

# THE ETERNAL WORD OF GOD

## 1 Peter 1:23-25

### INTRODUCTION

- Words, both spoken and written, have changed the course of human history for the last 6000 years.
- The words of men have immense power, even to kill or to promote life
- Yet there are other words, not of men or of this world, that have infinitely greater power, to not only affect people and events in this present world, but to affect *eternity*
- They are capable of not merely determining the life or death of man's physical body, but the life or death of man's immortal *soul*
- They are the words of God
- Since there is such power in the word of God, it should not surprise us to see the devil attacking it
- The foundation of the church is the word of God (Ephesians 2:20; 1 Timothy 3:15)
- But in many churches, the word of God has been abandoned
- The Bible is hardly read, preached, or sung. It has been replaced a "worship experience" where the senses are stimulated by sights and sounds, the music, the dimmed lights, the motivational speech.
- God's people are being destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6), and there is a famine of hearing the words of the LORD (Amos 8:11)
- We need to make the word of God the centre of our lives and church
- Previously we saw that Peter in vv.22-25, and continuing into chapter 2, calls upon the saints to love one another
- As the grace of God in salvation brings us from death to life, darkness to light, and misery to joy, so it brings us from hate to love, giving us both the power and the desire to love the brethren
- Here in these verses, Peter goes to the foundation this brotherly love, which is the foundation of our salvation and eternal life – the word of God
- Even as these first-century saints, in a hostile world, suffering persecution for their faith, needed the firm foundation of the eternal word of God to sustain them; so too, we in an increasingly dark and antichrist world need to lay aside the weak and crumbling foundations of man, and be established upon the unmoveable foundation of the word of God

### I. THE WORD OF GOD IS PERMANENTLY ENDURING

A. God's word is living

1. It is "quick and powerful" (Hebrews 4:12)
2. Christ's words are "spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63)
3. Christ has the words of eternal life (John 6:68)
4. Man lives by every word of God (Luke 4:4)
5. It is living in its continued existence despite the efforts of the enemy to destroy it
6. It is living in its perfect adaptation to all ages and all peoples
7. It is living in its inexhaustible interest – it is a fountain of knowledge that can never run dry

B. God's word abides and endures for ever

1. Note that in the Critical Greek Text, there is no "for ever" at the end of v.23
2. The Bible self-testifies that the words of God are both *from* eternity, *unto* eternity (Psalm 119:89,152)
3. God has promised that, notwithstanding the relentless efforts of Satan, his angels, and his many human servants, the Bible will never be destroyed (Psalm 12:6-7; 119:160; Matthew 5:18; 24:35)
4. No book has been attacked like the Bible, and no book has endured like the Bible
  - a. King Jehoiakim, who cut with a knife and burned in the fire the words of God through the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36:23), epitomises rebellious man's attitude towards the word of God
  - b. Seleucid King, Antiochus Epiphanes, in the second century BC, sought to destroy all copies of the Hebrew Scriptures
  - c. Pagan Roman Emperors sought to destroy the Bible – Diocletian in 303 AD ordered that every copy of the Scriptures be burned
  - d. Roman Catholicism for centuries forbade access to the Bible in vulgar languages, burning both translators and their Bibles
  - e. Over the past three centuries, Rationalism has attacked the Bible, and predicted its demise, yet these proud sceptics all perish, and the Bible remains

C. The permanence of God's word is contrasted with the transience of man

1. Peter quotes Isaiah 40:7-8 which depicts man's life and glory as nothing more than the grass and flower which spring up for a brief time, then wither away (cf. James 1:11)
2. The theme of man's frailty and the brevity of our mortal lives is emphasised throughout the Scriptures (Genesis 3:19; Psalm 39:5; 90:1-12; Isaiah 64:6)

3. Man in his pride rejects and ignores this truth, but age, infirmity and death cannot be ignored and we are forced to say, "all is vanity" (see Ecclesiastes 12:1-7)
4. The whole creation, under the curse of sin, is made subject to vanity (Romans 8:20), and is in a state of entropy, tending towards disorder and decay
5. For the unbeliever there is nothing whatsoever that abides, and is truly eternal, leaving nothing but a miserable, hopeless existence
6. But there is one thing that is permanent, and will remain, though the heaven and earth pass away, and it is the word of God
7. The believer can, even in the midst of all this change and decay, turn to this eternal word, and, placing his trust in it, find comfort, joy, peace, purpose, life and hope in the promises it contains
8. By this word, we transient mortals become partakers of its eternal qualities, so that our beings transcend the corruption of this world, and even death itself

## II. THE WORD OF GOD HAS POWER TO ENLIVEN

- A. The word of God is a "seed"
  1. Christ's parables likened the word of God to a seed (Luke 8:11; Mark 4:26-29)
  2. When the gospel is preached, the seed is sown into the heart of man, producing varied results (Matthew 13:18-23)
  3. The "good ground" that results in salvation, is that where the word is heard and understood and as a result bears fruit (Matthew 13:23)
  4. Even as the life that germinates from an apparently dead seed is a marvel, so the life that is created within the heart and life of man by the seed of the word is a wonderful mystery (Mark 4:27) that is the work of God alone (1 Corinthians 3:7)
  5. All other seeds, whether of plants or of man, are "corruptible", bringing forth life that is only temporary
  6. But the seed of God's word is incorruptible, and brings forth life unto eternity
  7. The word abides forever, and so does what it produces
    - a. Light (Psalm 119:130)
    - b. Faith (Romans 10:17)
    - c. Life (John 6:68)
    - d. Peace (Psalm 119:165)
    - e. Comfort (Romans 15:4)
    - f. Judgment (John 12:48)

B. In the new birth, a “creation” takes place

1. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature...all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17)
2. “The new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24)
3. As in the original creation, “the worlds were framed by the word of God” (Hebrews 11:3), so in the new creation of the repentant believer, God performs this work by the word of God
4. The new birth effects victory over sin, crushing first sin’s penalty, then sin’s power, and finally sin’s very presence – because “his [God’s] seed remaineth in him” (1 John 3:9)

### III. THE WORD OF GOD MUST BE PREACHED IN EVANGELISM

A. We receive the word of the gospel through preaching

1. Saving faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:15)
2. If you are saved, it is because someone with “beautiful feet” (Romans 10:15) carried the gospel message to you and planted into your heart

B. We are to spread the word of the gospel through preaching

1. The power of God unto salvation is not slick marketing, worldly enticements, or eloquence of preaching, but the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16)
2. Paul’s power in preaching was not his “wisdom of words”, but his “preaching the gospel” (1 Corinthians 1:17)
3. If we are to be effective in evangelism, we must use as much as possible, the words of God as we preach to the lost

### CONCLUSION

1. The only soul that will escape corruption, overcome death, and abide eternally in glory, is the life built upon the rock of Christ and his words (Matthew 7:24-27)
  - ✓ Is the foundation of your life the word of God?
  - ✓ Do you love it? (Psalm 119:97)
  - ✓ Is it your meditation all the day? (Psalm 119:97)
  - ✓ Do you esteem it more than your necessary food? (Job 23:12)
  - ✓ Is it hidden in your heart? (Psalm 119:11)
  - ✓ Does it dwell in you richly in all wisdom? (Colossians 3:16)
  - ✓ Is it a lamp to your feet and a light to your path? (Psalm 119:105)
2. We neglect the word of God to our soul's ruin