

Glad Tidings

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

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The Word Is Living

(Jerry Fite)

Living is a relative term. One might be technically “alive” but in a vegetative or inactive state. In most people, “living” probably conveys thoughts of activity and vibrancy. For a few decades now, the United States Constitution has been viewed by some as a “living document.” To such “progressives,” “living” means that one is not bound to interpret the eighteenth-century document considering what the words mean but are free to broaden the meaning of the text to accommodate modern agendas. Is this the way we should interpret the Word of God? Is God’s Word living in the sense of technically alive but not very effectual in producing much in our lives?

The Hebrew writer makes a great claim concerning God’s word: “*For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart*” (Hebrews 4:12). Notice the word “active” alongside the word “living” describing God’s word. The

Greek word is “*energes*” denoting something that is “powerful” and “effectual.” Do you see our English word “energy” in this Greek word? We are not talking about something that is living, but ineffectual because of abiding in a vegetative state. We are speaking about the Word as a living oracle, sharp, with the piercing power to reach the depths of man’s being. God’s Word exposes, sifts, and analyzes man’s innermost thoughts and intentions.

As the seed contains life, God’s word is seed for spiritual life (Luke 8:11). As God is the source for life, His living word offers life. Peter speaks of Christians “*having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible through the word of God, which liveth and abideth*” (1 Peter 1:23). God’s word is not only living and producing new life, it will never pass away. It “*abideth forever*” (1 Peter 1:25). Grasp the implication of this verse. We will never have to be looking for some new seed because God’s Word has lost its power. The Word will continue to live with all its begetting potency. We will never have to be

looking for some new seed, because God’s word died. It will continue to live and abide.

As the Word of God abides through the centuries, God never has to put out a new revelation to make His word relevant. Man’s actions still proceed from the thoughts of his heart in our century as they did in the first century. Fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, etc. are issues of the heart now as they were then (Mark 7:21-23) The unchangeable facts of Jesus’ death and resurrection will always be the foundation for the remission of sins and the hope of Heaven (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 1 Peter 1:3).

Man errs when he thinks the word of God is open to new interpretations in different times just because it is “living.” For example, you will never be able to take the living word of God and accurately interpret “capital punishment” as being wrong (Romans 13:1-4), or “homosexuality” as being acceptable (Romans 1:26-27).

Do you have the proper respect for the “living word?”