

7. The Word in Our Lives

Biblical material: Ps. 19:7-10; 119:105; Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:24.

Quotes:

- Since we astronomers are priests of the highest God in regard to the book of nature, it befits us to be thoughtful, not of the glory of our minds, but rather, above all else, of the glory of God. *Johann Kepler*.
- The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts. *A. W. Tozer*
- It is Christ Himself, not the Bible, who is the true word of God. The Bible, read in the right spirit, and with the guidance of good teachers, will bring us to Him. *C.S. Lewis*
- We are not to make the Torah into God Himself, nor the Bible into a “paper pope.” The Bible is only the result of the Word of God. We can experience the return of the Word of God in the here and now, the perpetual return of the actual, living, indisputable Word of God that makes possible the act of witnessing, but we should never think of the Bible as any sort of talisman or oracle constantly at our disposal that we need only open and read to be in relation to the Word of God and God Himself. *Jacques Ellul*

Questions

What difference does the Bible make in our daily lives? How is the Bible to be used? How can we turn the Bible into a “paper pope”? How is the Bible life-changing—and how do we share such an experience with others? We often speak of the Bible as a light and a lamp—yet in practice what does this mean? How do we make the Bible practical?

Discussion/ Comment

What is the Bible then?

- The record of God revealing himself to human beings all through history, and especially in the greatest revelation of all: God’s Son, Jesus Christ.
- The account of the great controversy between God and the Devil, good triumphing over evil, and how we all are involved in the battle over the nature and character of God.
- The demonstration of how God came to save us and to re-make us in his image. The evidence of God’s salvation.

So it can’t be just a good book, or sublime literature, or human imaginings. Take or leave it—the Bible says of itself: this is God speaking to you. Question is, can we trust this God?

For to answer the question “Can we trust the Bible?” really means answering a deeper question: “Can we trust the God the Bible describes?” So what of the God of the Bible? Doesn’t really matter whether the Bible can be trusted if we can’t trust the God it speaks of.

From Eden to Exodus, from Mount Sinai to the Mount of Olives, from Galilee to Gethsemane—the chorus of the Bible is: God can be trusted! He really does do what he promises. He really can fulfil his claims. He really is as he says.

The Bible is not full of pious sayings and religious instructions. Instead it shows how God acts and reacts to human beings. The Bible tells the story of how God so loved the world that he was willing to do absolutely everything--even to die on the Cross--to win us back.

Take time to check out this God. He doesn't say "Believe blindly in me." He says "Take a look. See the kind of person I am. Examine my record. Understand my nature. Then accept me for what I am. Look at what I can do for you. Salvation unlimited!"

That's what the Bible describes. In clear and simple terms it tells us how God is involved with us. The evidence is overwhelming. So why do so many ignore the Bible, then? Why do so few people trust the Bible?

People don't reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts themselves! Sadly most don't want to know what the Bible says because they don't want to know God. As Josh Billings suggested: "Almost any fool can prove the Bible ain't so—it takes a wise man to believe it." So let's leave aside all the pointless quibbling over this "inaccuracy" or that "mistake" in the Bible. It either is the word of God or not. That's the question. Either it is a pack of lies, or the deepest truth. No two ways about it.

How do you decide, then? How do you decide personally whether you can trust the Bible and its God? Only one way--read it, and find out! Start with the heart of the Bible, one of the gospels. Ask yourself questions: What is this telling me? Who is this person Jesus who claims to be God? Is he trustworthy? What did he do? How does this affect me now? Only by doing such an experiment will you find out the truth for yourself. "The Bible must be its own argument and defence." (H.J. Van Dyke).

Only then will you really know, instead of relying on other people's ideas and opinions. As Charles Hodge said: "The best evidence of the Bible's being the word of God is found between its covers." For personal experience is the only way the Bible can be analysed and judged trustworthy.

Text comments

The law is perfect, God's precepts right. Lamp and light. So how do we understand such concepts and apply them in our lives today? (Ps. 19:7-10; 119:105). How does faith come from hearing? (Rom. 10:17). How do we become a new creation? (2 Cor. 5:17, Eph. 4:24). How is the word of God living and active, and like a sword? (Heb. 4:12).

Ellen White Comments

The ministers preach smooth things to suit carnal professors. They dare not preach Jesus and the cutting truths of the Bible; for if they should, these carnal professors would not remain in the church. But as many of them are wealthy, they must be retained, although they are no more fit to be there than Satan and his angels. This is just as Satan would have it. The religion of Jesus is made to appear popular and honorable in the eyes of the world... But there was no difference between the professed followers of Christ and the world. {EW 228

The religion of Christ never degrades the receiver. It refines and ennobles the character. We should study carefully lest we cultivate some trait of character that is unlike the divine Pattern, and not in harmony with the blessed will of God. Just as soon as there is the diligent study of the Bible that there should be, we shall not fail of noting a marked difference in the characters of the people of God. We shall say from the heart, "The things I once loved, I now hate; and the things I once hated, I now love." {RH, April 9, 1889}

