

Grace to You :: *esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Flaws of a Fad-Driven Church, Part 7

Scripture: Hebrews 4:12

Code: A286

Fads Fade, but the Word Stands Forever

As we have seen in the last two posts, the Word of God is both *powerful* and *penetrating*. Third—

3. The Word of God is precise.

Notice how this verse describes the ministry of the Word of God as precision surgery, not wanton destruction: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

Now, obviously, surgery is ordinarily done with a scalpel, not a sword. Scalpels are small and precise, and razor sharp—just like the Word of God: “sharper than any twoedged sword.” The surgeon uses a scalpel with great care to cut precisely, sometimes dividing fine layers of tissue with remarkable precision.

That is exactly what is described here. The Word of God divides soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and it is capable of great discrimination. It discerns “the thoughts and intents of the heart”—something that is not even visible to the human eye.

We cannot look upon the heart—the innermost part of the human soul. First Samuel 16:7: “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but [only] the LORD looketh on the heart.”

We can’t even correctly discern the thoughts and intents of our own hearts. Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” We are all subject to self-deception and blindness when it comes to judging our own hearts. But the Word of God reveals what is really in our hearts, and it correctly assesses our thoughts and intentions. It shows our motives and our imaginations for what they really are. And that is why it is capable of such precision surgery—even in the deepest recesses of our souls.

Some people misread this phrase “the dividing asunder of soul and spirit” and imagine that this describes two completely separate parts of the immaterial makeup of our beings. I don’t believe that’s what it is teaching. I realize there are good Bible teachers who teach that man is a tripartite creature, consisting of body, soul, and spirit. But I don’t think that’s the point of this verse. Scripture often uses the expressions “soul” and “spirit” interchangeably. It is difficult to make any meaningful division between soul and spirit, and that is the whole point.

Just like the “joints and marrow” of your bones and the “thoughts and intentions” of your heart, these things are so inextricably linked that it’s impossible to separate them without destroying one or the

other. They aren't separate entities that exist apart from each other. They aren't distinct human faculties. There is overlap and interdependence. But the Word of God is precise and exact, and it cuts with painstaking accuracy. It divides what cannot otherwise be divided. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, and yet more precise than any surgeon's scalpel.

Here's the point: We ought to make better use of the Word of God in our ministry, and ignore all the evangelical fads that come and go. After all, only the Word of God has the powerful, penetrating precision that is necessary to reach and revitalize hearts that are cold and dead because of sin. And this is also our clear biblical mandate: "Preach the word . . . in season, out of season"—no matter which way the winds of doctrine are blowing and no matter how many fads and fashions come and go.

Obey that mandate, and God will bless your ministry. Chase every bandwagon that comes down the road, and you will regret it on that day when you give account for your ministry.

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