

## **ALL POWER IS BY MEANS OF THE WORD**

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*Readings: Isaiah 37:21-24, 33-38*

The Lord's Word is different from all other books because it is holy. It contains the law of life, or the laws of the Lord's kingdom, according to which people must live if they would be happy. By means of this law the Lord gives power to angels and people, so that in keeping it they may be strong, but in breaking it they become weak and helpless.

It does not seem as if the Word has any power, or as if we had any power by means of it. It appears like an ordinary book, and we do not usually consider that a book has power. Yet all power comes by the Word. As we become wise from it, we receive more and more of this power. This is because the Word is the law of life.

Even in this world the laws of a country are the source of power to all its citizens. If there were no laws to protect us, evil people would continually be stealing, killing and destroying. We would be in constant danger. We would have to defend ourselves and would live in fear. We would have no power. But the law protects us. It makes evil people afraid to injure us. It takes away fear from those who wish to live well, and places it on those who wish to do evil. So long as we keep the law, we dwell in safety. But if someone breaks the law at once he comes into danger, because he is no longer protected by the law. He may be put in prison, and kept from doing further injury; thus his power is taken away from him and he becomes helpless.

Now we can see that the law is powerful from the strength it gives to people. When someone represents the law he becomes powerful in a way he was not before. A dutiful policeman, because he represents the law, is respected by good citizens and feared by evil people who wish to break the law. One such person can hold in check a whole mob, not because they fear him, but because they know that all the power of the country, and of its law, is behind him.

So it is also with the law in the other world. It is the source of all power there. And those who receive the law from the Lord's Word and seek to keep it from their love for the Lord are given great power. An angel, by the power the Lord gives him, need only look at an evil spirit and he will fall into a swoon, and appear like a cringing animal instead of a human being. A whole society of the hells may rise up in anger and seek to bring injury to the good. But if an angel draws near and stretches forth his hand, they will lose all their power.

This happens often in the world of spirits, when the Lord protects the good from the attacks of the evil. It also happened in this world a long time ago, when Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came with a great army to attack Jerusalem. He sent messengers boasting of his strength, defying the Lord, and demanding that the city surrender to his army. It seemed hopeless for the Israelites to resist. They had no great army, and the hosts of the enemy were far mightier than they. But the Lord told Hezekiah that He would deliver him. And when the Assyrian army had camped all round the city and were prepared to rush on it and capture it, an angel stretched forth his hand and 185,000 were stricken dead in one night. The power exercised by the angel was the power of the Divine law, which protects the good and permits no evil to come on them. The king of Assyria was acting against the law; he was acting as a criminal. Therefore he had no power, even though he had a great army. And King Hezekiah of the Israelites, because he kept the law of the Lord, was given power from heaven, just as a soldier or a policeman receives power from the country and its law.

The power that is derived from the Word is not usually seen in this world, but in the other world it is very clear. Every society of heaven has a copy of the Word kept in sacred place. When the angels look at it they see light coming from it as if from a star. If they draw near and open the Word, the light increases until it is as bright as the sun. An angel who touches the Word will be seen to shine by others. A light will shine from his garments and face. But if any person who is in evil touches the Word there is a loud explosion and he is thrown down as if he were dead, and he remains there, unable to move for some time.

The hells are continually seeking to injure anyone who is trying to be good. They are continually seeking to steal from you the goods and truths which are the riches of heaven. There are so many evil spirits that you could not possibly resist them by yourself. They are like the army of Sennacherib, and you are like Hezekiah, helpless before them. As soon as you disobey the Lord's Word, you come into their power. But so long as you keep that law, all the power of the Lord is with you, all the power of heaven is given to you, and no evil can hurt you. For when the hells tempt you and seek to destroy your life and take away your happiness, an angel stretches forth his hand toward them, and they fall down as if dead, and then flee back into hell, overcome with fear and dread of the mighty power of the Lord.

So read the Word. Learn its laws, and keep them, for in keeping them is great reward. The Word is the rock against which the hells cannot prevail. For from the Word alone there is power to resist temptation.

Amen.