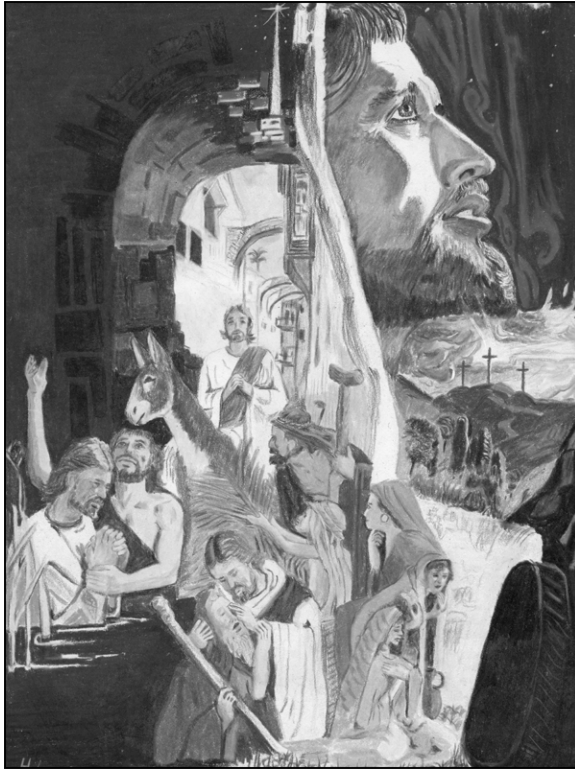


THE WORD – Part II

Truth in the Inner Man



The word of the Lord is one of the most intense life-giving forces on the planet. Last month we saw the word as a living person, Jesus Christ. Yet the word of the Lord is breath (His breath), and so it carries a dual application. One of the words translated in the Bible for Word of the Lord is the Hebrew word *davar*. Its literal meaning is as a driving force, creating something out of nothing. Often we say the word of the Lord is a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12-15). This dual application is seen in many different places in the Old Testament. In November's article we talked about the Lord allowing a sword among His people, but that

our praise could overcome the areas where the sword landed. Later on we saw that November was one of the worst months on record for casualties among all coalition troops overseas. In early December the Lord exhorted us to keep pressing through in prayer with the word of the Lord to expose the enemy (See the Current Events link). Not too many days after that was posted the former 'King of Babylon' was exposed and captured.

In Ezekiel 33 God tells the prophet that if a watchman sees a sword coming against God's people, and warns them by blowing the trumpet, but they do not listen, the watchman is guiltless. But if the watchman does not blow the trumpet, and people perish, his guilt remains. We all know the potential problems in sharing a difficult word with folks. It's like blowing a trumpet. Sometimes people listen and sometimes they get mad that the blast was way too loud, unnecessary, or--"Gee Wiz, Did you have to wake me out of my sleep with that racket?!!!" But that aspect of the word of God which is a two-edged sword also carries with it healing in its wings. The aspect of the word of God that drives forward like a storm, wiping things out of its path, creates life out of death. This is not always easy for us as humans to understand because our dual nature is really as a result of sin. The dual aspect of the word of the Lord has nothing to do with sin but simply has to do with the fact that HE IS! He is holy, He is light, He is love, He is a consuming fire, He is truth, He is a spirit, He is our great High Priest, our

Savior, our King and far more. He defines all these things, even life itself.

Last month we talked about a fundamental difficulty that we have in seeing the word of God. Our sight is tarnished because of the darkness in our soul and because of what we do to the image God created us in. Jesus, THE WORD, came to restore light to our darkness and recreate us into God's image. We are a 'new man'--- now we are made whole. This month we will look at one aspect of the dual creative power of the word of God and one of its purposes in creating within us a clean heart, or truth in our inward parts (Psalm 51). The word of God creates its own environment to come in and when it comes it changes the environment it came to. (Saints, even thinking about that for a second should give you hope in the darkest of hours.) The best example of this is when Jesus (the Word) came on the scene the first time. Let me explain. Malachi 4:5 says this: "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." What I would like to focus our attention on is the 'breaking forth' nature of this passage, and the smiting effect of the word of the Lord (the sword), which causes the healing or restorative power of God to be unleashed.

