

# **GOD IS ABLE...To Work Through the Scriptures!**

## **Acts 20:32**

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### **Introduction:**

- I. Imagine leaving someone you care for very much. You do not know if you will ever see him again. What would you say to them? Those parting words would always be remembered. A casual "goodbye" would not be enough. You would be careful to share with each other the most important words. The departing words would be special.
  
- II. Acts 20:32 is taken from a scene where loved ones are parting. The Apostle Paul is saying goodbye to the Ephesian Christians. He talks about all he has done in Ephesus and the parting is very emotional (v. 37-38).
  1. We are able to eavesdrop on Paul's departing words.
  2. Listen to what was foremost on his mind about his brethren in the Ephesian church (v. 32).
  3. The focus is upon the Word of God—Paul wanted them to concentrate upon the Scriptures!
  4. Why this emphasis?
    - a. Because God's Word is ABLE to do great things! It has an awesome power because God works through His Word (Romans 1:16; Isaiah 55:10-11).
    - b. Hebrews 3:7 – The Holy Spirit speaks today through the Bible ("saith" is 3<sup>rd</sup> per, sing, present tense, indicative mood, active voice. The Holy Spirit is Himself speaking at the present time as the Scriptures are read! Hence the Bible is powerful, Hebrews 4:12).
  
- III. It is tragic that most people do not understand the power of God in the Bible.
  1. They beg God for help, wisdom, and guidance, and think it will come in some mysterious way. When there is no "experience," they think God has not revealed His will to them.
  2. When tragedy strikes and we face illness, accident, or death, we ask, "Where is God when I need Him?" Others want to be saved and pray that God will mystically "call" them by an emotional experience to salvation, but they never have such an experience and think they are forever lost!
  3. Acts 20:32 reveals three ways that God is able to help us through His Word.

**Body:**

I. Three significant truths about scripture.

**A. God uses scripture to save us!**

1. "Inheritance"—The Hebrew/Greek refers to a decree of Deity that is independent of human action. It is a promise given by One whose word cannot be false.
2. This "inheritance" is provided by God to all who are saved.
  - a. It refers to a positive reward at Judgment (Matthew 25:34; Revelation 21:7,3-4).
  - b. It refers to salvation from sin (Hebrews 1:14).
3. The only way you can find this wonderful inheritance is by following Scripture (2 Timothy 3:15; James 1:21).
4. If you want salvation, look to God – not the Church, not the Priest or Preacher, not Tradition, not family (Isaiah 45:22).
5. God is able to rescue you from the slavery of sin IF you obey His word (1 Peter 1:23).

**B. God uses Scripture to strengthen us!**

1. "To build you up" – growth in faith and trust.
2. The only way to grow in faith is by studying God's Word! If you do not study the Bible, you will lack strength to keep your faith secure.
3. Many are weak because they look for strength in things other than the Bible and when those things fail, we discover that our faith is ruined and broken.
4. The Bible can give you strength...
  - a. To overcome sin (Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 119:9).
  - b. To become a positive influence in the world (Jeremiah 23:29).
  - c. To obey God's will (Psalm 119:111).
  - d. To live godly (James 1:23-25).
  - e. To develop and grow (1 Peter 2:2).
5. The Bible is God's primary means for building up the Christian's faith. The reason why so many are spiritually weak is that they neglect the Bible!
6. Too many churches neglect/ignore the Bible. They think you can have a strong faith by using other methods – but they are wrong! The only way you can be "built up" is through Scripture study!

**C. God uses Scripture to sanctify us!**

1. "Sanctified" literally means "to be separated" so that a distinction is evident. It refers to places, things, or people separated for God's use.

2. Note: The reference is to be a position one is in and not to a perfection of character! Those who are sanctified are "saints" (1 Corinthians 1:2). All who obey God are "saints" because they have obeyed His Word and have thus been separated from others (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).
3. The Bible is how we become saints (1 John 3:3). We will not be perfect, but we will be pure in God's sight!
4. Sanctification involves...
  - a. Dedication to obedience (1 Corinthians 1:2).
  - b. Commitment to obedience (1 Thessalonians 4:7).
  - c. Separation from others who are not sanctified (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).
5. To become a "saint" one does not need to do a miraculous deed, die a martyr's death, or pass the Church Council's test. All can be a saint if they will follow the Bible's teaching.

## II. Three significant lessons to learn.

### A. God's Word, the Scriptures, provides the means by which we can...

1. Be saved from sin.
2. Become strong in the Faith.
3. Be sanctified in our lives.
4. Why do we need any other religious authority than the Bible? What more can any other source do for us?

### B. We should study the Scriptures diligently.

1. They are the source of all the knowledge we need (2 Timothy 3:15; 2:15).
2. We should renew our devotion to Christ and pledge that we will study the Scriptures and follow them (Acts 17:11).
3. Scripture is the bedrock of the Christian's Faith. Because of this, Satan tries to persuade people to neglect the Scriptures and trust in some other source for religious authority and salvation. We need to guard lest our religious belief/practice is resting upon something other than the Bible (Colossians 2:8; 1 Peter 1:18, 23).

### C. Let all who are searching for salvation look to the Bible as the only guide! (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

## **Conclusion:**

- I. Paul's departing words are as important for us as for the Ephesians.

II. Let all assembled leave this place determined that s/he will follow only the Bible in religious matters. If your religious practices/beliefs cannot be found in the Bible, reject them at once because Satan is leading you and not God! (1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 John 9-11; Revelation 22:18,19).