by Wayne Goff

. . ."small groups," in homes, or with ***nothing at all!*** Has it not dawned on brethren that **preaching** is a God-ordained activity?! When we become so dissatisfied with the sermon that we seek to *quietly* dispose of it, what does that say about our faith?! God warned us in the first century that the time would come when they would **not** *"endure sound doctrine"* (2 Tim. 4:3). Brethren are not fond of hard-nosed, precisely-delivered sermons that "step on their toes." But God **commands** this to be done both in the church and out of it! *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine"* (2 Tim. 4:2, KJV). When brethren get tired of this kind of preaching, they will soon cease being God's people!

However, *on the other hand,* if brethren are looking for **more effective methods of learning**, then I laud the desire while cautioning the approach. We cannot eliminate the *"sermon,"* and do well. Gospel preaching will never go out of style among God's people. So presenting timely, applicable, interesting, Scripture-filled lessons that will **actually** be *heard* and *absorbed* is always the key.

Some may scoff at my dream of more *interactive* learning **during** the sermon. But education centers around the country are already using new tools of learning: YouTube videos of professors' lectures are "assigned homework," while the classroom is being used to solve problems. IPad programs for *writing* interactive, electronic "books" are already available, and some students have their entire curriculum loaded on their electronic devices! (It sure beats lugging around pounds and pounds of books!) There is indeed an **education revolution** on the way, and I hope and pray *better learning* is the result.

Still, nothing will replace the need for an active mind! There isn't a **"pill"** one can take that gives you instant knowledge, understanding and wisdom! One has to ***learn*** to desire God's Word more than his necessary food (Job 23:12). But computer programs have sure made Bible study more accessible, simple, and portable. You can have a dozen or more translations instantly available to your eyes, you can study the original languages more simply, and commentaries are readily available. And you can carry all of this and more in one hand with your electronic device!

Universal Knowledge?

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, "Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them" (Heb. 8:10-11).

Our premillennial friends *misapply* this passage (also found in Jer. 31:31-34) to their *imagined* earthly utopia where Jesus sits on the throne of David in Jerusalem and reigns over the entire, peaceful world. "Everybody shall know the truth," they tell us, and quote this passage. Well, I am all for every creature on earth hearing, believing and obeying the Gospel. But this passage in Hebrews and Jeremiah is talking about the **nature** of the new covenant in the Gospel Age. Today, those who are in God's covenant have already been taught, thus all **know** the Lord, from the least to the greatest. Under the Mosaical system, people were *physically* born into the covenant, and then had to *learn* about the Lord as they came into adulthood. Today, the Gospel is taught, heard, learned and obeyed **before** one is in God's covenant. That is what Jeremiah is talking about.

Just the same, Bible knowledge is more readily available in the world than ever before, and that is an exciting thing! Sermons preached in our building can be heard by *anyone* in the world via the "world-wide web"! Certainly God's hand is behind these modern inventions, and we should embrace the opportunity to use them well, wisely, and to the glory of God. And my **"Christmas wish"** for you, dear reader, is that you will **always** be an engaged hearer and doer of the Word (James 1:25).

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