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VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A..M.
Morning Worship.....10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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Truth for the World
Words of the Master

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THE POWER OF GOD

Mike Dugger

“Power” is a critical part of our world. Whether it is of an electrical nature, or a military nature, it is viewed by most as essential to life. “Power” also exists in nature, such as in great storms. All of this power has a source, and that source is ultimately God. One can see the power of God “in the beginning,” in His actions, in His plans, in the blood of Christ, and in the Gospel.

“In the beginning” God simply spoke the universe into existence. Moses says that in six days “the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” (Ex. 20:11). There are no flaws in God’s design, for He who cannot lie (Titus 1:2) saw that all He created was very good (Gen. 1:31).

One readily sees God’s power in the actions God took as recorded in the Bible. Consider the flood, the exodus from Egypt, and taking of Jericho; on an on one could go listing the things, which God did which were powerful. To disbelieve God’s Word and suggest that any Bible event did not occur is to deny God Himself.

There is no better planner than God. Being perfect, His plans are perfect. Thus, there is no waste or plan “B” with God. He gave man a plan of redemption (Gen. 3:15; Eph. 1:3-4) for He knew man would need the blood of His own Son (Eph. 3:11; Rev. 13:8). God worked through all and in all to bring about His plan (Rom. 8:28). Isaiah told of the coming kingdom (Isa. 2:2-3) as did Daniel and Joel (Dan. 2, Joel 2). Jesus preached that the kingdom was near (Matt. 4:17; Mk. 9:1), and it was established on Pentecost following the resurrection just as planned (Matt. 16:13-16; Acts 2:16). When most people make plans, they need a plan “B.” Not so with God, for He planned perfectly, and all went according to plan.

One can also see the power of God in the shed blood of Christ. Seven hundred and fifty years before Christ was born of a virgin, Isaiah wrote, “But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5). Jesus was willing to die and be obedient to God in death (Phil. 2:7; Heb. 5:8-9) and by His own blood purchased the church (Acts 20:28).

Finally, one can see God’s power in the Gospel. Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). The Gospel includes all that Jesus taught (John 16:12-13; 1 Jno. 4:6; 2 Jno. 9-11) and has as its foundation the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). The Gospel is the seed of the Kingdom (Luke 8:11).

Have you submitted to God’s power? God’s power can save us, buy only if we let it. While God did plan all things, He never interferes in the free will of man. Once we die, it will be too late to obey the Gospel. Don’t ignore the power of God, obey the Gospel if you have not. If you have, make sure to live it day by day. A crown of life awaits those who remain faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). Don’t miss out on the crown!

REKINDLE THE FIRE

Neil Richey

Ezekiel was a priest, later called by God to be a prophet. His ministry began toward the end of the time period of history we commonly refer to as “Judah Alone.” From such passages as 2 Kings 24:14-17, we learn that Ezekiel was deported, along with Judah, to Babylonia in about 597 B.C. It wasn’t until about five years later that he began to prophesy (Eze. 1:2). During the time in which Ezekiel was prophesying Nebuchadnezzar took the city of Jerusalem, destroying it in 586 B.C. Shortly following this event (565 B.C.) Ezekiel penned the words found in Ezekiel 37:1-14.

God’s people, because of their own rebellion, are now in captivity. Their capital and the temple were destroyed, and as a people they had no independence. Up to this point in Ezekiel, the prophet had been speaking the words of destruction and judgment. Now, he is going to share with them a message of hope. It is a message of restoration and revival.

God sent to Ezekiel a vision. He was put in a valley among countless numbers of dry bones. It was as if he was in the midst of an ancient battlefield. It is quiet. There are no vultures, no wolves, just thousands of sun-bleached bones. Can you imagine the scene (no sound, the picture of desolation)? Then, a voice breaks the silence – “Son of man, can these bones live?”

We learn of Ezekiel’s faith in this passage. He did not play the role of a skeptic, he simply said, “O Lord God, thou knowest” – then he obeyed the voice of the Lord. As a result, the bones lived again.

