

POWER IN THE BLOOD

By Richard Dent

One of my favorite hymns has always been "Power in the Blood," which includes the words, "There is power in the blood of the lamb." Many great song leaders like to ask their audience to make that letter "P" explosive when they are singing that great hymn. As a child that was probably the highlight of the hymn to me.

Let's critique the hymn.

In the Old Testament sacrifices were often made by offering up animal sacrifices. The book of Leviticus tells in detail how the Hebrew people were to sacrifice and what they were to offer up and also when they were to offer their animal sacrifices, or when the high priest was to carry out God's plan for them to be acceptable in His sight.

Today we don't offer up animals as sacrifice. There is no need for that since Jesus Christ is God's gift for the forgiveness of our sins when we obey His word. (John 3:16.) God is willing to forgive us when we are baptized into Christ and put Him on. (Galatians 3:27.)

When we are baptized God's power washes away our sins. There is wonderful POWER in the precious blood of the Lamb.

"Sin stains are lost in the life giving flow; there's wonderful power in the blood." Have you experienced this power? Life is in the blood both physically and spiritually. When blood quits moving through our hearts and brains . . . we die. Without the blood of Jesus cleaning our spiritual hearts

(souls) from sin . . . we die spiritually. We need to be released from the burden of sin. Spiritual surgery is needed. Read Hebrews 4:12.

Friend, appreciate the power of God's written word in song. Be justified by His blood and be saved from wrath. (Romans 5:9.)

Yes, there is power in the blood of the Lamb. Sing it out loudly!

— Liberal, KS

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:18,19.)

WATCH WHAT YOU SAY

By Danny Tunnell

Many people have not made a relationship between what they say and how things turn out in their lives. The problem is one inch below their nose! Unwittingly, they become the devil's mouthpiece.

We need to fix our words to be in line with the word of God. We read about the twelve spies in Numbers 13. God had promised that He would give to Israel "Canaan," a land flowing with milk and honey. (Numbers 13:1,2,27.) Twelve spies were sent out, but only Joshua and Caleb believed what God said about them possessing the land. (Numbers 13:30.) Ten of the spies said, "we are not able" to possess the land. (Numbers 13:31.)

The ten who failed to believe God's word about taking the land gave an "evil report." (Numbers 13:32.) It was evil, not because they cursed or lied (what they said was true about there being giants in the land). It was evil because they didn't believe what God had said. They had an evil heart of unbelief. (Hebrews 3:12.)

Question: how many of the twelve spies got what they said? All of them. The two who believed they could take

the land did so; and the ten who didn't believe they could possess the land, didn't come to possess it. They all got what they said.

When we speak contrary to the word of God, we are giving place to the devil and we are bringing an "evil report." If we take the position, "What God says might happen, or it might not," then we have an evil heart of unbelief.

Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." (Matthew 12:34.) You can't have "good things" deposited in your heart and then speak evil. Neither can you have "evil things" deposited in your heart and then speak good. (Matthew 12:35.) The best deposit or treasure in our hearts is the word of God. (Proverbs 4:20-22.)

It would be good to view what Jesus said in Matthew 12 as a law. A law will always produce a predictable outcome if it is followed. A law is something that works the same every time. For example, God set in motion the law of gravity. If we drop a one pound rock off the top of a ten story building, using the law of gravity,

scientists can predict how long it will take for the rock to hit the ground, and at what speed. It will be the same every time.

An airplane is governed by the laws of flight. You take an airplane and go down the runway and reach a certain speed, and the air coming over the wings will create lift. It draws the plane up and causes it to fly and to overcome gravity. It doesn't matter the size of the plane. It may amaze us to watch a Boeing 747-8 freighter, loaded with 3000 pound steel plates, lift off, as one did on May 2, 2011 in California, with a total weight of 1,005,000 pounds. That may seem amazing to us, but for those who truly understand the laws of flight, they would be surprised and astonished if the airplane hadn't flown.

By the same token, Jesus would be astonished, too, if what He said didn't work. Deposit in your heart a good treasure (the word of God), and no one should be surprised when you speak good things, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

— Miami, OK

Old Paths

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"ask for the old paths" (Jer. 6:16)

DON'T COVER IT UP; FIX IT!

By Luke Bowers

Every time I start doing major work on one of the walls of my house, I get nervous. What might look like a perfectly good wall on the outside will often reveal serious problems on the inside. I have removed wallpaper only to find improperly installed sheet-rock or covered up holes. Behind the sheet rock I have found poorly placed studs, bad wiring, lack of insulation, and even tools - sealed up and forgotten. The outward finishing might make things look pretty for a time, but eventually the underlying problems will show through.

