

The Power of The Word II

Happy Sabbath to all. This week we are going to look at the second study in A.T. Jones' Series "The Power of The Word" as found in the book *Lessons on Faith*.

In the first part, we saw what I consider to be one of the most important lessons in all of Christianity, and perhaps one of THE most overlooked and understated aspect of the Gospel. That is, actually, the spirit of the Sabbath rest. Nominal Christianity teaches, for the most part, that we accept Jesus as our personal Savior, and then spend the rest of our lives trying to emulate His example, and improving more and more (maybe!) to avoid sin through practice and constant repentance.

The Scriptures, however, and Jones's studies, present a different picture. We accept Jesus as our personal Savior, of course – that is the first step, and at which point He declares us "Just." This is Justification. But Sanctification is very different between the true and counterfeit Gospels. We find that, upon entering Christ's spiritual presence, and His Spirit dwelling within us, we enter a state of rest, not a state of exertion.

True Christianity is not about guilt, it is about peace. It is not about effort, it is about revelation. It is about seeing the work of Yahweh revealed in us, and we supply the choice, the will to follow, but not the effort to accomplish the works of salvation. The work of salvation is Yah's work to do within the believer; all we must do is "stand fast" as one Scripture says, and rebuke temptations that would seek to remove us from this process through false thoughts.

This is the reason why the apostles tell us we must have the "mind" of Christ. Another place says let the same "mind" be with you that was in the Messiah. Yet another verse tells us that we must be "transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Rom 12:2)

The common thread here is very easy to see when those verses are put together, but many people are not taught to read the Scriptures for principle, to find common threads of thought, and thus understand more clearly the wisdom of Yahweh. What we find here is that Christianity is a great controversy for the mind, for the application of the will to righteousness; but Satan would have people believe that it is a struggle in the flesh to do or not do wrong acts. The battles that he cannot win, the tempter will avoid by distraction. Our work is to restore an understanding of the true battleground for the soul, and to teach people to be transformed by the renewing of their mind, by dwelling on the Word of Elohim, because it is there that we find the power of the word.

We will continue this week by looking at Jones' follow-up study to that first one.

Let us begin, then:

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We have seen that the power abiding in the word of God is sufficient, only upon the speaking of that word, to create worlds. It is likewise sufficient, now that it is spoken to men, to create anew, in Christ Jesus, every one who receives it.

In the eighth chapter of Matthew it is related that a centurion came to Jesus, "beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. . . . And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour."

Now what was it that the centurion expected would heal His servant? It was "the word only," which Jesus would speak. And after the word was spoken, what did the centurion depend upon--to what did he look for the healing power? It was "the word only." He did not look for the Lord to do it in some ways apart from the word. No. He heard the word, "So be it done unto thee." He accepted that word as it is in truth the word of God and expected it, depended upon it, to accomplish that which it said. And it was so. And that word is the word of God today as certainly as in the day that it was originally spoken. It has lost none of its power, for that word "liveth and abideth forever."

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After a brief review of his previous focus, Jones starts with this record from Matthew to give a further illustration of the power that was, and is, literally in the "word" of Yahshua, who is in turn the Word of Yah. But notice, and this is also something of a carry-over from the last study, that the Word of Yah will not be allowed to work unless it is accepted.

This is a very powerful idea, and it reveals something of the responsibility that believers have. The world asks, "Does prayer really work?" The believer understands that Yahweh will often wait on His people to pray to Him (remember the six months of dryness before Elijah's prayer for rain) in order to reveal the cooperation that He desires to exist between the mortal and the Immortal. His plans are from eternity, and He well knows what He intends to do; nevertheless, our prayers are an important aspect of that eternal plan, and we benefit immeasurably by our agreement with, and understanding of, those plans.

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Again in John 4:46-52 it is related how a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum came to Jesus at Cana of Galilee and "besought him that he would come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth."

This is the power of the word of God to the man who receives it as it is in truth the word of God. This is the power that "effectually worketh also in you that believe." This is the way that the word of God accomplishes that which He pleases, in those who will receive it and let it dwell in them. Notice that in both instances the thing was accomplished at the very time when the word was spoken. Notice also that the sick ones were not in the immediate presence of Jesus but some distance away--the latter was at least a day's journey away from where Jesus was spoken to by the nobleman. Yet he was healed at once when

the word was spoken. And that word is living and full of power today, as certainly as it was that day, to every one who receives it as was done that day. It is faith to accept that word as the word of God and to depend upon it to accomplish the thing that it says. For of the centurion when he said, "Speak the word only and my servant shall be healed," Jesus said to them that stood around, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Let Him find it now everywhere in Israel.

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Again, we see that the focus this time is not only on the power in the Word, but also our part in this work. We must accept, and we must believe, and then the power in the Word will be effective in transforming our lives, and the lives of those around us. This sounds very basic, very simple, but the truth is, many people need to appreciate how simple the Word of God actually is.

