

THE BOOK OF ACTS

GOD'S WORD IS NOT BOUND

Acts 12:19-25

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On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not a man." Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

But the word of God continued to increase and spread.

When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

Acts 12:21-25

At the beginning of the chapter Herod is on the rampage – arresting and persecuting church leaders; at the end he is himself struck down and dies. The chapter opens with James dead, Peter in prison, and Herod triumphing; it closes with Herod dead, Peter free and the Word of God triumphing.

The enemies of the cross have always opposed the gospel. But in spite of them, the good news spreads. Why is it that the gospel continues to spread when so many other messages flounder and become relics of the past? Let me suggest a few reasons.

The Word of God Is Effective

Second Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." The key word is "useful," because it teaches that one reason the Word of God continues to spread is that it accomplishes what needs to be accomplished. It is a practical thing.

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What is God accomplishing in you?

The Word of God is not useless. It is effective.

1. We need to be taught, and it teaches us – about God, ourselves, and the way of salvation.

2. We need to be rebuked, and it rebukes us – about our sin and unrighteousness.

3. We need to be corrected, and it corrects us – showing us the way we should go, the way of blessing.

4. We need to be trained in righteousness, and it trains us – through daily application of its teaching.

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I suppose someone could say of Herod that he did many useful things. He was a great builder, for example. But compared with the gospel, which brings spiritual life out of spiritual death, what Herod did was of little value.

The Word of God Is Penetrating

Hebrews 4:12 says, “The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

1. This means that the Word of God gets through to us as no merely human words do.
2. This word of Promise Judges what is in a persons heart.
3. We set up barriers against God and cover ourselves with suits of secular armor to protect us against the truth of what we are, who God is, and what the future holds apart from Jesus Christ. But the Word of God strikes through that armor to show that we are sinners in need of salvation. When the Word of God penetrates our defenses, it does so not to destroy or kill us, as a sword would do, but as a surgeon’s scalpel to heal us and restore us to life.

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The Word of God Is Penetrating

Isaiah 55:10-11 says:

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

The rain and snow that come down from the sky water the earth so it can begin to produce fruit conducive to life, and that is the way the Word of God operates. It not only saves people from sin, but it also makes them fruitful so from that time on they can contribute to the world and be fount of spiritual blessing in it.

Appreciate the rain in your life. In every life some rain must fall.

Matthew 24:35 says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." We look about us and conclude that all things are temporary. People

are born and die. Even the dreaded Herod died. Even the earth on which we stand will be destroyed. Nothing lasts. But there is one thing that will not pass away, namely, the Word of God. Nothing can stop it.

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A person who has understood that truth knows that although there is some value to the visible, material things we work for and achieve in this life will still pass away. The only things that last are those that are invisible. And these come about only as God works through his Word to transform the hearts of men and women.

People say, “Nothing can be more precious than life.” But that is not true. Physical life is precious. We go to great lengths to preserve and enhance it. But it is not the most precious thing of all. Spiritual life is more valuable.

Conclusion: Therefore, Christians have been willing to give up their physical lives for the sake of what they know lies beyond. They want to link their lives to the gospel because they know that whoever builds on the foundation of Christ’s teaching will never be destroyed. They know that when the floods of life come they will be found secure upon that rock. Is it any wonder that a faith life that endures, increases, and spreads throughout the world?

Conclude: My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frames, but wholly lean on Jesus name.

On Christ the solid rock I stand all other ground is seeking sand.