

Power versus Speed

Which is better - power or speed? To some extent, that depends on whether one wants to win the Bathurst 1000 or plough a paddock. But in the long run, surely power counts more than speed. The world could get along quite nicely without sports cars or race cars. But life would be much harder without tractors and bulldozers. And in the long run, slow and steady wins the race, too.

Power and speed come face to face on the football field. The speedy runner can easily step around and outrun a front-row forward. But a football game is not won or lost only by the speedy players. No team would ever get close to the try line without the big forwards rampaging and bulldozing the opposition for a good field position.

Sometimes you see a smaller player try to stop a bigger one, only to come off second best. It takes a lot of courage to stand in front and try to stop a rampaging 120kg man who is running at you with a head full of steam!

Jesus spoke of a strong man being overcome by a stronger one (Luke 11:21-22). Jesus was saying that His power to cast out demons is sure proof that He is stronger than Satan. That is great comfort for Christians at all times of temptation and tribulation. Our Saviour is almighty God!

Earnest pastors and teachers of the Word are often tried by certain doubts. Why do people resist and reject the Word of God? Why do more people care more about anything worldly than about everything spiritual? Why do people rebel against a faithful pastor proclaiming God's Word? That is rebellion against God (Luke 10:16)! Why does God put up with that? Satan's power is limited. God's power is unlimited. Is Satan working harder than God?

That is the question. God is infinitely stronger than Satan. So when Satan seems to be coming out on top, it seems to us that he is trying harder than God. He is not working harder than God. But Satan is working more furiously than God. He has to. He knows that he is outmatched in the power department. His only hope, his last hope, his desperate (that is, hopeless) hope is in furious speed. Satan's hope will be disappointed. Our hope in Christ will be fulfilled and realised for Jesus' sake.

In Luke 18:1-8, Jesus encouraged perseverance in prayer despite seeming delays in God's help. He said: "*Will God delay long over them? I tell you, He will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?*" (vv. 7-8). The Bible seldom speaks of speed in God's actions. It does so here in a curious paradox. God will endure with us while we suffer, but He will also rescue and avenge us quickly (see Psalms 31:2; 69:17; 79:8; 102:2; 143:7).

The usual lists of God's attributes include power but not speed. Speed is temporal, and God is outside of time. But He knows the right time for everything He plans to do. He plans to help us in every trouble. He will help us in the right way at the right time. God wants us to trust Him in spite of Satan, in the face of the foe's furious ferocity.

"If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Paul asks (Romans 8:31-32; see vv. 28-39). Because Christ has died for our sins, God is gracious to us and directs all things for our benefit and blessing. God invites and moves us to trust Him for this world and the next in His Word. Based on the promises of God in His Word for Jesus' sake, that faith will be fulfilled; that hope will happen; that trust will come true.