

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

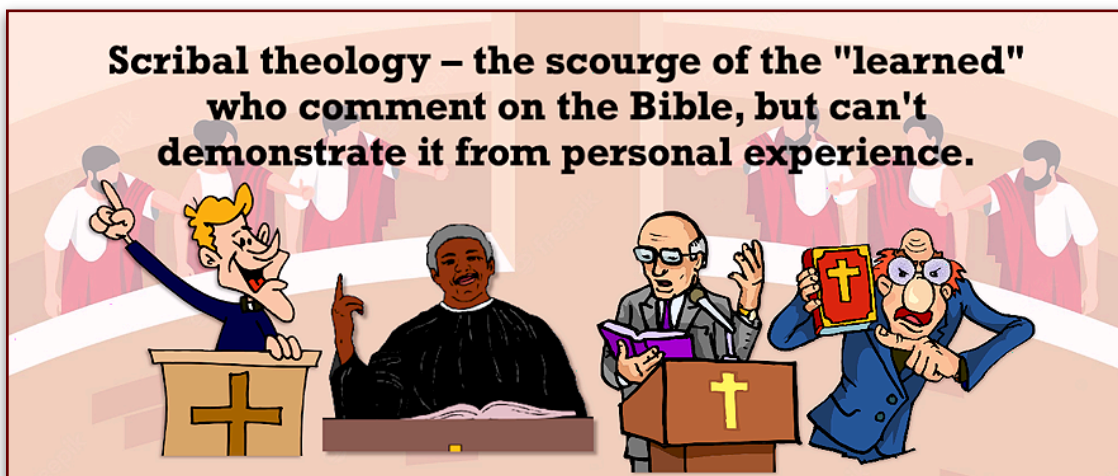
Attached to this email is Saga 5, ***Our Lord's Spirit Bestows Fellowship & Timely Words Of Wisdom.*** Within Christianity there's what's called "fellowship", and there is authentic FELLOWSHIP! The first fellowship means that someone within a faith community setting has a relationship with one or more people even if there's only minimum commitment to each other. But FELLOWSHIP, the kind the Bible speaks of, involves deeply committed relationships revolving around the Lordship of Jesus. These relationships must be purposely pursued and intentionally carried on. Two characteristics are inherent in FELLOWSHIP: •a love-motivated mutual commitment to each other's Christ-like character development, and •the freedom and mutual responsibility to correct each other and to help each other keep pressing on in obedient trust in Jesus.

In this Saga we recount several anecdotes in which only the Holy Spirit could have given us timely words which a particular person needed to hear. Trusting that the Holy Spirit will provide the timely words He wants spoken was something our Lord assured His followers in Luke 12:11,12: "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say." We've camped on this assurance many times over the years, not so much in "defending ourselves", but in having Spirit-bestowed words for dramatic situations, as you'll read about in this Saga.

"The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his ways" (Proverbs 14:15)

Mike: Many years ago I was part of a small band of brothers in Christ on a navy ship. One of the brothers shared with the others a tape of a noted TV evangelist known for his entertaining style. I was standing watch when they listened to it and I didn't get to hear it with them, but they were really excited over what they'd heard. I was given the tape and listened to it privately — stopping it so I could read each verse the speaker cited. It didn't take long for me to realize that he was using Scripture way out of context to support his unbiblical conclusions. The next day I took the brothers through the tape, stopping where I had so they could read the Scriptures for themselves. They were appalled by how duped they'd been. We all gained wisdom and a personal responsibility to test for ourselves the truth through using God's Word.

If you've spent any length of time under clergy teaching and scribal theology, we encourage you to scrutinize your spiritual life by asking the Holy Spirit to give you feedback about yourself. If you're earnest in seeking His evaluation of you, you can be sure He'll let you know. One of the last things the Holy Spirit wants for you is to live a passive spiritual life feeling comfortable among the religiously-mired. He knows fully well that the Father has prepared works in advance for you to do (Ephesians 2:10), and that He is THE source to reveal these works to you and to empower you to accomplish them. For most of you who are reading this, what we're writing is both biblical and the way of life for the Lordship-committed — but that methodology likely isn't the context of how you were taught the Scriptures. You are most likely a product of scribal theology – far more *knowing* that came from others teaching you but far less *doing* what Father wanted you to do.



One great hindrance of learning the Bible in the scribal pattern is the context in which you were taught. The context in which you're taught Scripture content is the context in which you will use the content yourself. This is one reason the religiously-mired are so reluctant to discuss our Lord Jesus with unbelievers. If you learned biblical truths by a sermon or a Sunday school lecture format, that's how you'll use that information: you'll need a formal lecture-type atmosphere in which you can lecture at an unbeliever. Do you think unbelievers are interested in being lectured at?

If you learned about the Lordship of Jesus and biblical truths through open discussion which included applying these truths to your life, then that's how you'll present your relationship with Jesus as your Lord to unbelievers, as well as how the Scriptures changed your life. Unbelievers are far more likely to engage in discussion than in being talked at. Going further: If a biblical truth was demonstrated to you through an action, then you'll demonstrate it to others too. For instance, not much can come by lecturing about hospitality or acts of kindness. These virtues need to be experienced through demonstration (role modeling) in order for them to be emulated. So, how many times in the past year have you eaten a meal at your pastor's home or at the home of any other congregation leader? How often have you had others over for a meal to affirm them?

Scribal theology and the lecture method it relies on have induced most Christians to separate their lives into two categories: the "religious" and the "secular." Many in Christianity are so trapped by the fear of "religious talk" that the vast majority don't even know how to "chew the fat" over spiritual things even among their own relatives! This is the great inhibitor by which **Plato's cosmic dualism** and **Nicolaitanism** have deceived so many. Most of the religiously-mired have bought into the lie that "religion is a private matter."



But the Lordship-committed don't want to "talk religion". To paraphrase Paul, we want to reveal our Lord Jesus: "How, then, can they call on the One they have not trusted in if someone doesn't discuss Him with them?" Our *emunah*, our unconditional trust, has no hesitation in representing our Lord Jesus or sharing how His Word has changed our lives through His Spirit at work in us. But the religiously-mired have been convinced to "believe" with limited or no trust in our Lord Jesus.

Please, if you're unsure of the Holy Spirit's appraisal of you, ask Him! And, "If you hear His voice, don't harden your heart" (Hebrews 4:7). Repent if He convicts you of having limited your obedient trust, and renew your loving determination that by His grace you'll go anywhere and do anything that's the will of our Father.

Mike & Sue