Sin and its participation with demonic forces on the planet will always try to silence the word of God in all its different forms and

effects. The whole book of Malachi is God's 'beef,' if you will, with how His people have treated one another and God. It starts off by discussing the effect of the sibling rivalry between two brothers, continues with God likening His people as His children and how their dysfunctional attitudes in their tithes, offerings, marriages and relationships with one another have blocked God's word from being a blessing of intimacy among them. While we must not remove the nation of Israel as the final fulfillment for this Scripture, placing this passage as Father God speaking to all the people He desires to call His own will help us to see how often He has been blocked from blessing His family. It was a unique Jewish custom of the patriarch of the household to bless the family. In fact, it was of primary importance when we study all the different feasts that took place during the Jewish calendar year. This was not seen in other religions of the time, nor is it seen in the customs of other religions today---except in Christian circles and that's only because of the teaching of Jewish customs throughout the Old Testament.

Imagine that you're a parent trying to get into your house but all the doors are locked. You're banging on the doors, but nobody is listening. You can hear your children carrying on inside the house. One brother is pulling his sister's hair, another is crying just because that's what toddlers do sometimes and your teenage son, whom you put in charge, is otherwise distracted by a lengthy and quite expensive long-distance phone conversation with his new girlfriend.

And did I forget to mention that you're paying for that phone bill while the TVs are blasting and somebody has the stereo on while every light is lit in the entire house! What's a parent to do? Unless you have a spare key, you have to break into the house somehow. While this may not be the best analogy of the book of Malachi, it's not hard to see how bad things can get when the Word in authority is absent from the house. Unlike our hypothetical analogy, God has a key that will both break into the situation and open the door to restore order and healing. That key is found in Jesus Christ and that breakthrough situation is found in the 'Elijah ministry.'

Most Jewish theologians couple Micah 2:13 with our study in Malachi: "One who breaks open the way will go up before them; they will break through the gate and go out. Their king will pass through before them, the Lord at their head." Many Christian theologians then couple these two passages with Jesus' sayings in the Gospels about John the Baptist: "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come." (Matthew 11:12-14) "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it." (Luke 16:16) Jesus was very clear in His teaching that John's anointing was as a breaker and Jesus as the Christ Himself was to come

after John (Matthew 16:15-17; 17:1-13). The dual aspect of the word of God here is to break through so many others break out also as a result of that word because it is the branch or key of the house of David (Christ) that comes to keep the door open to restore our healing. After John's ministry, Jesus came and healed many, even beginning a new healing ministry for His people after His resurrection.

In every situation in our lives there is a preparatory breaker moment or time of a sword and then a time when we are admonished by that word or sword and receive healing. Look at Malachi 4:6; the Lord talks about smiting or striking the earth if the breaker is not received and the family is not restored. Why? The Hebrew word used here, *nakah*, carries some interesting meanings. All of them convey the understanding of being hit with a sharp object that causes a wound or stripes or hurt. And that is the other aspect of the preparatory anointing. When we resist God's word or messenger, we are hardened. What could be healed in an instant because of our pliability now becomes a difficulty because of our stubbornness. Yet even here the word of God is amazing and healing. Look at our Jewish brethren today. Jesus desperately wants to heal their land and restore intimacy and fellowship to them. None of this can be restored until Jesus is acknowledged as Messiah. Hardness of unbelief can block God's restorative blessings. This is allowed by our Lord so that as we view the difficulties that our hardness causes us, we will turn and recognize that something is

wrong and ask God what it is so we can be healed. Truth in the inward parts or God's word in the inner man will break open the door so healing can begin.

“Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.”..... “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (Psalm 51:6-12; 17) This Psalm was written by King David after his hideous sins of adultery and murder. The kingly ancestral line that our Lord chose to come from was dysfunctional and in desperate need of healing. But something tells me that Jesus could have made a different line, just like he did with King Saul, if truth had not been found in David. David acknowledged that evil was in his heart and begged to be cleansed from it. Saul tried to hide it from God, himself and everyone else. It's not the fact that we are dysfunctional that qualifies us for salvation--for we are all dysfunctional--but what we do with the word of healing, grace and salvation that God brings to us. He may have to break through our situation to bring us healing, but His desire is always to bring emotional, physical and spiritual restoration.

