

Powerful Word of God

By

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“The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to the dividing of soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

No other book in the annals of history has had so many and so varied enemies as God’s word, the Bible. Many dynamic, learned and influential men, such as Huxley, Hume, Voltaire, Payne and others, have openly declared that they would destroy this book, and yet it lives! But to this list may be added a host of names that are more sinister and deadly: the “fifth columnists” within Christianity who avow that they accept and believe the Bible, but whose lives deny it! Paul the Apostle refers to such as “having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it;” and then warns us, “from such turn away—have nothing to do with them” (2 Timothy 3:5).

Surely, those who wage open war against the word of God will soon be exposed, as we recall that which is written: “The fool has said in his heart, there is no God” (Psalm 14:1). But when men profess to be followers of God and believers in Christ, and who stand in the pulpits as preachers of the Gospel, are able to beguile many listening, blinding the masses by their misuse of God’s holy word, and the truths revealed therein, they do nothing but deny the Authority of God’s word. Their insidious, treacherous attacks will never be open and direct. It will come with subtlety and deceit, even as was used by their father in the Garden of Eden (John 8:44). It is by such underhanded and cunning means that Satan beguiles the hearts of the simple, and weakens the faith of all who come under their dominion. We must be set for the defense of the Good News (Philippians 1:17), and for the “faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

How do we recognize these enemies? Those who teach that the revelation of God is a religion that is a developing religion, and a religion revealed to only a certain group of men, are those who downgrade that which God has revealed in his word, and minimizes its completeness. They are an enemy of God’s revelation in the Bible. The preacher who attends a conference, synod or church council in an attempt to up-date and modernize God’s word, thereby, in action, arrays himself against its Authority, and stands as an enemy of God and his Word. The priest who advises men that they must have “his” interpretation to understand the revealed “will” of God, usurps the express revelation of God’s word and is an enemy of it. The preacher who addresses an audience and persuades men to seek salvation on any other terms than those set forth from God in the Bible is an enemy of the Bible. The modernist who seeks to rationalize away the plain record of signs, wonders and miracles recorded in Scriptures thereby attacks the Lord Jesus Christ, and is an enemy of the Bible. The man who says that he believes, and does not live by it, is also condemned. “They profess that they know God: but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate”

(Titus 1:16). And yet, all these enemies will not ever be able to destroy the words of Jesus (Matthew 24:35).

We must love and respect the words given us by God's chosen writers of Scripture. With the Psalmist, we must affirm: "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). The word of God in our hearts will protect against the constant bombardment of temptations from this wicked world. We must recognize the Author of the Bible as the Creator of the Universe, and as the Father of our spirits (Hebrews 12:9). Cultivating a wholesome respect for God's word, we can say, "For thy law is my delight" (Psalm 119:77). Never allow anyone to convince you that you can't understand God's message to you. A loving God endowed you with intelligence, and now addresses that intellect through his revealed will. Paul says, "How that by revelation he made know unto me the mystery; as I have already written afore in a few words, and in reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:3-4). Yes, God had revealed it to Paul by the Spirit, and Paul revealed it to us in his writings and says we may understand the mystery which he wrote about. It has all been made clear enough to be understood by us.

It was the Psalmist who exclaimed: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Psalm 19:7). Surely we all agree that the life of man must be changed (converted). In its sinful state, it could not have an affinity with God. But there is no other power than the word that can convert one's being. In reference to this power, James wrote, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your lives" (James 1:21). Just try to think of another power in the universe that can do this!

To this Paul added, "Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you received, and wherein you stand: by which also you are saved, if you keep in mind that which I preached to you, unless you have believed it in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:1-2). Paul's zeal for preaching Christ was very compelling: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is it to me if I preach not the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16). To Rome, Paul wrote, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who will believe it: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile" (Romans 1:16).

God has many vast, unlimited powers controlling his Universe. His power is seen in the awesome force of the hurricane, the sudden eruption of a volcano, or the violent waves of the sea. But the only power he has given to save the life of man is the words of the Gospel. It is so truly said that "the law of the Lord is perfect." The word of God converts one's life; is able to save one's life; and is the only power God has ordained for this purpose. We must receive it, believe it, and yield to it in trusting obedience.

