

The Power of God's Word

***“The word of God
is quick, and
powerful, and
sharper than any
twoedged sword,
piercing even to the
dividing asunder
of soul and spirit,
and of the joints
and marrow, and
is a discerner of
the thoughts and
intentions of the
heart.”
—Hebrews 4:12***

THE APOSTLE PAUL POINTS to the words of our Heavenly Father and proclaims that they are quick and more powerful than all others in the wide expanse of the heavens. It is well that we all recognize the manner in which God accomplishes his Divine purpose, and especially in connection with his earthly creation and their ultimate reconciliation to him. Paul states, “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”—Heb. 4:13

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

God directed the writing of his Word by the power of the Holy Spirit which he exercises in the accomplishment of all of his purposes. It is beyond our

finite minds to understand how the power of God guided the writings of his Word of Truth and it is not necessary that we do. However, it is very important to know and to believe that when we read and study his Word that we are reading the thoughts of God even as he has caused his various servants to record them.

Paul said, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.” (Heb. 1:1,2) The apostle also drew attention to the Heavenly Father’s purpose. “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” (I Cor. 10:11) This wonderful assurance is corroborated by the Apostle Peter who also wrote, “Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”—I Pet. 1:12

SEEKING THE LORD

Writing many centuries ago, the Prophet Isaiah brought our attention to the wonderful thoughts and words of our loving Heavenly Father, when he wrote, “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and

he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”—Isa. 55:6,7

HIGHER THOUGHTS

Further to these words of the prophet, he provides us with an important perspective concerning the greatness and power of our loving Heavenly Father, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (vss. 8,9) This realization is shown in the manner in which God’s wonderful and diverse creation functions. “As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”—vss. 10,11

ENDURING FOREVER

When speaking of God’s Word, Peter wrote, “The word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” (I Pet. 1:25) Peter draws our attention to the Gospel message that is a major theme of God’s plan and purpose for mankind. In his message to the church at Galatia, Paul reminded them that the Gospel had been preached to Abraham, saying, “The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be

blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”—Gal. 3:8,9

The ‘gospel’ is the good news that through the promised seed of Abraham all the families of the earth are to be blessed under the administration of Christ’s future kingdom. There are many aspects of this good news, and God has caused the prophets, the apostles, and our Lord Jesus to touch upon and emphasize its various facets. It required many hundreds of years for the entire Word of God to be completed and therefore made available for his special people during this present Gospel Age. In the Lord’s providence, all of the important messages to his people have been preserved and recorded. This is to the extent that historical events concerning the world, and especially of the Lord’s people, are important to help them make their calling and election sure.

The Old Testament writers of God’s Word did not understand much of what they wrote, but the Holy Spirit directed their writings according to his wisdom and ultimate purpose. The Holy Spirit also operated to assure the accuracy of the historical portions of the Bible. Those ancient servants of God may have appreciated only in part the messages they recorded for the benefit of spiritual Israel. For example, David, having been a shepherd understood the lesson contained in those wonderful words, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”—Ps. 23:1

THE HEAVENS OPENED

At the beginning of our Lord Jesus’ earthly ministry during his First Advent, the Holy Spirit revealed to him much pertaining to the Word of God. This is indicated in the Heavenly Father’s dealings

with his beloved Son. It was at the river Jordan when Jesus was thirty years of age that the Holy Spirit came upon him, and we are told, "It came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Mark 1:9-11

Mark's Gospel record points to a revealing to Jesus of heavenly or spiritual things, and the truths pertaining to the ultimate purpose of his Heavenly Father. It was at this point in his life that Jesus presented himself in consecration to his Father, thus fulfilling the prophecy concerning him that was recorded earlier by the psalmist—"Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."—Ps. 40:7,8

Jesus had faithfully presented himself to the Heavenly Father, and agreed to do his will as it had been foretold in the Old Testament scriptures. What had been written concerning him was then revealed as indicated by the heavens being opened to him. From that time forward, he understood clearly the various prophecies that had been written by the prophets that would serve to guide him as he laid down his life in sacrifice in connection with the Father's will.

THE DISCIPLES

On every suitable occasion throughout the three and one-half years of his ministry, Jesus presented

to his disciples the great truths which had been revealed to him. However, much of what he tried to explain to them was quite beyond their ability to understand, because they had not yet received the Holy Spirit. An example of this lack of understanding was their refusal to believe that he would be arrested and put to death as he said he would be. This point is particularly significant, for one of the most important truths set forth in the Old Testament scriptures was that the promised Messiah would suffer and die for the sins of the people. It shows that the disciples understood these truths little better than those who had previously recorded them, until they received the Holy Spirit of God.

Jesus realized the difficulties his disciples had in understanding his teachings and, on the night before he was crucified, he explained to them, "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me; for He will take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you. A little while, and you will no longer see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me." (John 16:12-16, *New American Standard Bible*) In these verses of Scripture, the Holy Spirit has been referenced in the masculine gender which may be misleading to some. It is important to understand that all Truth comes from the Heavenly Father and not from any other individual.

The disciples had not yet received the Holy Spirit, and they did not understand Jesus' promise, as seen in their immediate reaction. We read from John's account, "Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith."—vss. 17,18

While it was true that the disciples did not understand much of what Jesus said to them, these truths being under the influence of the Holy Spirit were later remembered and their meaning grasped. Thus did Jesus prepare the minds of his disciples for the subsequent and wonderful revelation to them of the plans and purposes of God.

AFTER PENTECOST

At Pentecost, Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled on behalf of his disciples, and what a marvelous change was realized in their ability to understand the further dimensions of the Divine plan. We recall the zealous manner in which Peter opposed the idea of Jesus being put to death. He believed that would be completely out of harmony with God's will for the Master. He believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and that a dead Messiah could not accomplish all the wonderful things which had been foretold concerning him.

After the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter preached a sermon in which he spoke of Jesus having been raised from the dead, and he quoted one of the prophecies relating to both the death

and resurrection of our Lord. “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him [Ps. 16:8-11], I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [the grave], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.”—Acts 2:24-28

This and other prophecies of Jesus’ death had always been in the Old Testament scriptures, but Peter had been blind to their real meaning until he had received the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The revealing ministry of God began with the followers of Jesus, even as it had been with the Master himself when he gave himself to his Heavenly Father at the river Jordan.

For Jesus’ apostles and faithful followers, the Holy Spirit became not only a revealing power but an inspirational one also. The teachings of Jesus and the apostles are illuminated by the Holy Spirit of God as it relates to his great plan of the ages. This is also true of the Old Testament writers, the difference being that they did not necessarily understand what they wrote.

THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

The inspired words of God were brought together for the enlightenment of his people during this present Gospel Age. The writings of the Old Testament

and the New Testament are of great value and importance, for they all contribute toward the Lord's purpose of instructing and encouraging his consecrated people whom he is preparing to be the spiritual rulers in the forthcoming messianic kingdom. We can be certain that God's Word will accomplish his design, and will prosper in all things.

“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”—Isa. 55:11-13 ■