

4 January 2015

Let the word of God stir up your minds in 2015 (Pt 1 Stir up)

Introduction.

This is a new study for the new year. We will look at the phrase “stir up” in the Scriptures.

Three points are established from the Scriptures for this study.

1. The teachings of Jesus stirred up the heathen, and
2. The word of God stirs up the mind of a believer, and
3. The sight of sin stirs up the spirit of a believer.

Meaning of key words:

From the Greek.

* The various Greek words that are translated “stir up” are also translated: arise, awake, move, be raised, shake, shake together, and which cannot be shaken.

* “Be stirred” is also translated: easily provoked.

From the Hebrew.

* The various Hebrew words that are also translated “stir up” are also translated: awake, lift up, stir up self, to wake up, to rise up, to restore, to work, to put on, to go up, to carry up, to bring up, to stand up, to rear up, to pitch up, to help up, and to establish.

Summary of the meaning.

To “stir up” means: to awake, to rise up, provoke, and to shake.

Our three points in more detail.

1) The words of Jesus stir up the people.

Lk.23: 5 “And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.”

Context and meaning of our verse.

* In the Gospel of Luke (written to the Jews) we see that Jesus has spent His ministry teaching the disciples and preaching to the people. In Lk.22: 42 a multitude (including Judas) confronted Jesus and He was led away to the high priest (22: 54), to the council of the chief priest and scribes (verse 66), and then He is brought before Pilate (Lk.23: 1).

* In verse 4 Pilate acknowledged that he found no fault in Him, which led to our verse (Lk.23: 5) where the people were even more fierce about Jesus being guilty, so they made up some charges.

The Lord Jesus was a radical, “He taught...as one having authority” (Matt.7: 29) which stirred up the people and made the religious leaders look bad in the eyes of the people.

Other scriptural support.

* Mk.15: 3 – although not indicating that Jesus’ teaching stirred up the people, we see that the chief priests accused Him of many things.

* Lk.22: 2 – indicates the reason for the “chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him” was because “they feared the people.”

Application of our verse for today.

* We have established that the words of Jesus stir up the people. Today those who preach are to proclaim Christ and stir up the heathen.

* When a preacher waters down the words of Jesus today they weaken the power of the word of God (which is powerful – Heb.4: 12), and so there is less likelihood of stirring up the heathen.

* Just because the people are stirred up however, does not necessarily mean that the preacher is proclaiming the truth of Jesus.

Illustration.

* There was a preacher debating with two Muslim young men on Queen Street several months ago, and another two young men stopped as they could see the discussion was quite heated and felt they could calm things down. One of the two who stopped was passionate about everyone sharing

the **love** of Christ (perhaps because he remembered being stirred up about “love”), but that appeared to be all that he felt stirred up about the teachings of Jesus.

- * Perhaps he was referring to Jesus’s teaching on “Love your enemies” (Lk.6: 27).

- * The young man was then challenged to consider that not only did the Lord Jesus teach love, but He also taught truth, and vehemently rebuked the Pharisees for their error.

- * The young man gradually backed down from his initial request for us to “show the love of Jesus to each other” (at all cost), and accepted that truth was also part of Jesus’ teaching.

The learning from our illustration.

“It is a good thing” (Heb.13: 9) to be stirred up about what Jesus taught as this young man was in our illustration, but we need to do so with balance, i.e. be likewise stirred up with Jesus’ teaching on love, truth and hell, etc.

Challenge & or encouragement.

- * Let us remember that the Lord Jesus Christ spoke words of truth, and His words stirred up the people, and His words **will** stir up people today if we do **not** change them, or preach the words that we choose to proclaim and leave out the words we do not like.

- * Let us not fear the people for speaking the truth, but rather speak the words of Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to use those words to stir up the hearts of the lost.

2. The word of God stirs up the mind of a believer.

2Pet.3: 1 “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in [both] which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.”

Context and meaning of our verse.

- * The second epistle of Peter is one of two letters that Peter (according to 1Peter) wrote to “the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia” (1Pet.1: 1).

When we read the Holy Scriptures “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2Tim.2: 15) this book is doctrinally applicable to tribulation saints.

- * Prior to 2Pet.3 Peter is warning about false teachers and prophets (2: 1), and then in chapter 3 verse 1 he writes, “I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.”

