchup” (*What the Dog Saw*, p. 50). The article details why ketchup lacks several varieties like mustard. Instead, one kind of ketchup and one ketchup maker outstrips all the others, Heinz. This brand alone has formulated ketchup to meet all our taste buds’ senses. They call this high amplitude. It all blends in a beautiful masterpiece. Nothing else can come close to matching it, and nothing can be added to it to make it any better.

As I read through this lighthearted article, it brought to mind the Bible. Certainly, the Bible doesn’t speak of amplitude, or ketchup, or anything of the sort. However, much like ketchup, the Bible is a complete masterpiece, needing no additions. There is no other book that can match its truth. There is no other book that can provide us with a more complete picture of salvation, God, sin, hope, love, joy, peace, or evil.

Galatians 1:8 says, “*But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.*” Why was Paul so concerned that the gospel did not come from any other source, even an angel from heaven? If we were to receive a gospel from such a reputable, powerful source, we would tend to want to believe it. It is our nature to update things as we go along. We look for someone's most recent picture to get the most accurate picture. When a judge considers a case, he usually decides on the newest statutes. However, Paul profoundly puts forward the fact that no updates are needed. The Bible is perfect and complete.

Paul similarly states in **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*” No additional scriptures would make us any more complete. No additions to the ketchup formula will make it any more like ketchup. It is complete. The scriptures are the whole Word of God, and we cannot be made any more complete than through their instructions.

Jesus proclaims a definitive statement regarding himself, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word he shall never see death*” (**John 8:51**). No other Word can offer authentic, unending life. Other books can offer enlightenment or vague and often false promises of an extension of our earthly life. They cannot provide the pure and perfect. Only one, the Christ and the Word, could proclaim that, through faith in Him, we would never see death.

John tells us that not all accepted the Word. “*He came to his own, and his own did not receive him*” (**John 1:11**). In part, they didn’t receive him because they neglected to understand and appreciate the Word of God. In **Matthew 21**, Jesus spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees, saying,

Have you never read in the Scriptures: “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes”? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it (verses 42-43).

We are that blessed people who were given that kingdom through belief in His Word. (see **1 Peter 2:4-10**) A precious, perfect, whole, authoritative, and life-giving Word presented to us by the mercy of God so that we might look more and more like the perfect son of God for which God designed us. His Word needs no other element blended in to bring us joy (**1 John 1:4**), define for us love (**Ephesians 5:1-2**), equip us to destroy false ideas (**Ephesians 6:17**), and nourish us to godliness leading to life (**1 Timothy 4:6-8**). As the psalmist so aptly states, *"I rejoice in your word as one who finds great treasure"* (**Psalms 119:162**).

Our world is filled with an overabundance of media, just as many knockoffs don't quite have the correct formula for ketchup. If we're not careful, our utilization will give the impression that each is just as worthy as another. We may spend hours scrolling social media, an hour reading our favorite book, and a few hours watching the television, but we struggle to find time to feast on the Word of God. How terrible to end our life and hear Christ say as he did to the Pharisees, *"Have you never read in the Scriptures..."* Therefore, let us prioritize and relish the Word of God!