

# ST. SIMEON ANGLICAN CHURCH, OFF FUTA ROAD, AKURE

## BIBLE STUDY, 04/02/2009

### STUDY 3

## THE POWER OF GOD IN AND ON NEW CREATION

Psalm 62:11

"*Twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God*" (Psalm 62:11). God's people are much slower to perceive the exercise of His might in and on new creation. This is obvious from Ephesians 1:19, where the apostle prayed that the saints might know "*what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power*". Very striking indeed is this. When Paul speaks of the divine power in creation he mentions "His power and Godhead" (Romans 1:20); but when he treats of the work of grace and salvation, he calls it "the exceeding greatness of His power."

Thick darkness has now fallen upon the people (Isaiah 60:2), that the vast majority of those even in the "churches" deem it by no means a hard thing to become a Christian. They seem to think it is almost as easy to purify a man's heart (James 4:8) as it is to wash his hands; that it is as simple a matter to admit the light of divine truth into the soul as it is the morning sun into our chambers by opening the shutters; that it is no more difficult to turn the heart from evil to good, from the world to God, from sin to Christ, than to turn a ship round by the help of the helm but. And this in the face of Christ's emphatic statement, "*With men this is impossible*" (Matthew 19:26).

The power of God therefore should deepen our confidence and trust in Him: "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: *for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength*" (Isaiah 26:4). The power of God was the ground of Abraham's assurance (Hebrews 11:19), of the three Hebrews' in Babylon (Daniel 3:17), of Christ's (Hebrews 5:7). Oh, to bear constantly in mind that "*God is able to make all grace abound toward us*". Nothing is so calculated to calm the mind, still our fears, and fill us with peace as faith's appropriation of God's sufficiency. "If God be for us, who *can* be against us?" (Romans 8:31). His infallible promise is, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10). He who brought a nation through the Red Sea without any ships, and led them across the desert for forty years where was neither bread nor water, still lives and reigns!

### 1. The power of God in regeneration

Psalm 62:11; Mathew 6:23; Isaiah 5:20; I Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 4:18

For a soul to be brought to realise that "*every* imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5) requires the power of omnipotence to produce. By nature man is independent, self-sufficient, self-confident: what a miracle of grace has been wrought when he now feels and owns his helplessness! By nature a man thinks well of himself; what a miracle of grace has been wrought when he acknowledges, "in me... dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). By nature men are "*lovers of themselves*" (II Timothy 3:2); what a miracle of grace has been wrought when men *abhor* themselves (Job 42:6). By nature man thinks he is doing Christ a favour to espouse His gospel and patronise His cause; what a miracle of grace has been wrought when he discovers that he is utterly unfit for *His* holy presence, and cries, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). By nature man is proud of his own abilities, accomplishments, attainments; what a miracle of grace has been wrought when he can truthfully declare, "I count *all* things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus ... and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:8).

Little as real Christians may realise it, a far greater power is put forth by God in the new creation than in the old, in refashioning the soul and conforming it to the image of Christ than in

the original making it. Romans 1:16 tells us that "the gospel of Christ . . . is *the power of God* unto salvation to every one that believeth".

The gospel is the instrument which the Almighty uses when accomplishing the most wondrous and blessed of all His works, that is, the picking up of wretched worms of the earth and making them "*meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Colossians 1:12). When the gospel is presented to the sinner, not only is his understanding completely ignorant of its glorious contents, but the will is utterly perverse against it. Not only is there no desire for Christ, but there is hostility against Him. Nothing but the almighty power of God can overcome the enmity of the carnal mind. To turn back the ocean from its course would not be such an act of power as to change the turbulent bent of man's wicked heart.

## 2. The power of God in working faith in His people

Psalm 62:11

A supernatural and saving faith in Christ purifies the life. Is *such* a faith easily attained? No, indeed! Listen to Christ Himself: "*How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?*" (John 5:44). And again, we read, "*They could not believe*" (John 12:39).

Faith in Christ is receiving Him as He is offered or presented to us by God (John 1:12). Now God presents Christ to us not only as Priest, but as King; not only as Saviour, but as "Prince" (Acts 5:21) and "Prince" *precedes* "Saviour," as taking His "yoke" upon us goes before finding "rest" to our souls (Matthew 11:29)! Are men as willing for Christ to rule as to save them? Do they pray as earnestly for purity as for pardon? Are they as anxious to be delivered from the *power* of sin as they are from the fires of hell? Do they desire holiness as much as they do heaven? Is the dominion of sin as dreadful to them as its wages? Does the filthiness of sin grieve them as much as the guilt and damnation of it? The man who divides what God has joined together when He offers Christ to us *has not* "received" Him at all.

Faith is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8, 9). It is wrought in the elect by "the operation of God" (Colossians 2:12). To bring a sinner from unbelief to saving faith in Christ is a miracle as great and as wondrous as was God's raising Christ from the dead (Ephesians 1:19, 20). Unbelief is far, far more than entertaining an erroneous conception of God's way of salvation: it is a species of hatred against Him. So faith in Christ is far more than the mind assenting to all that is said of Him in the Scriptures. The demons do that (James 2:19), but it does not save them. Saving faith is not only the heart being weaned from every other object of confidence as the ground of my acceptance before God, but it is also the heart being weaned from every other object that competes with Him for my affections. Saving faith is that "which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6), a love which is evidenced by keeping His commandments (John 14:23); but by their very nature all men hate his commandments. Therefore where there is a believing heart which is devoted to Christ, esteeming Him above self and the world, a mighty miracle of grace has been wrought in the soul.

## 3. The power of God in preserving His people

Psalm 62:11; I Peter 1:5; II Peter 1:3; II Thessalonians 1:11;

"Who are kept *by the power of God* through faith. . . ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:5). "Kept *from what?* Kept from being drawn out of the narrow way by the enticements of the world. Kept from the horrible heresies which ensnare thousands on every side. Kept from being overcome by Satan, who ever seeks our destruction. Kept from departing from the living God so that we do not make shipwreck of the faith. Kept from turning His grace into lasciviousness. Weak as water in ourselves, yet enabled to endure as seeing Him who is invisible. This "is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

Sin is a mighty monarch which none of his subjects can withstand. Then what a *mighty* power is required to subdue it! Only He who "led captivity captive" can make His people more than conquerors. The preservation of God's people in this world greatly glorifies the power of God. To preserve those with so many corruptions within and so many temptations without magnifies His ineffable might more than if He were to translate them to heaven the moment they believed. In a world of suffering and sorrow, to preserve the *faith* of His people amid so many and sore testings, trials, buffetings, disappointments, betrayals by friends and professed brethren in Christ, is infinitely more wonderful than if a man should succeed in carrying an unsheltered candle alight across an open moor when a hurricane was blowing. Yes, for God to supply strength to His fainting people, and enable them to "*hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end*" (Hebrews 3:14), is more marvellous than though He were to keep a fire burning in the midst of the ocean.