What a wonderful passage of restoration and revival. Revival is the process of bringing to life that which was previously alive, but is now at the point of death. By way of this essay, I want to ask a question. Can God make us live again? Can the fire in our bones once again be rekindled?

The fire needs to be rekindled

Robert Robinson, in 1758, wrote the song “O Thou Fount of Every Blessing.” He later fell from the faith. He met a young lady singing his song. She, noting his sadness, wanted to share the lyrics with him. Robinson responded, “Madam, I wrote the song and I’d give a thousand worlds to have that feeling once again.”

The fire within our bones needs rekindling because of a number of reasons. Such as: 1) we are not as evangelistic as we once were; 2) our youth are in trouble; 3) a great wave of worldliness is sweeping through the world and the church like a cyclone; 4) we are no longer people of the Word; 5) spiritual conversation embarrasses us; 6) we rationalize for sin; 7) we attend services, but it doesn’t make a difference in our lives; 8) money dominates our lives; 9) it does not bother us that others are in misery and spiritually lost.

How to rekindle the fire

Negligence is sin. Jeremiah said, “Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully [negligently],...” (Jer. 48:10). When I have become slothful and negligent in the Lord’s service, I must repent.

Only when I stand justified in the sight of God, will I be ready and able to praise Him and serve Him. Case in point: Nehemiah for the people—“Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayers of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father’s house have sinned.” (Neh. 1:6).

The results of rekindling the fire

Churches will have a passion for seeking the lost to save. “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10).

Christians will be committed to keeping the commandments of the Lord, thus demonstrating their love for Him. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Jn. 14:15).

Broken marriages will be repaired and estranged families will reunite. “Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord...Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:22-25; cf. Lk 15:11-32).

Individuals will be more holy in their thinking process. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phil. 4:8).

Congregations will be transformed into what God wants them to be. “...Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rm. 12:2).

WHY AM I A CHRISTIAN?

Matthew Martin

Most likely, if you ask 10 Gospel preaches this question they will present 10 different, but all very true, answers. It is true, that there are dozens of good and sound answers to such a question, but I don't have the time or space in this article to cover every reason. So instead, consider three very simple reasons as to why I am a Christian.

I AM A CHRISTIAN BECAUSE I WANT TO BE

Nobody forced me to do it. No one grabbed my arm and dragged me down the aisle, kicking and screaming. It was my decision. I chose to become a Christian.

It has been correctly observed, that there are two very different, and also very incorrect views concerning the relationship between Jesus and man. One view has Jesus, standing with his arms outstretched, saying "come to me." If you do not come, he will walk over to you and make you come. The other view, has Jesus standing with his arms outstretched, saying "come to me." But no matter how hard you try, you cannot get to Him, because He keeps backing away from you.

Both views are a form of Calvinism. The first (Jesus forcing you to come to Him) is called irresistible grace, a doctrine that teaches that if God chooses to save you, there is nothing you can do about it. The second view (Jesus not letting you come to Him) is called limited atonement. This doctrine teaches that if Jesus chooses *not* to save you, then that's just too bad for you. Because no matter how much you may want to be saved, you never will be.

The problem is, both views commit a grievous error. They both assume that Jesus does the choosing. He does not. The very words "come unto me," as spoken by Jesus (Matt. 11:28), show that. The reality is, I am a Christian. not because Christ made me be one, but because I wanted to be one, and I obeyed.

Incidentally, I *remain* a Christian because I want to remain one. It is just as erroneous to say that Christ makes me become a Christian, as it is to say He makes me stay a Christian. After all, if I had no choice, then why would the Bible tell me to remain faithful (Rev. 2:10). Consider the prodigal son (Luke 15:11). He abandoned His father for a life of sin. Was he still considered a son? Yes, but an erring one. Would he have received any more blessings from his father had he not repented? No. Did his father seek him out and *make* him remain faithful? No. The prodigal son had a choice: stay faithful or leave. He chose to leave. Thankfully he returned, but the choice was still his.

Why am I a Christian? There are many reasons that could be given. But one that stands out first and foremost is, because I choose to be. And I thank God that He gave me that choice. Next week we will consider another reason why I am a Christian: Because I *need* to be.

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