Many of us live our lives this way. On the surface we try to put up really pretty wallpaper, but underneath we are unfinished and messed up.

For a while this might work, but over time it becomes hard to put on a smile and present a pretty front for all to see. The pretty exterior can only hold up for so long before the problems underneath begin to show.

Trying to live your life this way is exhausting and will only end in heartache and pain.

Each and every one of us has messed up our lives in some way. We have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory. (Romans 3:23.)

Fortunately, we don't have to go around just pretending that everything is OK. We can actually fix our problems and move on. You see, there is this really good repair man. He is a carpenter, a shepherd, and great physician; but, most importantly, He is our Savior. His name is Jesus Christ and He is the only one capable of putting our lives back together.

So, next time you realize you've made a mess of things, don't try to hide it. Instead call the only one you know who can fix it - and turn your life over to Him.

— Abilene, TX

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." (Matthew 23:25-28.)

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory." (Colossians 3:1-4.)

ARE YOU A BIBLE STUDENT?

By Milton Smith

Bible study is not optional; it is expected of every Christian. A common phrase found numerous times throughout the Old Testament is the promise that Jehovah God will show mercy unto those who love Him and "keep His commandments." Deuteronomy 30:16 speaks of the duty of His people to "love Jehovah" and desire to "walk in his ways, keeping His commandments, statutes, and judgments." Most all are familiar with Jesus' words in John 14:15: "If you love me, keep my commandments." But Jesus also said in John 15:10, "If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love." It was the aged apostle John who wrote in his first general epistle that all Christians should love God and keep His commandments. (1 John 5:3.)

Clearly, God expects us to keep His commandments! But how can this be done if we choose to remain ignorant of God's Word? This is where good Bible study becomes a must. I'm often asked what things might be helpful to insure profitable Bible study. Whatever my suggestions might be worth, I'm happy to offer them if they might be of any help. To begin with, any study of the Bible must be done reverently. Respecting the Bible as the Word of God is an absolute must. Any irreverent, haphazard attempt to study God's Word will always fall short of what is needful. The student must always have a desire to learn. This means that the reader must approach the Bible with an open mind and a willingness to do what the Book says to do; even if it means giving up previously held ideas that are not found in the Bible - no matter how cherished those ideas might have been.

Prayer should always accompany good Bible study. This does not mean that God will give us a "new" revelation as we study (for such is not promised to us today). But we can pray - as I have often done - that God might provide us with clear minds and pure hearts as we venture into our study. It is always important to consult other scriptures that might relate to a particular subject that the reader is studying. For example, the gospel writers will often give complimentary information regarding certain events in the life of Christ. One should honestly desire to understand what a passage is saying, love the Word of God, respect it for what it teaches, and live by those teachings. After all, Jesus once said, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge . . . in the last day." (John 12:48.)

May each of us study our Bible every day and respect it for the great truth that it contains!

— Tulsa, OK

FIGHTING WITH GOD

By Dalton Key

Some battles are just not worth winning.

Take for example, King Pyrrhus, ruler of Epirus, who once defeated the Romans in the battle of Asculun. Though winning the battle, Pyrrhus lost nearly all of his soldiers in the process. Sometime later, upon being congratulated on the victory, he lamented, "Another such victory and I shall be ruined!"

Many centuries have come and gone since so many soldiers fell at Asculun, yet we still use the term "Pyrrhic victory" to describe a victory achieved at excessive cost; a battle really won by no one.

The man or woman lifting a fist toward heaven, boasting of independence from God and freedom to live unrestrained by His will may temporarily appear to win the battle. God does not rule by force or coercion. But the victory is hollow and short-lived at best, a true "Pyrrhic victory." This same rebel will one day stand before the Judge of all men to answer for deeds done in the body. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." (2 Corinthians 5:10.)

In his Essay on Compensation, Emerson wrote, "Persons and events may stand for a time between you and justice, but it is only a postponement. You must at last pay your debt . . . you cannot do wrong without suffering wrong."

What a short-sighted victory, to waste a life and lose a soul in a foolish war waged against the God of heaven. Listen to the Lord: "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man, if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:25,26.)

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh, will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life." (Galatians 6:7,8.) As one wit once observed, "You can't sow wild oats and then pray for a crop failure."

Friend, don't fight against heaven. Some victories are just too expensive!

EDITORIALLY SPEAKING . . .

