

The Powerful Word Of God

"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joint and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And, there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:12f). This declaration of the power of God's word follows on the heels of the writer's exhortation: *"Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience"* (Heb. 4:11). Inasmuch as the next verse begins with the word *"for;"* the exhortation in verse eleven and the declaration of God's powerful word in verses twelve and thirteen are related. Just what is the connection between these passages?

There are three couplets which are difficult to interpret. *"Soul and spirit"* demonstrates this difficulty. Sometimes the words are interchanged for one another. Solomon wrote, *"Then shall the body return unto the dust as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it"* and James said, *"he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall cover a multitude of sins"* and while each of these is a different word (Solomon, *"spirit;"* James, *"soul;"* Ecc. 12:7; James 5:20); both had the same idea. Yet, there is a difference between *"soul"* and *"spirit."* Sometimes the word *"soul"* is used to describe the physical part of man (1 Pet. 3:20) while *"spirit"* refers to the spiritual part of man. It is equally difficult to distinguish between *"joint"* and *"marrow,"* but there is a difference as physicians well know.

There is also distinction between *"thoughts"* and *"intents"* of the heart. Thoughts enter one's heart by the windows or lamp of the heart, the eyes. Jesus said, *"The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy body shall be full of light. But, if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness ..."* (Mt. 6:22f). Jesus said, *"everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart"* (Mt. 5:28). Think ye that thoughts of committing adultery with Potiphar's wife entered into Joseph's heart (Gen. 39:7-12)? Doubtless so, but he weighed that thought and rejected it. He thought it; he did not intend it. But, just how does God's word, a dividing sword, discern the thoughts and intents of the heart?

God is the great heart searcher. *"I try the reins of the heart,"* He said, (Jer. 11:20). In the Hebrews passage he reminds us that *"there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight"* (4:12). His word enters the heart, and He,

before whom "*all things are naked and laid open,*" sees how that heart reacts to His word which has entered it. Thus the connection between the exhortation and His word: don't follow the same example of disobedience as ancient Israel in the wilderness; which disobedience was the natural consequences of their unbelief. Does He who has "searched us and knows us" see the unbelief in the heart before it becomes open rebellion, disobedience? You know that He does!

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