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Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: The Power of the Bible

James Willeford

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Churches of Christ
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with a

The Power of The Bible
James D. Willeford
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Herald of Truth
The Power of The Bible

A truck-load of Bibles tagged for Berlin was stopped recently by the Soviets at the border crossing point and was not allowed to proceed until a special permit could be secured from the higher authorities. The Russians claimed the Scriptures were "propaganda material."

They were right! We know of no material, if studied faithfully, that is more dangerous to the teachings of totalitarianism than that contained in the Bible. Is it possible that the sons of this world, more powerful in their generation than the sons of light? The Soviets take the Bible seriously; they hold that it contains dynamite which must be handled with care.

God's written word, the Bible, is powerful enough to accomplish all that God intended for it to accomplish. And this is a truth that needs to be learned today. If this truth is known by everyone it will help people to be satisfied with the Bible and it alone. When men realize that the Scriptures are sufficient and powerful they can better realize that they are perfect and authoritative.

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God's word has always been powerful. When he spoke worlds into existence that fact was manifested. He said, "Let there be light," and there was light. David said, "The word of God is a faithful and a sure word." (Proverbs 30:5). While Christ was on earth his words were powerful. He said, "Peace be still," and the winds and the waves obeyed His voice. He said "Lazarus, come forth," and the dead, in obedience to His word, came forth from the tomb. Many recognize this fact but fail to realize that there is power in the written word. But why should God's word, though written, be any less powerful than the words which he spoke orally? We consider the written documents of men more binding and powerful than their spoken word. Surely, God's word is no less powerful when written than when spoken. Of course, God's written word will not create worlds, it will not calm the sea, and it will not raise the dead. But God did not have it written for those purposes. God had the Scriptures written for the purpose of saving souls and preparing them for the heavenly habitation which Christ has gone to prepare. And the Scriptures which God gave for the purpose of saving souls are powerful enough to accomplish that purpose. When Christ spoke words for the purpose of raising the dead, he accomplished that. When he spoke words for the purpose of saving souls, then surely those words can accomplish that.

It was through the power of the written word of God that Christ put Satan to flight. Every time Satan tempted him he said, "It is written," and then he quoted Scripture. The devil could not cope with such power, and Matthew says he left.
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**Note:** All times are Sunday unless otherwise indicated.
Christ said to his disciples, “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” (John 15:3) In a prayer to the Father, Jesus said, “Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” (John 17:17). So there is power in the word of Christ to sanctify and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The power of spiritual life is in the Bible. In the parable of the sower Jesus taught that the germ of life in God's word. He reminded his disciples that a farmer had to sow seed to produce plants, and from this known law of sowing and reaping He taught that His word must be sown in the hearts of men to produce Christians. Jesus said the seed that will perpetuate his kingdom among men is the word of God. (Lk. 8:11) This is why we never find Christians in lands where the Bible has not gone. It must be planted in human hearts to produce Christians. They cannot come in any other way.

We all know that pure wheat seed will produce nothing but wheat. There is no power in wheat seed to produce oats or barley. And there is no power in the word of God to produce anything but Christians. When the seed of the kingdom is planted in the hearts of men it will produce nothing but Christians, and nothing else is produced some other kind of seed must be added to God's word, and in that case His word ceases to be pure. I am sure that we will all agree that since the Bible has within it the power of Spiritual life, we should fill good and honest hearts with nothing but God's word.

The apostle Paul sums up the power which God has placed within the Bible when he said, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” (Rom. 1:16). My friends, can you think of anything you need in being saved that is not supplied by the Scriptures? Do you need light? Do you need sanctification? Do you need cleansing? These come through the word of God. And if you would receive these things you must go to the word of God for them.

And yet, some refer to the word of God as a “Dead Letter.” It has been called that by men who claim to be preachers of the word. The Lord stressed the fact that His word is not a dead letter when he said, “For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discriminator of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12). Christ's power to save has been offered to us through the New Testament. Paul certainly did not subscribe to the view that the word of Christ is a dead letter. Is it quick and powerful? Is it not able to do the word of God to call it dead? It is not! It is the power of God unto salvation! It leads, and guides, and gives light. It quickens, and begets, and cleanses. It sanctifies, and saves. Surely something dead cannot do all of this!

Some look upon the Bible as nothing more than a document composed of ink and paper. They cannot conceive of a written document having any power. But we can all understand how a written proclamation of our President or a law of Congress can move the nation to action. The power is in the President and the Congress but it is conveyed to us through the written message or law. The same principle is true of the Bible. The power of salvation rests in God, but He has chosen to exercise it through His word. Paul says the word of God is the sword of the Spirit. (Eph. 6:17). It is with the Spirit's sword, the word that God pricks our hearts and leads us to repentance. An outstanding Bible scholar has said, “Let us put the Word of God upon its trial. Let us not treat it as a dead, unmeaning, monotonous thing, to be carried in the hand, read at church, or suffered on the table; but rather as a living person to be questioned, to be listened to. So treated, the Bible will become to us a voice, not a page only.” (Dean Vaughn in Gray's Biblical Museum, pp. 660, 661.) I have heard people pray for the Lord to come down and save them. I have heard preachers urge sinners to kneel and pray for pardon. It is significant that no inspired preacher of the New Testament ever told sinners to pray for salvation. Instead of telling them to pray for salvation he preached to them the word of God, and then urged them to believe it and obey it. He told them exactly what to do to be saved, and when they did it they went on their way rejoicing. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Why should a person pray to the Lord for salvation? What is there for the lost person to pray for? Now, don't misunderstand me and think that I do not believe in prayer. I do believe very strongly in prayer. But I do not believe that an alien sinner is to pray for salvation. He already has the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. He should accept it and obey it and be saved thereby.

The mysticism that has so long shrouded the plan of salvation must be removed. This plan must stand out in its original purity, power and simplicity. An intelligent God gave to intelligent human beings, through the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures. In them he has told us how to be saved. I believe in the power of God's word; it can perfectly accomplish that for which it was given by Jehovah.

Not only is the gospel the power of God to bring us salvation from past sins; but it is God's power to keep us saved. Peter says through the apostle Paul, “So ye are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Pet. 1:5) The power of God is the gospel. (Rom. 1:16). Paul reminded Christians that he had preached unto them the gospel which he said, “ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you.” (1 Cor. 15:2). So the gospel is God's means of saving us and keeping us saved. Surely there is no power compar-
able to it in all this world!

We plead with you to be satisfied with the Bible and the Bible alone. Believe in its authority and you will become dis-satisfied with the creeds of men. Believe in its perfection and you will not be swept about by the strange doctrines of modern prophets "so-called." Believe in its power, and you will not be looking for and expecting some mysterious way of salvation, but you will be saved in God's way.

Christ said, "The words I have spoken to you, the same shall judge you in the last day." (John 12:48). In that Day we shall not be judged by the creeds and opinions of men, but by the blessed word of God. When you stand before Him and he opens the book, the one supreme question will be, "Did you believe and obey my Word?" If you have not obeyed the gospel will you not rise in the Lord's name and do so today?

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