A GOOD FRIEND

By Dalton Key

I once had a good friend. He didn't drink alcohol, and so was never involved in any alcohol-related crimes or embarrassments. He never once destroyed his mind with the use of illegal, mind-altering drugs. I never once heard my friend gossip. In all the time I knew him, I never heard him tell a single lie. His time was never wasted hanging out in night clubs, casinos, or any other questionable establishments. I can't recall ever hearing him speak even one word of profanity or vulgarity. And he never cheated a soul in business.

Many people would describe my good friend as a "good Christian."

But you need to know that I have been describing my long gone, fondly remembered dog, Patches!

It is time we learned what being a Christian is all about; that being a Christian involves more than merely not doing wrong. Being a Christian concerns actually doing what is right, fully submitting to Christ, and living by faith.

Christ taught, "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23.) Complete and total submission to Christ is essential if we would be called by His name. Like the brethren of Smyrna, all of us in Christ are expected to "be faithful until death." (Revelation 2:10.)

The priest and the Levite in our Lord's parable of the Good Samaritan would have been happy to boast of all the vile things they had no part in and were no party to, but the larger question was this: what, with respect to a man dying alongside the road, were they willing to actually do? (Luke 10:30-37.)

The world holds many good and honest souls who are not maliciously engaged in the blackest of evils. Many of these good, moral citizens are our neighbors, our friends, our relatives. They may, in some cases, be more moral than some of the church's more nominal members.

But they should not, by virtue of their upstanding lifestyles, be confused with "good Christians." They may refrain from wrong; they may even be involved in promoting much that is right. But outside of Christ they cannot be considered Christians.

Not until one comes to Christ and obeys the gospel is one a Christian. No one can live a pure enough life to save himself, and there is still no other name to save us but the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12.)

Remember, there is a world of difference between my dog and a "good Christian."

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17.)

**THE CHURCH COULD USE MORE LIKE JOSHUA!**

By Bobby Key

The destiny of a nation is bound up in its leaders. This is no less true of the church. Very seldom can a congregation rise above its leadership. Men by nature follow the examples of this about them. Relatively few think for themselves or decide, rationally, on their course of conduct. For the most part we all like to play "follow the leader." This should be a sobering thought for those who stand in the place of divine leadership.

Joshua, who in earlier years was the servant and minister of Moses, led the people across the Jordan into the promised land. It was Joshua, supreme head and leader of the people, who read God's law from Mount Ebal. There was never any doubt as to where this godly man stood. He called on the people to make a choice that would determine their destiny and the destiny of their children's children. They had but two

alternatives: Serve Jehovah God or serve either the gods of their fathers which were "on the other side of the flood" or "the gods of the Amorites." Joshua's example inspires us all: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15.)

"And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old." (Joshua 24:29.) At this point his life was ended but not his influence. We are not surprised to read from Judges, chapter two, verse seven: "So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua."

No greater tribute could be paid Joshua than this. His faithful life of devotion and service to God led an entire nation in the right direction. Not only did he influence the people for

good during his life but during the days of the elders that outlived him as well. He was dead, but his works continued to live on. (Revelation 14:13.)

It would be impossible to over-stress the importance of godly leaders. If those who speak for God fail to be steadfast in doctrine and moral purity, what may God expect of the people in general?

Joshua, God's servant, lived the way he preached. The church today could use more faithful leaders like Joshua.

— DECEASED

GOD HAS SPOKEN

By Joe Slater

As the inspired author wrote Hebrews 1:1-4, that whole section is one long sentence. In the NKJV it has 107 words! But remember that every complete sentence must contain a subject and a verb. In this case "God" is the subject. (v. 1.) The verb doesn't start until v. 2 with the helping verb "has." Then, after the prepositional phrase "in these last days" we have the rest of the verb: "spoken."

God has spoken! That's the point of the sentence.

We serve a God who has communicated with the people He created. In bygone days He did so through prophets by various means. (visions, angels, audible speech, etc.) Now He has done so through Jesus, His Son. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth. (John 16:13.) That leaves no new truth to be revealed today. We have that body of truth in written form.

We need nothing additional.

Innumerable people still claim

that God has spoken directly to them. Let it be said kindly but firmly: they are sincerely mistaken or else they are lying. If modern-day revelation is needed, then the Spirit guided the apostles only into partial truth at best. But Jesus said, "all truth."

When we faithfully teach and proclaim what God has revealed, confirmed, and recorded in the Bible, we may hear people say, "That's just your opinion!" But not even the inspired prophets of the past spoke their own ideas. "For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21.)

God has spoken! We would do well to listen, submit ourselves to Him, and teach and encourage everyone to do likewise.

— Justin, TX

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that

the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16,17.)

"The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those who proclaimed it." (Psalms 68:11.)

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