

Life and Light

By David Pyles

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. – 2Tim 1:8-10

These verses divulge principles that are very important for purpose of understanding the biblical doctrine of salvation. The verses say that God has always given eternal life in accordance to the same purpose, plan and procedure. All these things were ordained before the world began. However, this eternal life and its underlying cause were not fully revealed, or brought to light, until the coming of Jesus Christ and His gospel.

This plan was of force in the earliest age of the earth, or in the pre-law era, when there was no Bible and none of its books had yet been inspired. God's people of that era were eternally saved the same as people are today, but being then void of a Bible, they had very little understanding of the purpose, plan and procedure that was saving them. This was followed by the law era in which the first Bible books were written. These books, like all books of the Bible, taught about Jesus Christ, but only through shadows, allegories and prophecies whose meanings were not then well understood. Even the disciples of Jesus, though having the benefit of all these books, seemed near-clueless until He was raised from the dead and gave them the sorts of explanations they received on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-32). While in their state of ignorance, these disciples were the possessors of eternal life, but they had little knowledge of how they had been given this life, nor did they have the assurance, strength and joy that such knowledge brings, nor could their minds and hearts adequately glorify God while in this state of ignorance. The gospel would change all this, not by introducing a new plan, but by opening their eyes to an old,

glorious plan of grace that had been operative from the very beginning. Their life and immortality were “*brought to light*” by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Obviously, logic demands that eternal life must *precede* the gospel light that reveals it. The gospel could not bring to light an eternal life that was nonexistent. Accordingly, it takes life to perceive light, and no amount of light can give life to a dead corpse. In fact, light on a corpse will only hasten its putrefaction. These truths will explain the order in which Paul presented things in the text being considered. In particular, he said that Christ first abolished death, which can only be done by giving eternal life. Christ then brought this immortal life to light by His gospel.

Some good Christians are confused concerning these simple principles. They think light essentially precedes life, or that by means of giving light to a spiritually dead man, he can somehow be quickened to eternal life. The severity of this error is exposed by the fact that it was the Devil who first preached it. This was, in fact, the first lie ever told and the first heresy ever taught. The Devil told Adam and Eve they could magically evolve themselves to god-like form upon acquiring the enlightenment in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. All consequent death and its accompanying horrors were occasioned by this toxic lie. In truth, the only life Adam and Eve ever received was *directly from God*, and all their enlightenment was owing to this freely given life.

Paul said the gospel is the savor of death unto death to some, but is the savor of life unto life to others (2Cor 2:16). Observe he did not say it is the savor of death unto life, nor did he say it is the savor of life unto death. That is, it does not produce life where there is death, nor does it produce death where there is life. Rather, it is life unto life and death unto death. The meaning is that where there is death, the gospel will show there to be death, and where there is life, the gospel will show there to be life. It shows life when it elicits belief in Jesus Christ from a spiritually quickened heart. That is, it brings life and immortality *to light*.

John said of Jesus, “*In him was life; and the life was the light of men,*” (Jn 1:4). This verse reflects the same principle: Life precedes light. This life is in Christ and nowhere else. Our light, or spiritual understanding, is not the cause or means of this life.

The reverse is true. The gospel gives eternal life only in a subjective sense. It brings into our perception and realization what was actually done directly by the hand of God upon our inward man. That is, our life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel, which, when properly preached, gives all praise to God.