

An exegesis of 1 PETER 2:2

- **Text:** As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.
- **Context: 1 Peter 1**
- 1. **The New Spiritual Birth is described in ([1Pe 1:22-25](#))**
- 2. **Continued Spiritual Growth is discussed here ([1Pe 2:1-3](#))**
- 3. **Privileges of believers as the holy and royal priesthood are delineated in ([1Pe 2:4-10](#))**

OUTLINE

- **As**
- **new born babes** **THE PEOPLE**
- **desire** **THE PROJECT**
- **the sincere milk of the word,** **THE PRODUCT**
- **that ye may grow thereby.** **THE PURPOSE**
- **The aim of the desire for God's pure spiritual milk is growth in Christ-likeness.**
- **Note that the fulfillment of the purpose is critically dependent on the purity of the product.**
- **So we should make sure that what we take in is indeed pure (sincere)!**

As.....

- **As** “or in the same way that”
- This word indicates that this verse is a simile-in fact it is an unfinished simile, that we must finish ourselves.
- A simile is a term of comparison introduced either by *like* or *as*.
- **In the same way that in the natural realm (in nature) mammals need and seek mother’s milk for their physical or natural growth and development, in like manner spiritual neonates or newborn believers must desire spiritual milk-the milk of the Word for their spiritual growth and development.**

- In this verse, Peter draws a simple comparison between **the instinctive (God given) appetite of a healthy mammalian baby for its mother's milk** and **the appetite that a newborn (and old) "healthy" believer should have for the Word of God.**
- **Even as a baby must partake regularly of pure milk in order to grow and be physically healthy, so too must the newborn believer (and "old born again" like yours truly!) daily partake of sound doctrine that they might grow in grace and Christlikeness**

- As a babe longs for nothing but its mother's milk and will take nothing else, so every Christian should take no spiritual nourishment save the Word.
- Peter's imagery is beautiful and expressive.
- He is saying "Just look at a babe at its mother's breast!"
- In this way you should ever drink the milk of the Word-just like babes that have just been born.

- The imagery of the passage is indeed very vivid... **What the author wants to express is the ardor of the suckled child.**
- **Such an ardor for spiritual food is essential for spiritual growth in young Christians.**
- Believers should at all times be like infants in their craving for the nourishment that the Lord has provided for their spiritual growth.
- Peter's picture is apparently based on the teaching of Christ that the kingdom of God must be received as a little child (Matt 18:3; Mark 10:15).
- **The analogy with a newborn baby is obvious for just as God has designed milk to be the perfect food for the physical nourishment for babies, He has similarly given us the Word which is the perfect food for spiritual nourishment.**

.....new born babes..... **THE PEOPLE**

- New born babes are ...**THE PEOPLE** who are addressed here.
- **All believers start off as newborn babes or spiritual neonates**
- Peter had just discussed their new birth explaining that **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (The Gospel)...(and that we) have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding Word of God. (I Peter 1:3,23).**
- **The Christian is bred by the Word and he must be fed by it.**

- **The word for “newborn,”** (artigennetos from **arti**, an adverb of time = now, newly, recently + **gennetos** = begotten, born) **is literally one just born, lately born and so newborn.**
- **It refers to a child at birth or of tender years and in context could refer to new converts or it could simply refer to how any convert should approach the "pure milk" of God's Word.**
- **Peter uses this figurative language to give the readers the mental picture of infants craving nourishment, for anyone who has been a parent or had a baby sibling knows how newborn babies vocally and ardently express their desire to be fed regularly.**
- **In fact, newborn babies act as if their life depends on the next feeding, an attitude that should be true of believers, for Jesus Himself clearly stated that...**
- **Man shall not live and be upheld and sustained by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4) (Amplified Version).**

- This verse characterizes Christians as newborn infants with an inborn longing for their mothers milk.
- This picture of the readers as babes, is not derogatory, but **"sets forth the tenderness of their relation to God, (abba, Father) and implies the idea of guiltlessness"** "new-born babes—altogether without “guile” ([1Pe 2:1](#)).
- As long as we are here we are “babes,” in a specially tender relation to God ([Is 40:11](#)). The childlike spirit is indispensable if we would enter heaven.
- **Classic Greek** used **brephos** to describe a babe at the breast, **one who is dependent on the mother's milk for nourishment**

.....desire..... THE PROJECT

- **Desire is... THE PROJECT upon which the spiritual neonates are to embark.**
- **The most important thing to note here is that the verb is in the imperative mood.....IT IS A COMMAND. It is a must do.**
- **IT IS IMPERATIVE TO NOTE THAT THE VERB IS IN THE IMPERATIVE. It is a must do.**
- **If they are to develop spiritually, new converts or the spiritual neonates must desire the Word of Truth.**
- **Babies like and need to be FED and to be CLEANED**
- **Spiritual babies NEED THE SAME!**
- **Only the word can feed and cleanse new converts or the spiritual neonates.**
- **The word alone can feed and cleanse new converts or the spiritual neonates.**
- **The Christian is bred by the Word and he must be fed by it (I Peter 1:23).**

