

## The Word of the Lord

Without question, the Bible is the world's most powerful book. It tells us of and leads us toward the One who can save us in eternity (Hebrews 7:25) and guides us through our daily walk of life (II Peter 1:3). Physical muscle is impressive, but spiritual strength benefits both here and in the world beyond (I Timothy 4:7-8). The Bible is the book that builds that spiritual fortitude (Romans 10:17).

The source of the Bible's power is God Himself. With the Holy Spirit guiding their every word, the Bible penmen wrote those words that God wanted to impart to mankind (I Corinthians 2:7ff). The evidence of this is seen throughout the Bible and here is noted in one particular phrase.

The phrase, "the word of the Lord" is found in over 250 verses in the Bible. In some cases, it is found when God is speaking to His people. For example, Genesis 15:1 says, "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." In other cases the phrase is found in reference to those who believed and obeyed God based on His word. Exodus 9:20 reads, "He that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses." We find individuals rejecting "the word of the Lord." "And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." (I Samuel 15:26). It is "the word of the Lord" that was preached by the New Testament church in the first century (Acts 8:25; 13:49; 15:35,36; 16:32).

As it pertains to this article, "the word of the Lord" is found numerous times in reference to the messages that were being written by the aforementioned inspired writers of the Bible. The phrase is especially popular in the books of the Old Testament prophets. In the nineteen verses of the first chapter of Jeremiah, the phrase is found four times (Jeremiah 1:2,4,11,13). Jeremiah 2:1 begins, "Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying..." God would inspire Jeremiah to use the phrase 46 more times throughout the rest of his book. Ezekiel opens his book by saying, "The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel, the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was there upon him." (Ezekiel 1:3). He goes on to reference "the word of the Lord" 59 more times. The very first words in the King James Version of Hosea's message inform us that "the word of the Lord" came to this particular writer (Hosea 1:1). The same is true of Joel's record (Joel 1:1) as well as Jonah's (Jonah 1:1), Micah's (Micah 1:1), Zephaniah's (Zephaniah 1:1) and Malachi's (Malachi 1:1).

The phrase is rarely used in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit choosing to say, "the word of God" more frequently there. The significance is the same. The words that these men penned were God's words, not theirs. Granted, the Lord allowed each writer to retain his individual style in writing but the words that flowed were those that God wanted them to write. There was no error in their writing. They wrote "the word of the Lord."

Being "the word of the Lord," the Bible is to be taken seriously. It is not a series of suggestions, nor is it a book of principles upon one is to merely base his or her actions. "The word of the Lord" offers promises (Titus 1:2), warnings (Ezekiel 33:7-10) and comfort (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). It also gives commands (I John 5:2,3). The promises are encouraging because they come from God. The warnings are impressive because they come from God. The comfort is meaningful because it comes from God. The commands are to be obeyed because they come from God.

Is there a man-made book that so thoroughly bears the stamp of its author as the Bible does its Divine source? God's presence is clearly seen throughout the Bible, but the frequency with which the Bible reminds the readers that it is His Word drives home the point of the Bible's Divine origin.

When we pick up a Bible, open it and read it, we are reading "the word of the Lord." If we will take it into our heart and apply it, we will gain spiritual strength and draw closer to God (Psalm 119:11). Individually, we need this strength. As a nation, we need this strength. The entire human race needs this strength. "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." (Jeremiah 22:29). There is no book that can compare to "the word of the Lord."