- * What is he bringing to remembrance? The words spoken by the holy prophets and the commandments of the apostles (verse 2), “knowing that there will come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts” (verse 3), and he continues to identify what they were willingly ignorant of, and hence what he was bringing back to their memory.

The words of God when preached to believers stir up their minds bringing them into remembrance of those things which they are **not** to be ignorant of (just as Paul reminded the church not to be ignorant of Satan’s devices (2Cor.2: 11).

Other scriptural support.

- * 2Pet 1:13 and 2Tim 1:6.

Scriptural examples.

- * Moses encouraged the children of Israel to remember the lessons of those who had gone before them, to not forget what the Lord had done for Israel, so that they would do what the Lord commanded (Deut.24: 22). In doing so Moses stirred up the minds of the children of Israel.

Application of our verse for today.

- * The verse is not doctrinally for us today, but we can apply it to us and say that the word of God stirs up the mind of a believer to bring to remembrance the commandments of the Lord.

Illustration.

Given that those who read and listen to this study are saved, we should all be familiar with the Good News of Christ according to the Scriptures.

- * I enjoy listening to the gospel being preached on the street because it brings to remembrance the words of God. Repeatedly hearing the gospel reminds us of its content and enables us to proclaim God’s saving grace to others.

* Some preachers point out to their flock that they have read the Bible upwards of eighty times in their life, unlikely to boast of their efforts, but more likely to illustrate the importance for each of us to immerse ourselves in the Scriptures, and remember God's commandments so that we can live by every word of God (Lk.4: 4).

Challenge & or encouragement.

* When you read or hear the Scriptures being preached does your mind get stirred up?

* Let us read, and reread the gospels, the words of Scripture that we may remember that which the church should not be ignorant of, such that our hearts never grow weary of being **stirred up** by the word of God.

3. The sight of sin stirs up the spirit of a believer

Acts 17: 16 "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry."

Context and meaning of our verse.

* We are in the book of Acts, a book that records the early "actions" of the fledgling church. Peter is now out of the "picture" (the last we hear of Peter is Acts 15: 7), and Paul is God's appointed apostle to the Gentiles (Rom.11: 13).

* Paul is in Athens and the city is "wholly given to idolatry", which we know is iniquity (1Sam.15: 23). Everywhere Paul looked his eyes would have beheld idol worship. An example of what stirred his spirit was detailed in verse 23; "I beheld your devotions, I found an altar with the inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD."

* The sight of such exceeding sinfulness stirred up the spirit of Paul.

Application of our verse for today.

* The Lord Jesus loved righteousness, and hated iniquity (Heb.1: 9). Both feelings stir up enormous emotion in a person, whether a believer or non-believer. But for the believer who follows the Lord, he is to hate sin (Ps.97: 10), and depart from iniquity (2Tim.2: 19).

* For a man to be mobilised to move away from sin, or to proclaim error in the face of evil he would need to hate sin, fear God (Prov.16: 6), and his spirit stirred up as Paul was in Athens.

Scriptural examples.

* The Lord God in heaven is an example of being stirred by man's sin where it is written of Him, "I am broken with their whorish heart" (Eze.6: 9).

* Ezekiel would have been stirred by Israel's sin when the Lord told him to lie down and bear their iniquity (Eze.4: 4).

Illustration.

* How would you feel if you were an Indian saved out of the idolatry of Hinduism whilst your father, mother, sister, and brother were still snared by the devil, and bowed down to fruit, plants and anything else that is considered a god?

* For those new creatures in Christ (2Cor.5: 17) who have been saved from such idolatry, to walk into a room where idols are prominent, the sight of such exceeding sin would stir up their spirit.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* Does your spirit feel stirred up when you walk into a Roman Catholic's house with idols of Mary, or a Buddhist's house with statues of Buddha in every room?

* Let each one of us today ask the Lord for discernment of spirit that we would be stirred up when sin is present, whether we walk past the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, a Hindu place of worship in Auckland, or a local pub full of drunkards who worship the god of this world (for all the gods of the nations are idols (Ps.96: 5). Let each one of us be stirred up in our spirit by the sight of sin.

Summary of our three points.

1. The teachings of Jesus stir up the heathen.

2. The word of God stirs up the mind of a believer.

3. The sight of sin stirs up the spirit of a believer.