- **“Desire” or “Long for”** is in the imperative which calls for a decisive action (or attitude change in this case) on the reader's part.
- **The idea is -- Do it! Do it now! Don't delay!**
- **It is a command and not an option.**
- **In other words, longing in one's heart for Truth is not an option if we desire to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.**
- **Since we have been born again by the Word of God, we have a new nature with a new longing.**
- **Peter is saying "Now make up your mind once and for all to intensely crave the word of God!"**
- **Nothing but pure milk satisfies a baby and nothing but the pure milk of God's Word will truly satisfy one who has been born again.**

- **The Greek word translated “desire” is epipotheo (epipotheo from **epi** = toward or an intensifier + **potheo** = yearn) is a strong word which means to long for, to “long after”, or intensely crave to have a strong desire for something, to have a great affection for someone or something. with implication of need.**
- **It indicates an intensive yearning or desire directed toward an object with the implication that the one longing recognizes the lack or the need of it...**
- **Epipotheo paints the picture of being an absolute hungering and thirsting after the Word.**
- **It describes an intense yearning for something.**
- **It is to long for or intensely crave something (in the context here, it is God's pure Word).**

- Just as a newly born child shows an immediate fervent and frequent desire for nourishment, arising from an impatient sense of hunger, and accompanied with the best efforts of which the infant is capable.
- **Newly born babes don't try to** chemically analyze mother's milk, they instinctively and earnestly desire and long to feed on it, for mother's milk is its most proper food.
- In like manner, our part is not self-sufficient rationalizing and questioning, but just to simply **desire the milk of the word.**
- **Newly born babes, must desire the milk of the word.**
- Do you see the connection between the Word of God in the preceding section in **1Peter 1:23-25, where Peter tells us that we** are born again into the Kingdom of God by the "imperishable seed... of the living and abiding Word of God.
- Now he tells us "well intensely crave and long for that same pure word. You began this new life in Christ with the Word and the only way to grow in Christ likeness is by letting the "the Word of Christ richly dwell within you" (see note [Colossians 3:16](#))
- Peter is saying that we must **ardently** and eagerly **long** for it.
- The command in this verse to have the attitude of longing and yearning, passionately for the Scripture.

....the sincere milk of the word....

THE PRODUCT

- The “sincere” or “pure” milk of the word is **THE PRODUCT** that **spiritual neonates must desire.**
- **What does “sincere” mean?**
- When the New Testament was translated into English from the Latin Vulgate, the words “SINE” & “CERE” were trans- litterated.
- They were brought straight into English without translation.
- Have you ever signed a letter “Yours sincerely?”
- What did you mean?
- “SINE” means “without”, and “CERE” means “wax”.
- So sincere or sine cere really means without wax or **“genuine” or the “real thing”not something that was “glossed over” or “polished”**
- Let me explain the origin of the word “sincere” so we can better understand what Peter was trying to say here

- Dishonest merchants in that day would add water to their milk to make more profit. This was “deceitful” milk. Peter tells us to long for the pure, not-deceitful milk.
- The milk of the word is said to be sincere, i.e. pure, without mixture or adulteration, not blended, or diluted
- The word pure means “unadulterated” or “unaltered”, or uncontaminated.” God’s Word needs no additions or subtractions.
- Heretics and false teachers today love to mix chalk with the milk, so that the milk that they purvey has all manner of “additives”, so that unadulterated milk is virtually impossible to find.
- In all human wisdom there is some admixture of what is either useless or harmful; the Word of God alone is altogether good. It is the only Word which is guileless, without imperfections, flaws, dilutions or anything that would deceive or lead astray!
- The pure Word of God has no ulterior motives added to it like so many human teachings, but has as its primary purpose the nourishing of our soul.
- This food of the God's Word has not the slightest admixture of anything evil in it.
- Besides the pure milk of the Gospel, there is no other pure, unadulterated doctrine.
- Consequently, Peter is calling for intake of God's word, because there is nothing better for the child of God.
- FOR EXAMPLE The early church had to deal with those who considered circumcision necessary for salvation ([Acts 15:1](#)).
- That idea was rejected because it was not in accordance with the Word of God, which says that salvation is by grace alone.
- Peter encouraged his brethren in the Lord: “Why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples? . . . We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved” ([Acts 15:10,11](#)).

