

Glad Tidings

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

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The Essential Read

If we are to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord” (2 Peter 3:15), we will be diligent in reading. While we can know God exists by observing nature, we can only know God’s directive for created man by reading His revealed word.

Paul exhorted Timothy to “give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching” (1 Timothy 4:13). The context indicates this “reading” for Timothy to do was “public reading” of Scripture to the congregation. Timothy reading the Scripture, including Paul’s newest letter to the churches, communicated to the mind of listeners authoritative teaching and exhortation. We, in private reading of the Bible, gain knowledge of God’s will and directives for our lives. Today, we have the Scriptures assessable to our daily reach for reading, not just the times for public worship. What a blessing!

The Word of God is the essential read. It contains “all things which pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). Revealed Scripture completes the reader, furnishing the way unto “every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17). The good news of the Gospel is “the faith once and for all delivered unto the saints”

(Jude 3). Therefore, no further verbal revelation from God will occur, or is needed. The reader can know every good work that is to occupy his or her time. The reader knows all things that pertain to living godly in this life with the hope of eternal life in heaven (cf. Colossians 1:5).

God’s revealed Scripture is the essential read because it is “God breathed.” Paul unhesitatingly declares, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16, KJV). The Greek word translated “inspiration” is “theopneustos,” literally meaning “God breathed.” The English Standard Version translates it this way: “All Scripture is breathed out by God...”

Breathing out to form reading words is accomplished through God’s Holy Spirit. Paul did not write his inspired letters by receiving “the spirit of this world,” but by “the spirit of God.” The Holy Spirit of God guided Paul in revealing the mind of God in the things we must know. “Which things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words” (1 Corinthians 2:13). Peter pointing to the Holy Spirit for the source of prophecy declares,

“For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).

That which the prophets of old and the apostles of Christ spoke and wrote were inspired by the Holy Spirit of God! The Bible contains “all the truth” and “the whole counsel of God” (John 16:13, Acts 20:27). It is the essential read that binds us with the essential truth through Scripture which “cannot be broken” (John 10:34).

If we are to be “filled with the Spirit” we must “let the word of Christ dwell in us richly” (cf. Ephesians 5:18, Colossians 3:16). As one rightly has said, “This is not done ‘by inspiration’ but ‘by perspiration.’” It takes effort on our part to read and gain knowledge. It takes diligence to keep our hearts filled with the word of Christ in abundance.

The truth of the Gospel is essential for our initial salvation from sin and consequent spiritual health. Our souls are purified in “our obedience to the truth... which is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you” (1 Peter 1:22, 25). It is to also “continue” with you, never allowing it to be perverted even for “an hour” (cf. Galatians 2:5).