

HOLDING ON TO OUR FAITH IN THE WORD OF PEACE (EPHESIANS 2:14-22)

It can be said, and has been, based on the Truth of the Word of God, that there is nothing more important for us to have than the Word of God. God's Word says exactly that, as God's people can testify to also, as **Psalms 119:105** says, "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Yet the Word of God is all-encompassing to one's life and well-being for those who have believed on Christ Jesus and have received Him. A prophecy given to Isaiah the prophet, that usually gets mentioned at Christmas time, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, gives us a broader understanding to the Word of God and the purpose for the life, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. Yes, Christ Jesus died on a cross for our sins against God, He bore our sins upon Himself, but also, as Isaiah prophesied, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (**Isaiah 9:6**) While the fulfillment of "the government will be upon His shoulder", is soon to come, yet He is and is called by, and known by, and expected to be, to God's people, "Wonderful" and our "Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Where we are going in this message is that we, as children of God, are to be not only believing on Christ Jesus but also putting our trust in God, through Christ Jesus, and continue to hold on to our faith in the Word of Peace. As the "multitude of the heavenly host" praising God and sa[~~id~~id, to the shepherds who were watching their flocks by night, at the time of Jesus' birth:] "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (**Luke 2:14**)

Now, as we know, the Word of God is first of all, the inspired by God and then written Word that we have as our Holy Bible. The Apostle Paul, also known as Saul, told his spiritual son Timothy, that "the Holy Scriptures, (which) are able to make you wise for **salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus**. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [God-breathed-theopneustos], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (**2 Timothy 3:15-17**) That completeness comes to us as we abide in Christ and His Word, as He works in us the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, **peace**, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (**Galatians 5:22-23**) The Word of God is for us a precious gift from God, as we are told of God's redemptive plan for mankind, in His Word, of which God is reconciling us back into a right relationship with Him, as our Lord, God, and Savior. God's Word to us also speaks of His love for us, as His Word tells us in **Romans 5:8** that, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." And then His Word tells us of what He expects of us as, not only His creation, but as children of God, to those who have believed on Jesus as being the Christ, the Anointed One of God to be our Savior, and

then we are led to repentance of our sins against God, and we then receive Him, to be "**born-again**" as Jesus described it, to be a new creation in Christ, just as the Apostle Paul tells us, "Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (**2 Corinthians 5:17**)

Speaking of the Word of God, in relation to Christ Jesus, the Apostle John tells us, in **John 1**, that the Word of God is not just His spoken and then written Word. He says, "In the beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." (**John 1:1-3**) Who is He speaking of? "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (**John 1:14**) Logos, the Word. When Jesus was asked by a centurian to heal his servant, he said to Jesus, "but speak the word [logos] only and my servant will be healed" (**Matthew 8:8**) Jesus marveled then at that man's faith. What he was saying by faith is what is now written for us, in God's Word, that God "has in these last days spoken to us by His Son [THE WORD], whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds [aeons]; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and **upholding all things by the word of His power**, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." (**Hebrews 1:2-4**)

The Apostle Paul, who was also called Saul, wrote 13 or 14 of what we call books of the New Testament in the Word of God. He was one person who certainly had a dramatic encounter with Christ Jesus (**Acts 9**), similarly to how the apostle John had described, "we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth". For on Paul's way to Damascus, after Jesus had risen from the dead, "As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." From that point on, he was never the same and he later said that he was given the ministry and calling to preach the gospel, the good news of Christ Jesus, primarily to the Gentiles, (**Galatians 2:7-8**) those outside of the Jewish faith, although the first place he would go in his missionary travels from town to town would be the synagogues, of the Jews. In his letter to the church at Corinth, he said "...I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you **received** and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, **if you hold fast that word** which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also **received**: that Christ died for our sins

according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas [Simon Peter], then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. [they died] After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time." (1 **Corinthians 15:1-8**)

The Apostle Peter, who wrote 2 books in the New Testament, **1-2 Peter**, and is said to have had a primary ministry to the Jews even though his ministry also included the sharing of the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles, such as with Cornelius and his household. Nevertheless, after Jesus had risen from the dead, He appeared to His disciples/apostles and had said to them, "**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**" (Matthew 28:18-20) We can read, or listen to, or have someone else read to us, of the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus and all of His recorded words in the gospel accounts of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. After the gospels, the book of Acts begins for us by speaking of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and then goes on to give a narrative of the spreading of the gospel of Christ Jesus throughout the region and beyond to the other nations, all the way now to the United States of America, to us! Praise the Lord!

Getting back to Simon Peter, in his first letter or epistle to the Jews who had been dispersed throughout of what was called Asia Minor and is today the country of Turkey, after his greeting he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us (again) to a **living hope** through the **resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, **reserved in heaven for you**, who are **kept by the power of God** through **faith for salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your **faith**, being much **more precious than gold that perishes**, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet **believing**, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, **receiving** the end of your **faith**—the salvation of your souls. Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the **Spirit of Christ who was in them** was indicating when He testified beforehand **the sufferings of**

Christ and the **glories that would follow**. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.” (**1 Peter 1:3-10**) We are then, holding on to our faith in the Word, just as John the Baptist declared the Word to his disciples when Jesus came toward them, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (**John 1:29**) For the present, His Word is being declared, to where we are believing on Christ and receiving Him and then:

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EPHESIANS 2:14-22 Christ is Our Peace

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one [Jews/Gentiles], and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached **peace to you** who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. [You can read Jesus “Sermon on the Mount”, in **Matthew 5-7**, of which are His “Beatitudes”, (which means “supreme blessedness”) of which one of them is “**Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.**” (**Matthew 5:9**)]

Christ Our Cornerstone

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

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That foundation of the apostles and prophets is THE WORD OF GOD of which we must all then hold onto our faith in the Word. It is in the incredible price that Jesus paid for our sins against God, taking our sins and punishment upon Himself, that we may be reconciled to our Heavenly Father, to be His children, the children of God Almighty. The Apostle Peter tells us, “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should **follow His steps**: “Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth”; who, **when He was reviled, did not revile in return**; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might **live for righteousness** [and peace]—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” (**1 Peter 2:21-25**) It is upon each of us to believe on Jesus as being the Anointed One of God Who died on a cross for our

sins, rose from the dead on the third day, conquering death, sin, and evil, and then as we are led to repentance of our sins against God, we then receive Him, the Word of God, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. "[For] as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (**John 1:12-13**) That is, as Jesus said we must be born-again, born of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, to receive Him, into a newness of life-life eternal in Christ and to live for righteousness, as He IS our Righteousness and He is the Prince of Peace! Christ Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed! Glory to God as we continue in holding on to our faith in the Word of peace!