- So we see that Peter was trying to say here that spiritual neonates must desire the **genuine** milk.....the **true** milk, the **pure** milk, the **unadulterated** milk, the **unaltered** milk ...the **pure** milk!
- We are not to **DILUTE** the milk of the Word
- We are not to **PUT ADDITIVES** into the milk of the Word
- We are not to **PASTEURIZE** the milk of the Word
- We are to **PREACH THE WORD IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON, AND DO SO IN ITS PURE FORM**
- We are to keep the milk of the Word unadulterated, ..Unaltered! And Pure!
- We are not to corrupt the word, [2Co 2:17](#); [4:2](#)), with human fictions or traditions.
- **Just as infants desire their mothers' milk pure: believers should desire the word pure, as it is, and not mixed with any thing that may lessen and hinder its efficacy.**
- "Only pure unadulterated, unsophisticated and wholesome milk must be imbibed
- **EVENTUALLY OVER A PERIOD OF TIME THIS SAME MILK THAT IS JUST MILK TO THE BABY BELIEVER WILL BECOME MEAT TO THE MORE MATURE BELIEVER.**
- But even when you can digest the strong meat of the Word, never grow weary of the milk, for it is always good diet even for a full-grown man in Christ.

- **When does the milk of the word become the meat of the word?**
- **We don't really know exactly do we?**
- **After all if you are a five day old Christian or if you are a believer for 50 years you drink in the same "milk of the Word!"**
- **But over time, the same "milk of the Word" becomes the "meat of the word".**
- **Believers never reach a place in this life where they stop needing the pure "milk of the Word."**

...that ye may grow thereby.. THE PURPOSE

- Peter now explains the purpose for taking in the milk of the word. It is that ye may grow thereby.
- Peter's thesis is simple - Just as babies grow best on pure milk, so too believers grow best on the pure milk of the Word of God.
- Grow ([auxano](#)) means to cause to increase, to become greater in extent, size, state, or quality, (like a plant or a tree [or follower of Christ] would increase in size, stature, beauty, fruitfulness, etc).
- Figuratively, auxano describes the supernatural effect of the Gospel of grace ([1Cor 3:6](#)).
- If you want to grow
- If you want to know
- if you want to sow
- You need to desire the sincere milk of the Word.
- Peter says spiritual babes need to suckle on the pure word of God in order to grow into spiritual maturity.
- NO INTAKE OF THE WORDNO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- **It is not enough for spiritual neonates to be spiritually alive, they must grow in grace Their great desire should be that they may grow.**
- **The unadulterated “milk of the Word” is the best food for those who are, spiritually, “newborn babes.”**
- **Spiritual neonates are to desire this unadulterated milk of the Word not out of an idle curiosity, but...**
- **So that they may grow thereby,**
- **So that they may grow wiser, holier, more earnest, more like your Savior,**
- **So that they may grow up into the likeness of Him Whose you are, and Whom you serve.**
- **You are in the family of God, but you are only babes in it yet; you have to grow to the stature of men in Christ Jesus, so “desire the sincere (unadulterated) milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”**
- **There is no other way of growing.**

- Why do we make so much fuss about milk, here?
- Why does Peter use **milk** as that irreplaceable nutritional source which is vital for growing, sustaining and perfecting the children of God.
- What do we know about milk that can enhance our understanding of this verse?
- **Since there is no other source of pure, unadulterated doctrine, the Word must be held in such high esteem and preached purely from the pulpits.**
- **The Christian is bred by the Word 1 Peter 1:23.and he must be fed by it.**
- Let us be as simple as little children, as guileless, as harmless, as free from anything like unkindness as newborn babes are.
- And inasmuch as we are to follow them in what they have not, let us also imitate them in what they have. Let us desire ardently, as for our very life, the unadulterated milk of the Word.
- Let us cultivate that combination of hunger and thirst which is found in a little child, that we may hunger and thirst thus after God's Word.
- We have done more than taste the Word; we have tasted that the Lord himself is gracious. Let us long to feast more and more upon this divine food, that we may grow thereby.

- **Let us not ruin our spiritual appetite by feeding on the junk food of this world.**
- **If we don't sense a great need for God and His Word, it may be because we've filled up on junk like television.**
- **Shut it off!**
- **Or, maybe you've been filling up on the junk food being sold at Christian book stores under the label of Christian, but which waters down the pure Word of God with modern man's wisdom.**
- **Such junk food makes you feel full, but it doesn't nourish the soul. Don't waste your time reading it!**
- **There are some excellent Christian books that will help you to understand and apply God's truth. They're well worth reading.**
- **But above all else, read your Bible! Hunger for God's truth. Drink it in like a nursing infant.**
- **You've got to have it above all else if you want to grow in your salvation.**

