

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Only Thing The Bible Is Good For

(Jerry Fite)

Alexander Campbell made a simple, but profound statement when he said, “*The Bible is a perfect chart for the entire voyage of life. Beyond that it is of no value. It is not adapted to man in Heaven or Hell.*” This statement is focusing our attention on a broad panoramic view of the Bible. Campbell is inviting us to see the big picture of our voyage of life in contrast to the only two destinations when this life ends. There is the broad way that leads to destruction, eternal punishment in the eternal fire of Hell (*Matthew 7:13, Matthew 25:46, Mark 9:47-48*). And, there is the straightened way that leads to eternal life in Heaven (*Matthew 7:14, Matthew 25:46, Colossians 1:5*).

I agree, the Bible is not full of specifics on how to conduct my eternal day in Heaven. It certainly does not guide me through Hell’s inescapable lake of fire. So, what good is the Bible? It is only for this life, my life now, my daily walk with God in this present voyage of life.

God claims that His word is the guide for our way through life. The Psalmist writes, “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path.*” (*Psalm 119:105*). The path for our life is

lighted by God’s word. The specific steps we take are guided by a specific light source, the same Word of God. God’s word lights the way to Heaven, and like a lamp, God’s word guides our individual steps along the way.

Our Lord has always possessed life. “*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men*” (*John 1:4*). Because the Son of God is eternal, the life He possesses is eternal. This life has been communicated to the world through the Gospel. Paul affirms God’s purpose has “*...now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*” (*2 Timothy 1:10*). Life, that is not subject to death, is before our eyes through the Gospel. Submitting to its directions, we can possess it for sure. John affirms this fact, and reveals the path we must follow: “*These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God*” (*1 John 5:13*).

God’s word communicated through Jesus’ apostles gives us substantive guidance which we can hold and follow. Paul exhorts us as Christians to “*Hold the pattern of sound words which thou*

hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (*2 Timothy 1:13*). Paul points us to two important characteristics of the inspired word he heralds to all men: They are “sound” words which denote God’s revelation to man is “healthy” to take into our hearts, and live out in our lives. Next, these revealed words form a “pattern”, leaving a definite “imprint” or “copy” to follow. You can only “hold” on to something that is substantive. The Apostles’ teaching or doctrine leave a definite pattern to grasp in this life.

The inspired Scriptures provide the perfect chart for our course in this life. Paul writes, “*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*). Paul affirms the sufficiency of Scripture as God’s chart for our course in life. It instructs us in the way of righteousness, and when we stray off course, it penetrates our conscience to return to the divine standard.

It will be too late to wait until eternity to make God’s Word our guide. The Bible is only good for our present voyage through life. Chart it’s course now!