



“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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Jump Start # 2100

Revelation 1:11 "saying, 'Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.'"

God has always believed in writing and reading. Our verse today is one of many that shows the value of what God believed in. His word, inspired, perfect and Heaven sent, remains the one book that all must read. His books is the one book that we must know.

Long ago, God sent inspired prophets and preachers to tell His message. Inspired by the Holy Spirit these early writers recorded what God wanted. Through time, God's book, became the means which our faith is established and our hope is identified. When Moses came down from the mountain top, he held tablets of stone, written by the hand of God. He carried God's book. And, through the ages God's message was written, read and passed on. To the last book of the Bible, where our verse today comes from, John was shown a message. He wasn't told to draw pictures. He wasn't told to direct what he saw in a dramatic play. He was to write in a book what he saw. That book was to be circulated, read and understood.

Going to the local library once was a great adventure and experience. Checking out books was such a great summer time thrill. But today, most do not read. Newspapers are dying. National magazines have vanished. One statistic reported that 80% of Americans did not read one book last year. Some have shifted to electronic reading, which is still reading. However, there is a huge segment of society that no longer reads. Everything is videos. Videos move fast, are entertaining and allows a person to do other things while keeping an occasional eye on the screen. It's hard to do other things while reading. A person might eat, but you can't fold clothes, do house work, balance the checkbook, play with the kids while reading. Reading demands concentration. Reading involves contemplating. Reading engages the mind and enters the heart.

So, of all the avenues of communicating through the ages, God chose writing and reading. He wrote and we read. Our system of faith traces directly back to what God has written. We stand with assurance and confidence when we look into His book and find what He wants us to do. The power of God's written word would take supreme place over miracles, spiritual gifts and other means of communicating. In these last days, Hebrews begins, God has spoken to us in His Son.

(OVER)

Here are some things we learn:

First, nothing beats reading the Bible, and that includes these Jump Starts. Studying what was said, and why it was said, and what it means becomes our primary goal and mission in our journey with God. This is not a walk in the dark. This is not something that we allow our feelings to lead us or guide us. This begins with His book and we always remain with His book.

Second, we must get our young folks to read. This is the role of parents. There are lots of books geared for children that begins this journey of reading. There are all kinds of daily Bible reading programs that allow the school age kids and us adults a plan to follow. Most of these plans take us through a book. Reading a verse here and there is not nearly as helpful as staying with a book and reading it through.

Third, we must know the Bible. What's the Bible all about? There are so many people and so many stories in the Bible, one can miss what the message is all about. Find that message. Why did God give us the Bible? See the Bible as one complete message, rather than 66 individual books. Learn what the Bible is talking about. You do this by looking at places on a map. You do this by looking up words you do not understand. You do this by comparing one version to another. You do this by being a real student. Life long homework. Dig deep. Lower the nets. Don't just look things up on Google. Do your own searching in the Bible. Think about what you would have done had you been there. Listen to what is being said. Apply. Think.

All of this takes time. Don't be in a hurry with the Bible. Look at what people asked Jesus. Look at what He asked them. Look at their answers. Notice words that are repeated in a section. Notice references to other places in the Bible. And all through this process, your faith grows, your knowledge increases and your character changes. You can tell a person who has spent a lifetime with the Bible. It shows in their heart.

Fourth, we must realize that we cannot be wrong with the book and right with God. We worship, not the Bible, but the author of the Bible, God. However, God is so closely tied to His word, that one cannot walk righteously with God without following the Bible. This means obedience to the word is supreme. There is no getting around this. Those who frown at this love to throw out the prejudicial expression, "legalist." No one wants to be known as a legalist. Those that use that word do not understand what it means. To ask, what is the difference between legalism and obedience, they see no difference. Their concept of faith is feelings that are spontaneous, fluid and ever changing. The church's mission is evolving with culture, they believe. And this fanciful, form of disobedience has become the mission of many churches today. Standing in the old paths, as Jeremiah called for, seems quaint and sentimental to those who believe God still talks to them directly. They cannot prove this Biblically. They ignore plain Bible verses, yet, onward they go.

While modern culture looks to the future, the people of God look backward. Our eyes are upon this ancient book. We follow this book. We stay with this book. We treasure this book. We warn from this book. We find hope and assurance from this book. This book, His book, becomes the platform upon which we stand.

We must never get weary of God's book. We must not sell out to the moderns who have little use for God's book. We must not be deceived into believing it doesn't matter what we do as long as we love the Lord. In a time when people have given up on books and reading in general, we won't and we can't.

Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)