

What of the WORD?

September 27, 2012

The Word of God: Epic and/or Epoch? *Moby Dick* is an **epic**—meaning a long poem in elevated style narrating the deeds of a hero. An example of an epic work in Scripture is the Book of Job. **But an epoch** is a work or record extended over a long time period—era, age (epochal) timeless—eternal. The Bible constitutes ‘the’ Epoch of **epochal** works, because God’s Word is eternal, ageless—not limited to or affected by time. It is as effective today as it was the day it was recorded! If we do not read and study and meditate on *Moby Dick*, we are no worse for it; but if we so neglect the eternal Word, we are spiritually starved, at risk for ‘great’ deception, and dead while we live.

The most valuable thing we own is the Word of God! Not a mystery book; it is a plan for redemption and rescue for us from beginning to end! When perilous times come—and they will—we won’t run for the TV remote, or the phone, or the neighbor; if we’re a believer we’ll grab the closest Bible to see what God has to say. In John 6:68 “*Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’*” Soon we will see the final struggle against Christ and His followers escalate. Satan will send strong delusion: The ‘copy’ (counterfeit) will look so much like the ‘true’ that the only way we will know the difference is by knowing the *Truth* and His *Word* intimately.

The American Embassy in Cairo is a little bit of America in the land of Egypt, as the Church—representing the kingdom of God—is an embassy, with Christians as ambassadors, providing a little bit of Heaven (God’s kingdom) to the land of earth. Earth—the world—will not necessarily receive our heavenly ambassadorship with relish. It has, for the most part, rejected God and His Word, and, therefore, will oppose His representatives. We must be prepared to suffer—perhaps even die—for our Lord Jesus Christ. We know that on September 11, 2012, 100 militants attacked the Consulate in Benghazi, Libya, and murdered American Ambassador, J. Christopher Stevens—the first killing of this kind since 1979. Was it Stevens they despised or what he represented?

As Christians, we come and we operate in Christ’s Name! So, if as ambassadors we give food to, or cold water to, someone but do not share the gospel of our King—His Epoch Message—we are only facilitating them to enter hell well-fed and -watered! Scripture says, “Whoever gives a cup of water **in my name.**” Sadly it is often the “*in my name*” part that is ignored today. What does “in my name” mean? **The cup of cold water is given from the heart and hands of an ambassador on behalf of the One who sends us—King Jesus.**

We are come in service to the Lord Jesus Christ who gave His life for us—paid for our sins with His own blood—who sits at the right hand of the Father on High. His *Name* is Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, and of His kingdom there will be no end. That is in *Whose* Name we give this food and this water! Pastor Joe Williams “The power of the Word of God is the only possibility there is to positively affect our world, our nation, our state and our local community.”

Because our inner life is so important to God, we must seek Him for *Who* He is and not what He can do for us, and **we must share *Who He is*** while we do for others! Without His gospel, we will simply look good on the outside with nothing solid on the inside to offer a dying world. As ambassadors we also need to get rooted and grounded in the Word of God so that we are not easily offended and bothered by the ‘one anothers’ at the embassy (church) we’re to love. A disruption in our love for our brothers and sisters can have disastrous results for those who are waiting to hear the message of King Jesus. 1 John 2:11 *“But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.”*

Jeremiah 7:1-8 *“This is **the word** that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2‘Stand at the gate of the LORD’s house and there proclaim this message:*

*“Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the LORD. 3This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘**Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. 4Do not trust in deceptive words and say, “This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!” 5If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, 6if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, 7then I will let you live in this place in the land I gave your forefathers for ever and ever. 8But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless.**”* This is a picture of Israel painted by God through his prophet, but this is as much a portrait of America, today!

► From the New Testament, John 1:1-5 and 14, we learn:

- 1) The Word was in the beginning;
- 2) the Word was with God, and
- 3) the Word was God (v 1).
- 4) The Word—He was with God in the beginning (v 2).
- 5) The Word was Creator—through Him all things were made (v 3).
- 6) The Word—In Him was life and that life was the light of men (v 4).
- 7) The Word—Light of Christ in us shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it (v 5).
- 8) **The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us** (v 14)!

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God **is** living and active. *Sharper* than any double-edged sword, **it** penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; **it** judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” Based upon what the Word of God **is**—living, active (Christ in us, the hope of glory)—**it** is *sharper* than any double-edged sword; **it** will *penetrate* the deepest parts of us, and *judge* the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts. The Person of the Word will do this powerful ‘sacred’ stuff!

