

FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORD OF GOD

TEXT: HEBREWS 4:12

Introduction:

1. The word “For” (4:12) connects this verse with the preceding verses (4:1—11).
2. You will enjoy your rest more and more as you study the Word of God.
3. The Bible is the inspired Word of God (cf. 3:7; 4:7).
4. Second Timothy 3:16 says, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”
5. Second Peter 1:21 says, “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” In other words, David spake as he was “moved by the Holy Ghost” (Heb. 3:7; 4:7).
6. I want to speak tonight on “Five Characteristics of the Word of God.”

I. THE WORD OF GOD IS “QUICK” – LIVING (4:12).

1. Today the word “quick” means “fast” or “swift,” but when our Authorized King James Bible was translated, the word “quick” meant “living” or “alive.”
2. Three times in Scripture we are told that God will judge the quick and the dead (Acts 10:42; II Tim. 4:1; I Peter 4:5).
3. The Word of God is alive. First Peter 1:23 says, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”
4. The author of the Bible is God. Thirty times in the Bible, God is referred to as “the living God” (cf. Hebrews 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22). God is “the living God,” and His Word is alive.
5. David said, “For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (I Samuel 17:26).
6. Jeremiah 10:10 says, “But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God.”
7. King Darius said, “I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God” (Daniel 6:26).
8. Simon Peter said to our Lord, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).
9. Paul and Barnabas said to the people of Lycaonia, “We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn

from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein” (Acts 14:15).

10. In II Corinthians 3:3, the Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of the living God.”
11. In II Corinthians 6:16, Christians are called “the temple of the living God.”
12. In I Timothy 3:15, the local church is called “the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
13. In I Timothy 4:10, the apostle Paul says, “We trust in the living God.”
14. In I Timothy 6:17, Paul says, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.”
15. God is alive. He is “the living God,” and His Word is alive.

II. THE WORD OF GOD IS POWERFUL (4:12).

1. There is a moral, spiritual dynamic in the Word of God which has the power to produce transformation in the lives of believers.
2. First Thessalonians 2:13 says, “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”
3. “...in you that believe.” The Word of God is powerful, but it works “effectually” in those that believe (cf. Heb. 4:2).
4. Matthew Henry said, “When God sets it home by his Spirit, it convinces powerfully, converts powerfully, and comforts powerfully. It is so powerful as to pull down strong holds (II Cor. 10:4, 5), to raise the dead, to make the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk. It is powerful to batter down Satan’s kingdom, and to set up the kingdom of Christ upon the ruins thereof.”

III. THE WORD OF GOD IS SHARP (4:12).

1. Back in Bible times, men often carried swords, and they had to keep them very sharp. Our Lord said in Luke 22:36, “He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.”
2. The Word of God is “sharper than any two-edged sword.” Ephesians 6:17 says, “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”
3. The Word of God is incisive. It draws a sharp line between the saved and the lost.

4. It draws a sharp line between the genuine and the false.
5. In the Bible, the sword is often a symbol of the judgment of God. Our Lord said in Matthew 10:34, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.”
6. Revelation 1:16 says, “Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.”
7. Revelation 2:12 says, “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges.”
8. Revelation 2:16 says, “Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”
9. Revelation 19:15 says, “And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations.”
10. Revelation 19:21 says, “And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.”

IV. THE WORD OF GOD PIERCES (4:12).

1. J Vernon McGee said, “Do you know that only the Word of God can divide the soul and spirit? You and I cannot do that.”
2. There are times when the Bible uses the terms “soul” and “spirit” interchangeable, but Hebrews 4:12 tells us there is a distinction, and only the Word of God is sharp enough to divide them.
3. It is sharp enough to divide asunder even the soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow.
4. Theologians and preachers and Bible college professors frequently debate whether man is trichotomous or dichotomous.
5. First Thessalonians 5:23 says, “I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” First Thessalonians 5:23 teaches man is trichotomous and so does Hebrews 4:12.

V. THE WORD OF GOD IS A “DISCERNER” (4:12).

1. The unsaved have absolutely no spiritual discernment because they are unsaved. First Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”
2. But oftentimes Christians lack discernment because they do not study the Bible (cf. Heb. 5:11-14).

3. The Greek word translated “discerner” is *kritikos* – where we get our English word “critical.” Christians should not be overly critical, but we do need good Biblical discernment.
4. For example, I recently read an article about Wheaton College in Illinois. Many Christian parents send their children to Wheaton and these children get terribly backslidden. Some of them even become atheists.
5. Wheaton College endorses the theory of evolution and in many ways has become as worldly as a secular college. If parents (and pastors) had discernment they would not promote that school.
6. We need to study the Bible in order to discern what is right and what is wrong. Second Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (3:16).
 - DOCTRINE – What is right.
 - REPROOF – What is not right.
 - CORRECTION – How to get right.
 - INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS – How to stay right
7. WH Griffith Thomas said, “The Word of God wounds the sinner, condemns the hypocrite, and rebukes the saint.”
8. On the flyleaf of DL Moody’s Bible – “This Book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this Book.”
9. Psalm 119:9 says, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.”
10. The Word of God is “a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). The heart represents the inner man. Unbelief is not an intellectual problem – it is a heart problem.
11. Our Lord said, “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matt. 15:19).
12. Ezekiel 36:26 says, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”

CONCLUSION:

The Bible stands like a rock undaunted
 ’Mid the raging storms of time;
 Its pages burn with the truth eternal,
 And they glow with a light sublime.

*The Bible stands though the hills may tumble,
It will firmly stand when the earth shall crumble;
I will plant my feet on its firm foundation,
For the Bible stands.*

The Bible stands like a mountain towering
Far above the works of men;
Its truth by none ever was refuted,
And destroy it they never can.

The Bible stands and it will forever,
When the world has passed away;
By inspiration it has been given,
All its precepts I will obey.

The Bible stands every test we give it,
For its Author is divine;
By grace alone I expect to live it,
And to prove and to make it mine. -- Haldor Lillenas