

The Nature of the Word Part 3
John R Gavazzoni
March 24, 2003
Thousand Oaks, CA

There certainly are extremes of opinion in regard to how God communicates with His children. One of these extremes is founded on the solid ground that He inspired certain men to hear His voice, and/or see in visions, then speak and/or record what they hear/saw, to later be compiled into the collection of teaching, prophecy, poetry and history that we call the Bible.

So far, so good; but upon this premise, they claim that this collection, having been completed, is all that God's children need in order to ascertain the will of God. Not only do they say that the Bible is all we need, they warn of grave consequences should one accept any other form of communication as genuinely from God.

If pressed, they will admit that God did at times speak to other men and women directly, and that those ones passed on His Word to others, but only those utterances of God that He chose to be included in the Bible should be given serious consideration.

In this scenario, if the Holy Spirit is granted any place, it is only as He who helps the believer to interpret the Bible. There is an extreme of this extreme that claims that the Spirit of Truth, having finished His job of inspiring and supervising the collection of writings making up the Bible, no longer is needed on the scene. "Just study your Bible," they say, "That's all you need." Of course, don't you dare come to a conclusion in your study that differs with what your spiritual superiors have already determined to be the true interpretation.

At the heart of this view is the notion that when Paul wrote, "when that which is perfect is come" (I Cor. 13:10), he was referring to the time when the canon of scripture would be completed. Let me just say that I will not dignify this presumption with an attempt to discredit it. It would be surprising to the average Christian to know how this assertion, in varying degrees, has influenced, not only those who consider themselves part of Christian orthodoxy, but also some that they would consider cultists.

On the other end of the pendulum are those folks who validate their religious opinions, prejudices and general ignorance with the constant assertion, "God told me." They are particularly grating because, almost as often, they insist that "God told me to tell you."

They certainly are quite convinced that God still speaks personally to His children, as well they should, but they are even more convinced of their ability to discern His voice and your need to listen to their "word from the Lord." Often they do not have what is commonly thought of as a "public ministry"; they just make a pest of themselves at a very personal level, exposing their religious insecurity by their amusingly pompous pontificating.

Then there are those who have a particular sensitivity to the voice of God, and because of it, come to be recognized as "ministers of the Word"

in circles that highly value the present message of the Spirit to the church. Quite often, the problem with them is that they are little aware of the contamination that they add to the intuitively received Word as it is filtered through their untransformed mind. The effect is that of a symphony being amplified through a sound system full of distortion.

But there is, what appears to be, a wiser, more reasonable, seasoned mid-spectrum of thought that maintains the need for a balance of the Spirit AND the Word. From that mid-section we are constantly reminded, by what can strike one as really impressive maturity, that all Spirit makes for fanaticism, and all Word makes for cold orthodoxy.

Believe it or not, that creates a problem to me. Just how do you separate the Spirit from the Word? And if you could (and YOU CAN'T), are we to have some kind of a system like that of an automobile carburetor that feeds just the right mixture of fuel and air to the engine?

Hey folks, we're gettin' too much Spirit here, cut back on it a little and add more Word! How I love that kind of compartmentalizing of God. Am I the only one who, when hearing this sort of shallow observation, thinks to himself, "Wait a minute, that sounds wise and mature, but it doesn't make any spiritual sense." Every spirit speaks and speaks to

the degree that it operates, and every word is the operation of some spirit.

Back to basic gospel folks, The Word became flesh and went through a process of transformation to being a "life-giving Spirit" (I Cor. 15:45), and He, the last Adam, our glorified Lord Jesus, gives us life as Spirit-Word. When you are moved by the Spirit, you always, by some definition, hear the Word and you find yourself thinking new thoughts, likewise, stating the truth in reverse, when you truly hear the Word, you are unavoidably energized by the Spirit.

The Word and the Spirit are ONE, one Lord Jesus Christ, and we are, so to speak, the amplified version of the Word. Fellow saints, are you able to read what God has said in you (plural), his Book of Life? The time is coming, and now is, fellow saints, for us to BE the Word. We are that "one loaf" that Paul wrote of, and that one loaf is Christ, the Bread of Life, in us, as us. We must be freed of our religious addiction to scripture so that it might take its proper place as an instrument and conduit of the Word.

Dare I speak of addiction to scripture? I believe so, and we shall pursue that thought in our next installment. To be continued.....