The Word of Yahweh is not bound by either time or distance. It is not bound by circumstance or all the strength of the fallen angels. The only thing that limits it, and that by the will of Yah Himself, is the part that the believer must play. The Scriptures tell us, "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; who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." (Acts 14:15-17)

Yahweh, even through all His allowance of both individual and national sins, has never been without witnesses in the earth. This is not merely so that a record would be left of His judgment and His salvation (although that is certainly vital) but also so that He could work through His agents in the course of human history. We believe that the ministry of invisible angels is responsible for the blessing that Yah sends to us – they are the ones that bear our prayers before the Throne (as Revelation tells us) and they are the ones that work out the miracles and wrath of the Creator. Nevertheless, angels seldom appear without a human agent to receive them. When we read through the Old and New Testaments, we find angels appearing to human beings before going about their work. Of course, there are many blessings that we receive from them that we will not know about until we look back over these years on earth from the vantage point of Heaven, but the "great works," those recorded in the Bible, were revealed unto faithful men before they were accomplished.

Will it be any different in this generation? Certainly not. We are the ones who will receive, and testify to, the ministry of angels in these last acts of the Great Controversy.

We continue:

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Jesus says to every one of us, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." It is through the word that this cleansing is wrought. The Lord does not propose to cleanse you in any way apart from His word, but through the word which He has spoken. There and there alone are you to look for the cleansing power, receiving it as it is in truth the word of God which effectually worketh in you and accomplishes that which He pleases. He does not propose to make you pure except by the power and indwelling of His pure words.

A leper said to Jesus, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." And Jesus answered Him, "I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." Are you mourning under the leprosy of sin? Have you said or will you now say, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean"? The answer is now to you, "I will; be thou clean." And "immediately" you are cleansed as certainly as was that other leper. Believe the word, and praise the Lord for its cleansing power. Do not believe for that leper away back there; believe it for yourself here, now, immediately. For the word is to you now, "Be thou clean." Accept it as did those of old and immediately it worketh effectually in you the good pleasure of the Father.

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Oh, how I wish those who disbelieve, and even those who actively oppose, the Gospel, and the Victory over Sin, would understand the words of this study that I quoted from Jones above. Many who wish to be, and many who believe they are, faithful Christians, have been taught that they must cleanse themselves before Christ will accept them. This is a great tragedy. They have no more power to cleanse themselves from sin than the darkness had to create light from itself, or the earth to bring forth life of itself. All the power to create, and to transform, must come from the Word of Yah, and that Word says unto these struggling ones, "Enter my Sabbath!" Enter my rest, my "cessation" from the works that you think will justify you.

There is no power in the universe but the Word of Yah that can bring forth good things from evil – and the carnal heart is in desperate need of this transformation. Many, even many who are in churches, struggle with sins. We have heard them, and mourned over them, because if we ask the question, "Would you like to never need to give such a testimony as you have just shared again?"

If we ask them this question, they are offended. They do not see that the question comes from loving care, from brotherly affection, and not from a position of judging them as being "less than we are." We, who are Sabbath-keepers in the spirit, we are the servants of those who yet strive against the demons (both literal and figurative) that keep them from the joy of salvation.

They must be humble, as must we all be, and they must understand that they yet have things to learn, if they will see the days of light in the Restoration.

We conclude this second simple, but very powerful, message:

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Let all who have named the name of Christ receive His word today as it is in truth the word of God, depending upon that word to do what the word says. Then as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," even so it will be now to the glory of God.

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In the first part of His study, Jones establishes that there is power indeed in the word. In this second part, he explains that we must believe in this power, and accept it for ourselves – this very day – in order to receive the promises that Yah has for His people. He lets the rain fall on the just and the unjust alike, but

there are special blessings, blessings with everlasting benefits, for His en-covenanted people. The end of those blessings is the development of the perfect character of Christ Yahshua in the believers both individually and as a Church. So many are taught, or accept the testimony of their limited experiences, that there is “no one Church that gets it all right.” Similarly, they are taught, or accept the testimony of their own personal experiences, that “nobody can truly live without sin.”

I want you to understand that these two ideas, these two deceptions of Satan, are intimately linked. If one believes that individuals can truly accept the promise of Christ, and experience victory over sin, then it follows naturally that a collection of these people will compose the purified Church of the 144,000. If one cannot accept that “whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,” (1John 3:9) then how can they possibly believe that any organization of human beings can ever be truly pleasing to the Father?

But we testify that we have this experience of Victory as individuals, and that our fellowship IS that “glorious Church” in this generation. We testify that we believe in the power of the Word, and that, in accepting it, we have become the witnesses for this age through which Yah can work His work upon mankind, and draw them ever closer to His heart as the Judgment breaks to cleanse the universe, forever, from all sin and suffering.

It takes courage to bear that testimony, just as it takes humility to accept it. But let us be bold indeed, and let us seek out those who are humble indeed. Let us take this commission, and this responsibility, seriously, as we unyieldingly stand for glory and truth in an era of darkness and lies.