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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORD

The Bible is the mind of Christ, that is, His thoughts on every subject. In 1 Corinthians 2:16, Paul said, "For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."

God places the highest priority on His Word, and has magnified it above everything else known to man. Psalm 138:2 say's, *"I bow down toward Thy holy temple and give thanks to Thy name for Thy steadfast love and Thy faithfulness; for Thou hast exalted above everything Thy name and Thy Word."*

The Word existed, in the form of wisdom, before human history. Proverbs 8:22-30 as wisdom personified, said, "The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old [/ farthest time of antiquity]. From everlasting I was established [Heb. *'olam* here means- eternity past], from the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills I was brought forth; while He had not yet made the earth and the fields, nor the first dust of the world. When He established the heavens, I was there, when He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep, when He made firm the skies above, when the springs of the deep became fixed, when He set for the sea its boundary, so that the water should not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth; then I was beside Him, {as} a master workman; and I was daily {His} delight, rejoicing always before Him."

The Bible surpasses all human intellectual achievement. Paul discusses the wisdom of the world and its relation to the Word of God in 1 Corinthians 1:17-31. Peter wrote, in 2 Peter 1:19-21, that "...we have the prophetic word [Old Testament] {made} more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is {a matter} of one's *own* interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

When Peter say's, "we have the prophetic word {made} more sure," he's speaking in the light of what he just said in v. 16-18, that "...we were

eyewitnesses of” Christ’s “majesty,” and that “...when He received honor and glory from God the Father,” who said, “‘This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased,’ ...we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven...”What better way of substantiating the truth than to say, “We saw it with our own eyes and we heard it with our own ears.”? What can be more real than seeing and hearing? Peter tells us that the Word of God should be more real to us than *anything* else in life!

Peter documents the experience of the Transfiguration which he had shared with James and John on Mt. Hermon in Caesarea Philippi. They had seen Jesus Christ in all His glory, as He would appear at the 2nd Advent. They had witnessed the inward reality of His true nature as eternal Deity shining through. They heard the Father’s voice speak from Heaven; and yet Peter wrote with utmost conviction-- “we have the prophetic word {made} more sure, to which you do well to pay attention...”He say’s that the prophetic word is an even surer confirmation than what he saw at the Transfiguration; that the testimony of the OT is more convincing than even the voice of God which he heard that day. The phrase “more sure” is from the comparative of *be/baioj* (*bebaios*). *Bebaios* means- *permanent, certain, secure*. It speaks of something that is firm, stable, something that can be relied upon and trusted in. The idea is that the Word of God which we possess is an even *more* reliable foundation than the signs and wonders which Peter and the other apostles had witnessed firsthand.

To this Word, Peter say’s, you would “do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place.” One might ask the question, in ignorance, “Why place such a profound importance on the Scriptures?” The Word of God leads us out of spiritual darkness.

Psalm 119:105, “*Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.*” 2 Samuel 22:29. “For You are my lamp, O LORD; and the LORD illumines my darkness

Proverbs 6:20-23, “My son, observe the commandment of your father, and do not forsake the teaching of your mother [divine viewpoint instilled by / parents]; bind them continually on your heart [right lobe of your soul]; tie them around your neck. When you walk about, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk to you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is *light*; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life.”

How long are we to single-mindedly devote our thoughts, our efforts, and our energy to the Word of God?” The answer-- “until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.” The dawning of the “day” here is the Day of Christ-- the Rapture of the Church. The “morning star arising in your hearts” signifies the ultimate decoration in eternity-- the order of the Morning Star. The “morning star” is described as a category of eternal reward in Revelation 2:26-28.

Thyatira was a church characterized by great spiritual service. In v. 19 Jesus said, "I know... that your deeds of late are greater than at first," a statement that implies spiritual growth in the body. Their spiritual growth had resulted in "love and faith and service and perseverance." Yet, in the midst of their spiritual growth, and their Christ-like attitude of service in the cause of the Gospel, they were tolerating a self-appointed "prophetess" by the name of Jezebel who was teaching false doctrine and leading weaker believers astray into sexual immorality and idol worship.