Answering Nicodemus' question regarding the new birth each person must experience, Jesus said: "Truly, truly, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he can never enter into the Kingdom of God" (John 3:5). These two elements combine with the word in effecting the birth through "the washing of water with the word" (Ephesians 5:26). That new birth must begin with a conception, and as Paul says: "For even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel" (1 Corinthians 4:15). This is very much a parallel of what Peter also taught: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides

forever” (1 Peter 1:23). This is the power of which the Psalmist spoke: “For thy word has quickened me” (Psalm 119:50). Thus is revealed that the word of God is the vital germ of life in the spiritual family of God. Jesus simply said, “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). Without the Bible, we could not know the mind and will of God, and could not receive the terms he laid out for our salvation.

After Peter had been released from prison by the angel, he was told, “Go, stand and speak to the people, and given them all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20). The Jews had heard, and many received that word of salvation. But the Gentiles were still without the message. But hadn’t the word been promised for all nations? Most assuredly! So, God opened the way by sending an angel to speak to Cornelius, a Roman Centurion; a Gentile who was pleasing to God. That angel said to him, “Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell you words, words that shall save you and your house” (Acts 11:13–14). It was very necessary that they had to have the same word proclaimed to them as did the Jews if they were to have salvation. Just being good did not count. They had to repent and be immersed (baptized) to be saved just as did the Jews. Peter later verified this, saying that God “put no difference between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9). They heard the same “word” from the same man as those on Pentecost; therefore they had the same faith (Romans 10:17). It was by this that they entered into the same salvation; for Jesus said, “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). That same seed, planted in honest, receptive hearts, produced the same faith, the same obedience—in both the Jew and the Gentile.

The word of God is power in our fight with the unrighteous. Paul instructed Timothy, saying: “Fight the good fight of the faith, take hold of the eternal life to which you were called” (1 Timothy 6:12). He told him again, “Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:3). But there was also offensive action demanded, and Paul explained, “Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). This is the only offensive weapon furnished the soldier of the cross. And is it ever effective and sufficient! As we started out noting, “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword...” (Hebrews 4:12). One need never fear if he is skilled in the use of the sword of the spirit.

It is only by the word that we have that faith by which we are saved. “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Religious folks entertain some exalted opinions and philosophies from myth and old wives tales, but faith in God, Christ, and heaven comes only from the word of God. The path to glory is illuminated by this revelation from God; “The entrance of thy word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple” (Psalm 119:130). Do you value this word above the teachings of men? Paul said, “And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13). So God’s word produces faith, gives light and understanding, and works in those who believe it. In view of this, isn’t it pathetic that so many church members neglect to read and to study the sacred volume in which God speaks to us?

The power of the word works within those who believe. Yes, Jesus emphasized what that word does for the believer. In prayer he asked: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). We must be sanctified (set apart for service to him), but this is done by the word of his power. It is also by that word that we are

spiritually cleansed: “Now you are clean, through the word which I have spoken to you” (John 15:3). And again he yet said: “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). The transforming power of the word is seen in its effect on the church: “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:25–26).

Here is another example of the power of the word and its work. Paul wrote of the vileness of fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, self-abusers, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers and extortionists; that such will never enter the kingdom of heaven; but then said, “And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9–11). Does this not manifest the power of the spirit working through God’s word? Surely it does!

There is power in the preaching of the word of God! If the population of millions of lost beings are ever to be redeemed, it will be through the preaching of God’s powerful word. We should never try to minimize the force of the plain, direct, saving message of the Gospel—the Good News of salvation! God has promised from ages long past, “So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return to me empty, but it will accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11).

Although there are many who may scoff at preaching from the word of God, inspired men knew its value—Peter, Paul, and all the other writers of both the Old and New Testaments. It should be no surprise to learn that Noah preached the word of God; that Moses preached the word of God; that even Jesus, to all he spoke to, only preached the word of God, for that was what he was sent to do—and he did it right up until he was crucified on the cross.

Yes, there is power in the preaching of God’s word! Though some may scoff and ridicule the preaching of the word, all of the inspired writers of the Bible knew its value.” “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe” (1 Corinthians 1:21). Preaching the Good News is essential if the lost are to know salvation. “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they be sent?” (Romans 10:14–15). It is a rhetorical question, and we know its answer. Because of this, Jesus said, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to all creation” (Mark 16:15). We have failed our Lord when we fail to tell lost men of salvation to be had in His name. How will we answer in judgment if they shall ask, “Why didn’t you tell me?”

God’s word is complete. God gave to mankind his complete and perfect revelation, disclosing all that man needs to have for redemption and remission of sins. Paul wrote to Timothy: “All Scriptures is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17). That is the power of God’s word! It is complete, and able to do just what the Apostle Paul said it could do. It covers everything of value to Christians. It does not need to be added to, nor subtracted from to be up to date.