- I. The WORD of God is a Person—Jesus;
 - II. The WORD of God is absolute Truth—Jesus, and
 - III. The WORD of God will stand forever!
1. The Holy Spirit inspired human authors to write down what God thinks!
 2. His thoughts became Holy Writ—*The Word*—and knowing those words is the only way we can know how to be reconciled to God. Of the Word, Paul said, “*that makes us wise to salvation*” and leads us to eternal truth!
 3. The Word is the only place to find out how to live the Christian life—the answer to “where from here (salvation)?” The only way—the process—to become mature and equipped is outlined to us in 2 Timothy 3:16 “*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for Teaching us—what to do; Rebuking us—what not to do; Correcting us—what to do when we’ve done what we’re told not to do, and Training us—in (righteous) living.*”
 4. Holy Writ is the only place where we’ll find out what will happen in the future. Speculation equals man’s unreliable thinking versus: revelation—God’s thinking; His thoughts which are His Holy Written Word!

Think of it: The very Word (Logos) of Almighty God exists to **present** the way of eternal life to the lost, and then to **assure** believers that they have eternal life through Christ—1 John 5:13 “*I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*” Even Joshua in 3:9-10 understood that listening to God’s words would let the Israelites know that He was among them: “*Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God. **10This is how you will know that the living God is among you....***”

Old Testament prophets searched and investigated (Daniel 12:8), because the terrible price of forgiveness was not fully realized until Jesus’ death on the cross. And unlike Isaac (Genesis 22:13), there would be no substitute for Jesus. “The Word of God is God at work!” said J. I. Packer. “God’s word in the Old Testament is His creative utterance, his power in action fulfilling His purpose.”

As we celebrate the 400th anniversary of the English Bible, we are brought face to face with the *Light* and the *Logos*: Jesus Christ. Received or un-received; believed or un-believed, accepted or rejected—the Word of our God will stand forever! Psalm 119:89 “*Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.*” It is Very Christ—anointed and appointed!

In studying the Bible, the first thing involved is our motivation—we **have to want to do it!** And to be motivated to do it, **we have to know that we need it**—wisdom from God—daily: Proverbs 8:34-36 “*Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors waiting at my doorway. ³⁵For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD. ³⁶But whoever fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death.*” Blessed (happy) is the listening, watching, waiting one; the one who finds *Truth* and *Life* will receive favor from the LORD. Failure to find—to seek and to keep *Him*—is our responsibility with dire consequences!

A time when all will hear—John 5:28-29—“*Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.*”

So what about those who reject the Word? John 12:47-50 “*As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. ⁴⁸There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. ⁴⁹For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.*” Verse 48 said about the one who rejects Christ: “*that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.*” Proverbs 15:8, 10-11 “*The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good...¹⁰Stern discipline awaits him who leaves the path; he who hates correction will die. ¹¹Death and destruction lie open before the LORD—how much more the hearts of men.*”

Things happen when God speaks, and we have His Word on it! When in Genesis God said “*Let there be light*”, light appeared; when He called for the land to produce vegetation, “*it was so*”. Every single thing that God called into being came to exist at His Word. At God’s command a bush burned without burning up; seas and rivers parted, and it rained for 40 days and nights. When Jesus told a storm to “*Be still*”, “*the wind and the waves obeyed*”; when He commanded a “*deaf and dumb spirit*” to leave a young boy and never return it left with a shriek! When Jesus spoke thanks to His Father for a few loaves and fish, they multiplied by thousands; at Christ’s order a fig tree withered, and diseases obeyed His command to “*Be clean.*” All of nature heeds the word of God, and does just what its Creator expects of it; but man rebels.

God commends angels who obey his word: Psalm 103:20 “Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, **who obey his word.**” And of His people God has said: Psalm 149:6 “May the praise of God be in their mouths and a **double-edged sword** in their hands.” God’s will is for men and women to read and heed His Word—to study and meditate upon it daily. It’s His will that we spend more time in this holy book than in any other book; and that we spend more time getting to know the *Word* than we spend getting to know anyone else.

Here is a life-centering verse—literally: With 594 chapters before and after it, the Bible’s center verse is **Psalm 118:8** “It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.” While most people in America own at least one Bible, and though it is said to be the best-selling book, according to reports it’s the least read. Psalm 33:4 “For the word of the LORD is right and true; **he is faithful in all he does.**”

In His letter to the angel of the church in Pergamum, in Revelation 2:12, Christ told John to write: “**These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword.**” In 3:8 Jesus—the Word—**commends the church at Philadelphia for keeping His word and not denying His name.** He announces Himself to the lukewarm church of Laodicea like this: “These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, **the ruler of God’s creation.**” And then He tucks in this invitation to sincerity and repentance with the wonderful **words of 3:20**—“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”

John describes the evil words of the Antichrist—the beast—exercising his authority on earth in Revelation 13:5-7 “The beast was **given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies** and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. **6He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.** 7He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.” For a time...

But behold the *Rider* of the white horse six chapters later in Revelation 19:11-13, 16—His name is the Word of God! “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. 12His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and **his name is the Word of God.** ...16On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**”

“The words of men are unstable things, but not so the words of God,” said J. I. Packer, in *Knowing God*. “What He does in time, He planned from eternity. And all that He planned in eternity He carries out in time.” Be sure that His glorious, epochal Word will stand for all eternity...and beyond!