

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK, SERIES

Ronny F. Wade, Speaker

The Word of His Grace

Acts 20:32

What a powerful statement. What a wonderful tribute to the word of God. The reference here is doubtless to the gospel, with its promises of support, its consoling truths, and its directions to seek all needful help and comfort in God. God's word is here presented as the means of building one up in the holy faith. The philosophies, speculations, and theories of men provide no power at all in this sector. Only the word of God, received, studied, obeyed, loved, preached, and honored by men can affect any true spirituality and in any manner build up the followers of Jesus. This word is adapted to the end in view, the salvation and sanctification of the soul. It is fitted by infinite wisdom to secure the renovation and salvation of man. The Gospel is God's power to save---Romans 1:16

Some claim that the power of God is demonstrated independent, separate and apart from the Gospel, by direct intervention of the Holy Spirit.

One cannot deny that the plan of God is for the Holy Spirit to have a central role in the conviction and conversion of the sinner.

1Cor.6:11 "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

1Cor. 12:13 "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

The issue is not:

Does the Holy Spirit work today in the conviction and conversion of the sinner?

Is the Holy Spirit real? Is the Holy Spirit powerful? Does the Holy Spirit operate on the hearts of men and women to save them from sin?

The issue is:

How or by what means does the Holy Spirit work? Does he work directly (without means) or indirectly (through means) upon the heart of the sinner? Does the Holy Spirit work through the word of truth, or does he work in addition to and distinct from the word of truth?

I. The Holy Spirit and the Word.

The Holy Spirit's work in conversion, believed by most Protestant denominations today, is called "irresistible grace."

Background of this doctrine comes from John Calvin who taught:

1. each person is totally depraved and needs a "direct operation of the Holy Spirit" to be converted.
2. his doctrine was systematized into five points by the Synod of Dort in 1618 and later adopted into the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1647.

According to Calvinism, the Holy Spirit works directly on the heart of the depraved

sinner, apart from the word of truth to make the sinner born again.

It is believed that the sinner cannot resist the Holy Spirit's work and that is why it is called "irresistible grace." As such the man is passive in his conversion while the Holy Spirit does all the work of conversion for him.

The idea of "irresistible grace" has led to the practice of "praying through at the mourners bench," "alter calls," "getting religion," "having an experience of grace," and "catching the Spirit."

This Doctrine Runs Counter To The Teachings Of The Bible.

1. It negates the importance of man's obedience.

Mt. 7:21 "Not everyone that says to me Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father in heaven."

Heb. 5:9 "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."

2. It bypasses and overrides the free-will of man.

Rom. 2:6 "who will render to each one according to his deeds"

Rev. 20:12 "...and the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."

3. It has faith and repentance coming from the Holy Spirit, not from man.

4. It makes God a respecter of persons, sending the direct operation of the Holy Spirit to some, but not to others. Acts 10:35 "But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. Rom. 2:1 "For there is no partiality with God."

5. It makes God personally responsible for those who are lost.

1Tim.2:4 "who desires all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth."

2Pet.3:9 "...God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to..."

6. It denies the all sufficient power of the gospel to save.

Romans 1:16 "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation."

James 1:21 "...receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls."

7. It denies the fact that the Holy Spirit can be resisted.

Acts 7:51 "Ye stiff-necked...you always resist the Holy Spirit, as your fathers did..."

8. It denies the true nature of God's grace that instructs man through the word of truth.

Titus 2:11 "The grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared unto all..."

9. It denies the true nature of God's call through the gospel.

2Thess. 2:13 "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

II. The Original Promise of the Holy Spirit's Work—John 16:8-11.

1. The Holy Spirit would convict the world in respect of sin.

The word "convict" translates a word meaning "confute, refute, reprove."

How was this promise fulfilled? Note the events that followed:

a. The Holy Spirit was promised to the apostles by Jesus.

Luke 24:49 "Behold I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Acts 1:4-5 "And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father which He said "you have heard from me for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

b. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all truth.

John 16:12-13 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever he hears He will speak and He will tell you things to come."

c. The Holy Spirit baptism was administered to the apostles only.

Acts 2:1-4

d. The Holy Spirit preaching was done by the apostles.

Acts 2:4 and v. 14

e. The Holy Spirit convicted and converted sinners.

Acts 2:37 "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart..."

How then did the Holy Spirit convict the world of sin?

Answer: He convicted and converted sinners through the preaching of the word of truth.

The apostles words were the words of the Holy Spirit.

1Peter 1:12 "To them it was revealed that, not to themselves but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things which angels desire to look into."

What caused the people on Pentecost to be "pricked in their heart?"

Did they "hear" something or "feel" something? They heard words.

What did they receive? Peter's "word" or "the direct operation of the Holy Spirit?"

They received Peter's word.

III. The Holy Spirit and the Word.

The New Testament teaches that the Holy Spirit uses "words" to convict the world of sin.
2Tim. 4:2 "Preach the word, be ready in season..."

Titus 1:9 "holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict."

The Holy Spirit always operates through the word of truth to convict and convert the sinner.

John 14:17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him but you know Him for He dwells with you and will be in you."

The "sword of the Spirit" is the "word of God." Eph. 6:17

God draws sinners through the word of Truth: John 6:44-45 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him and I will raise him up at the last day. It is

written in the prophets and they shall all be taught by God. Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me."

God calls sinners through the word of truth: 1Thess. 2:13-14 "...to which he called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

IV. The Word of His Grace.

"...I commend you to God and the word of His grace which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.