

Psalms 19:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Analysis

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Having described six attributes of God's word and their six effects (verses 7-9), David now expresses Scripture's supreme value. He uses two comparisons—gold and honey—representing wealth and pleasure, the two things humanity most naturally desires. Yet God's word surpasses both.

"More to be desired are they than gold" (hanechmadim mizahav, הַנְּחַמְדִּים מִזָּהָב) uses chamad, meaning to desire, covet, take pleasure in. This is the same word from the tenth commandment: "Thou shalt not covet." What should be desired above all else? Not gold but God's word. Zahav (gold) represented ultimate material wealth in the ancient world—portable, imperishable, universally valued. Yet Scripture is more desirable.

"Yea, than much fine gold" (umipaz rav, וּמִפָּז רַב) intensifies the comparison. Paz is refined, pure gold—the highest quality. Rav means much, abundant. David doesn't compare Scripture merely to a small amount of ordinary gold but to vast quantities of the finest gold. Even unlimited material wealth cannot match the value of God's word.

"Sweeter also than honey" (umetugim middevash, וּמֵתוּקִים מִדְּבַשׁ) shifts to taste. Matok means sweet, pleasant. Honey was the primary sweetener in the ancient world, the sweetest natural substance commonly available. God's word brings

greater pleasure than the most delightful physical taste. "And the honeycomb" (venophet tzufim, וְנֹפֶת צֻפִּים) adds emphasis—not processed honey but fresh honey still in the comb, the purest and sweetest form. Even this doesn't match Scripture's sweetness to the soul.

Historical Context

The comparison of God's word to gold and honey appears throughout Scripture. Psalm 119:72 declares: "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." Psalm 119:103 asks: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" These were not mere literary flourishes but genuine valuations.

In the ancient world, gold represented security, power, and pleasure. Yet Solomon, who possessed unprecedented wealth, concluded that wisdom (which comes from God's word) is more precious than rubies, and "all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her" (Proverbs 3:15). He learned experientially what David declared here: material wealth cannot satisfy like God's truth.

Honey's sweetness made it a biblical symbol of delight and goodness. The Promised Land was described as flowing with "milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8). Jonathan's eyes were enlightened when he tasted honey (1 Samuel 14:27). Yet Ezekiel discovered that while God's words were "as honey for sweetness" initially (Ezekiel 3:3), proclaiming them brought bitterness (3:14). Scripture is sweet to receive but sometimes difficult to obey or proclaim. Still, its ultimate effect is delight in God.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Why does David compare Scripture's value to gold and its pleasure to honey rather than to other things?
2. What would it look like practically to 'desire' God's word more than wealth or pleasure?
3. How can Scripture be 'sweet' when it sometimes corrects, rebukes, or calls for costly obedience?
4. What have you found more 'desirable' or 'sweet' than God's word, and how might this verse challenge that?

Interlinear Text

הֵנִחֵמָּד יִם	מִזָּהָב	וּמִפֶּזֶז	כִּי ב	וּמִתּוֹק יִם
More to be desired	are they than gold	fine gold	yea than much	sweeter
H2530	H2091	H6337	H7227	H4966
מִדָּב שֵׁ	וְנִפְתִּי	צוּפִים:		
also than honey	and the honeycomb			
H1706	H5317	H6688		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:103 (Parallel theme): How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Psalms 119:127 (Parallel theme): Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.

Psalms 119:72 (Parallel theme): The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

Job 23:12 (Parallel theme): Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Proverbs 16:16 (Parallel theme): How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

Proverbs 8:19 (Parallel theme): My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.

Proverbs 24:13 (Parallel theme): My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste:

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