It's stated by some doctors that many (not all) physical sicknesses can be traced back to emotional wounds and scarring. Whatever the woman at the well's story was concerning her past relationships (John 4), when Jesus comes on the scene knowing her secret past, yet affirms her, and does not criticize and judge her, this releases a healing within her emotionally even to the point that she becomes one of the first evangelists before Jesus' resurrection. Look at the story of the Gadarene demoniac (Mark 5; Luke 8). Frankly, he was not so very different from many of the mentally ill people seen on the streets in America or in our homeless missions today. No one would go near him. Yet Jesus does not run from him but goes right up to him as the Word of God, commanding the demons to leave thus seeing the man restored. Most ministers would have wanted the man observed for a time period within their own ministries after this healing to make sure all stayed well. But Jesus must have known something about this man that the text does not tell us because He tells him to go and preach the Good News of what Christ has done for him. This man came from the Ten Cities. Instead of leaving him in a dependent situation, Jesus gives him an assignment---a purpose. And what a purpose it turned out to be! A formerly insane man is credited as also being one of the first evangelists before Jesus' resurrection, preaching to the people of these cities. Before any of the disciples ever get to 'work' as evangelists for Jesus, God breaks through to an adulteress and a crazed man, sends His word and heals them to

become His first workers to preach about Jesus.

Sometimes as Christians we want desperately to preach the word or minister, but our 'swords' (the word of God within us) become silenced so we are not able to minister properly. Many years ago, while working for a ministry, I observed a man who would share the word of God, but as he did so he would literally beat people up with the word. It was a difficult situation for the pastor in charge. We came to find out many things that had taken place in this man's life, including the fact that he had been brutally beaten by his father. This explained why his 'sword' (the word of God) caused more damage and never brought about any healing for people. Unfortunately he had little or no respect for women either. This made it very difficult for us as women ministers to get him the help he needed. This is not an unusual situation. I have seen it before in varying degrees over the years. Latent anger, unforgiveness and bitterness over being offended or denied a place or position can tarnish the word of God within us. My husband and I were extremely blessed as young Christians to be taught that feelings and attitudes can adversely affect the word of God within us. We were taught that by faith God wants to heal every aspect of our being to change us into the character and nature of Jesus Christ. But faith without works is dead. We need to actively pursue inner healing just as vigorously as we pursue physical healing.

Healing can start simply with the word of God in prayer. The Bible says that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). So the word can go into your past, your present and even your future and bring healing to the issues that you and I are willing to admit exist in our hearts. We can repent of judging others who have wronged us and ask the healing blood of Jesus to flow into those areas of our hearts that have been wounded by our judgments, sins and attitudes. Love is a choice, not a feeling. We must choose to love the unlovely. In like fashion, forgiveness is also a choice. The Bible commands us to forgive so that we can be forgiven (Matthew 6:12-15). We may not feel like forgiving people, but we can choose to. Quite often we have believed lies about ourselves that the enemy has planted and we do not even realize it. The Holy Spirit can reveal these things to us in prayer or counseling with another trusted believer. Once the lie is exposed, we can break its ability to control our attitudes. I can recommend three good books on this subject. The first is available on this website. Click on the Beyond Strongholds link. The book, "Beyond Strongholds, Infiltration by the Glory of God," studies human attitudes, their relationship with demonic strongholds and the manner in which God in glory can come and reside when these attitudes are dealt with. The next is by John and Paula Sandford, "The Transformation of the Inner Man." (Victory House, Inc.) This book is a comprehensive study of inner healing. The last one is by John and Mark Sandford, "A

Comprehensive Guide to Deliverance and Inner Healing." (Chosen Books) This book gives an excellent overview of inner healing issues and couples them with deliverance from specific demonic spirits.

If you are new to the adverse effects of human attitudes on spiritual growth or would like to see the word of God grow unhindered in you, any one of these books (as you read them in connection with the Bible) would be an excellent source to help you. Simple prayers of release from bitterness and repenting of judging people can help tremendously. As you read these books or pray and the Holy Spirit reveals specific points and moments in your life that need healing, ask Him then. He is as near to you at that point as a heart beat. God wants to restore whole nations in healing past wounds so He can bring them into new avenues of witnessing for Jesus. Click on the Missions Outreach link to see how God did this on a recent trip overseas. Please don't hesitate to contact us for prayer or ministry--we are here for YOU. Log on next month for more.....



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