

FED MORNING AND EVENING BY RAVENS

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Lessons: I Kings 17:6

How many people had breakfast this morning? How many had supper yesterday? How about lunch? How about breakfast yesterday? How many people had breakfast, lunch and supper every day last week? Why did you eat so often? Because you were hungry? Why didn't you eat just once last week? It would save a lot of time so you could do other things!

We need to eat often. That is the way the Lord made us. When there was a drought and famine in Israel, the Lord sent ravens to feed Elijah bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening. The Lord did not miraculously feed Elijah once and never again (although on another occasion, he fed him from heaven and he went for forty days in the wilderness in the strength of that food (I Ki 19:8)). But usually the Lord feeds people daily. He gave manna each morning to the children of Israel while they were in the wilderness, and quails each evening. He taught us to say a prayer in which are the words, "give us this day our daily bread."

How many of you liked your breakfast? How about supper last night? How many of you didn't like some or all of the meals you had last week, but ate it anyway? Why did you eat it? Why did your parents make you eat it? Because it was good for you? It's good to try some new kinds of food, or some old kinds so that you may learn to like it? Did you ever wonder if Elijah liked the bread and meat the ravens brought him? What would have happened if he had said, "I won't eat anything that a dirty old bird brings me!"?

The reason Elijah had to be fed by ravens was that there was a famine in which there is not enough food. The reason there was not enough food was that there was no dew or rain in the land. The reason there was no dew or rain in the land was that the king and his wife, Ahab and Jezebel, had troubled Israel by forsaking the Lord and following the baals. When they stopped following the Lord and worshipped the idols they chose instead, the Lord could no longer bless the land with dew or rain, or any of the food that it would produce.

When we read this story, the angels think about how people who stop being concerned about the Lord spend their whole lives doing what they want, thinking only of themselves and what pleases themselves. Then there is no spiritual rain. That means that people no longer feel blessed by the truth of the Lord's Word. They don't understand the Word. It means nothing to their lives. They don't care about it. When there is no spiritual rain, there is a

scarcity of spiritual food as well. People are not satisfied with their lives. They hunger for things that bring little satisfaction. Just as Elijah left the people he lived among and went to a brook to be fed by ravens, it is almost as though the Lord leaves the people who have the Word but do not love it, and lives among people who do not even have the Word, but try to live a good life even though their false ideas cause them to make many mistakes and poor judgments.

The remedy for this situation is to not go after other gods. Instead of spending all our time trying to do what we want, we could make an effort to learn from the Lord what He wants for us. That means stopping to read the Word and really think about it. How many people read from the Old Testament, the New Testament, or the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church yesterday? How many people read from the Word since last Sunday? Not as many people as ate about three meals a day.

Sometimes people think that you only need to read from the Word once in a while, and that when they do, it should bring them great insights and life-changing messages. But that's not what our food does for our bodies. It just feeds us for a few hours, and then we eat again. You could have the biggest, most delicious meal ever, and you would still come and eat again within a day or so. In fact, you might even eat things that you didn't especially like. In a similar way, we should not expect the Word to feed us with such astounding truths that we never need to read the Word again. We should not even expect that we will enjoy reading the Word every time we read it. We can remember that we need spiritual food from the Word daily, or our spiritual life will suffer. In fact, when we neglect the Word, that is when we are likely to experience the spiritual drought that leads to a spiritual famine, which leads to the Lord spending more time with others even though they do not have the Word, because they, even though they have many false ideas, at least try to do what God wants every morning and every evening.

Prayer I

Lord Jesus Christ, turn our hearts to You that we may not experience the hardship of spiritual drought and famine. Remove from us our desire to think only of ourselves and our own pleasure that we may take delight in Your Holy Word and in the things which nourish our eternal life. Feed us in mind and body each day, and help us to be content with the food You set before us.

Amen.