Nevertheless, our Lord said, that "...he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received {authority} from My Father; and I will give him the *morning star*," vv. 26-28. The "morning star" is a decoration awarded to those few who have become so conformed to Christ in this earthly life that they will reflect the glory of Christ in heaven. There could be no more tremendous honor-- no greater privilege than to exchange at the Bema Seat this uniform of honor, worn in the soul, for that uniform of glory.

When Peter writes to these persecuted believers, he doesn't say, "But know this first of all." What he says is, "keep on *knowing* this." The word Peter uses is a pres. act. part. Which speaks of a perception and understanding which is uninterrupted, continually taking place, The active voice brings out the principle of personal responsibility in the application of the doctrine they were being taught. He uses the phrase "keep on *knowing* this" to refer *back* to the words "to which you do well to pay attention." That is, as these believers gave their attention to the OT prophecies and the OT Scriptures, they were to keep in mind what followed in the next two vv.

In one short sentence Peter lay's down the most important hermeneutical principle you and I will *ever* learn "that no prophecy of Scripture is {a matter} of one's *own* interpretation." The Greek i)/dioj (idios) means- *one's own private, exclusive possession*. I.e., what he's saying is the Word of God is not subject to the mind of man; it's not a ball of metaphorical clay that even the most brilliant human mind can mold and shape into the form and fashion it desires, nor is it subject to rationalism and empiricism.

It is, however, the exclusive possession of the Spirit of God, and therefore, to assimilate the Word, to metabolize the Word, and to interpret it *accurately* requires the exercise of faith in the power of the Spirit. Allow me, if you will, to illustrate this for you from 1 Corinthians 2.

In 1 Corinthians 2:11 Paul told the believers in Corinth that no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. He went on to say in v. 12, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world [human viewpoint-- / wisdom and rationale of / CS], but the Spirit who is from God [HS], that [*hina*- 'in order that;'] it

begins a final purpose clause, i.e., it is used by Paul to point out / principal reason for our having been given the HS at salvation] we might know [with a *clear* and *absolute knowledge*; subj. mood of *oida* means that volitionally, / choice to learn and apply / Word is entirely up to you and I] the things freely given to us by God [‘freely given’ comes from / verb *charizomai*- ‘give in grace;’ those ‘things given to us by the grace of God’ are spiritual truths in / form of Bible doctrine].” --Back to 2 Peter.

The word “for” in v. 21 is the causal particle *gar*, and it means- *for this reason*. Why is it that “no prophecy of Scripture is of one’s own interpretation”? For this simple reason, because “no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will” “no prophecy was ever given by the will and desire of man,” by his choice and his inclination. Therefore, divine truth is not relegated to the sphere of human intellect, or to the subjectivity of emotion. That belongs to cults, like the Mormons, with their completely subjective ‘test of faith’ known as the “burning in the bosom.”

We cannot say, as *many*, many a Sunday School class can testify, “Well, this is what *I* think it means.” That’s precisely the type of ‘pooled ignorance’ that leads to mass confusion and spiritual blindness. Peter begins his last statement with “but.” The Greek word is *alla*, the strongest conjunction of contrast possible. In perfect contrast to the finite intellect of man, “men moved by the HS spoke from God.” *Phero* means- ‘be carried or borne along.’ It signifies that the prophets of old were impelled by the power of the Spirit, that He controlled and superintended them so that what they wrote was the *exact* message He wanted written.

They didn’t simply write what they *felt* like writing, they were “carried along” by the HS. Neither can we simply interpret the Word according to what we *feel* it means, or what we feel it *ought* to mean. We must let the writer speak for himself, without putting *our* thoughts in *his* head.

The verb *lale/w* (*laleo*) here means- *use words in order to declare one’s mind and disclose one’s thoughts*. Without waiving the human authors personality, literary style, IQ, vocabulary or frame of reference, G / HS inspired these men to declare and disclose to the human race, in the language and vernacular of their *own* day, the mind and thoughts of God-- the divine viewpoint infallibly expressed in human terms. o, we have seen, without a shadow of a doubt, that the Bible far surpasses any human intellectual achievement. “All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths contained in the Sacred Scriptures.”

The Bible is our most important provision for daily life. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus answered the temptation and testing of Satan with the words, “...Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”

The man who hears and obeys instruction from the Word is a *wise* man. Our response to the Word of God is the basis for our eternal reward.

James 2:12-13, "So speak and so act, as those who are to be judged [evaluated, at / Bema Seat] by {the} law of liberty [Word of God; what James is saying is that our spiritual lives will be assessed in / light of / divine standard found in / 'law of freedom']. For judgment [at / Bema Seat] {will be} merciless to one who has shown no mercy [James recognizes that because of our arrogance, our inability and our insufficiency, what we need more than anything else, standing in / presence of / omniscient Judge, is mercy, i.e., / fullest possible measure of compassion]; mercy triumphs over judgment [not only will mercy triumph at / Day of Christ, mercy is victorious right now; mercy triumphs over arrogance, mercy triumphs over hypocrisy, mercy triumphs over self-righteousness and a judgmental attitude; 2 principles of mercy from vv. 12-13]." Because God has shown us great mercy, we are to show mercy to others. The standard of mercy that you measure out to others is the standard by which you yourself will be measured.

In Matthew 7:1-2 Jesus told his fellow Jews, "Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you." How do *you* judge others? Because this is the divine standard of judgment, whether *with* mercy and grace, or *without*, it's measured back to us,

John exhorts these believers, to "watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward." The word for "watch" here is a mental word in the Greek. It means- *consider, contemplate, direct your thoughts and attention toward something.*

John penned these very words in recognition of the "...many deceivers" who had "gone out into the world." He describes them in v. 7, as "those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh those who did not acknowledge humanity of Christ were Gnostics that John labeled as deceivers and antichrists."

What was it about themselves that John was commanding these believers to keep a watchful eye on, to direct their thoughts and attention toward. It was their *dedication* to the one and only thing that would give them discernment against false teaching, the *one* thing that would enable them to identify the deceivers and antichrists-- the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

Hebrews 10:35-36: "Therefore [or *consequently*, in light of your having endured / 'great conflict of suffering,' described in vv. 33-34, he says], do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward [their confidence, which came about as a result of their understanding / Word of God, rested in an eternal, omnipotent and immutable God]. For you have need of endurance, [now he gives us / reason for our desperate need of divine endurance] so that when you have done

the will of God, you may receive what was promised [blessing in time and reward in eternity].”

Communication of the Word must be heard before faith can be exercised, thus accentuating the importance of Bible class and *personal* study-- “faith {comes} from hearing*, and hearing by the word of Christ,” Romans 10:17.

Faith* must be exercised, ‘inhale faith,’ before application can take place, for the simple fact that you *cannot* apply what you do not know.

Full knowledge, knowledge* to which faith has been applied, is a reality *only* when we believe what has been perceived and understood through the illumination of the HS, through His teaching ministry. Once we possess *epignosis*, full knowledge, in the heart-- the right lobe of the mentality-- now we can move into the realm of *application**. We call this ‘exhale faith.’

From application of the Word in the power of the Spirit comes character*. Christian character means virtue, and eventually, integrity. Integrity is *consistency* of character.

From spiritual character comes true spiritual service*, *ministry* to the Body of Christ. Here’s the principle: *Character is a result of spiritual growth; service is a result of character.*

With that service comes a finality in our personal sense of destiny-- joy, peace, contentment, and a sense of completion and fulfillment* unequalled and unparalleled by *anything* the world has to offer! Inner tranquility and contentment come from learning how to rest in the arms of God’s matchless grace.

The personal sense of destiny, the joy of spiritual service, the fulfillment and contentment which come from ministry to the Body of Christ, are all a part of the believer’s blessing in time which will be parlayed into reward in eternity. ations stand or fall based on their attitude of people toward God’s Word.

“The vigor of our spiritual life will be *in exact proportion* to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts.