

Jesus Isn't Residing Between the Bible's Covers — He Is a Living Lord!

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

We're continuing to work on our upcoming series which highlights key aspects of the **Hebraic foundations** versus the institutionalized, man-centered Christianity which **Nicolaitanism, Hellenism** and **Revisionism** have produced over the centuries. Countless individuals (maybe you?) and denominations (maybe yours?) have been led astray by these spawns of **anti-Semitic theology**. Through the widespread influence of this unholy trio, the **theological intelligentsia have undercut and severely minimized** the **rule and Lordship of Jesus** which God's Word calls for in Christ's own. BUT if you are pursuing and applying the Hebraic foundations to your life, you'll realize just how belittled our Lord has been by the theological practice of viewing Him predominantly through the confines of Bible verses. Here's an essential biblical truth: Jesus is the LIVING LORD Who is experienced in spiritual intimacy through His indwelling Spirit.

The Hebraic foundations have been our way of life for several decades as we've been graced to grow in understanding their application. It's been a joy to share these with others who are loving and serving our Lord Jesus wholeheartedly. And we delight that we're living in a time when our Father is restoring the true nature of living under the Lordship of Jesus as was understood by His first followers, the **genuinely born again**. In the upcoming series we'll clarify how the genuinely born again are an entirely different breed than self-identified "Christians" in general. Here's an example. Specifically within the Book of Hebrews is a key Hebraic understanding of our Lord Jesus as Mediator of the New Covenant, and our responsibilities to Him as our Lord if we follow Him and hear His voice: "Today, **IF you hear His voice**, do not harden your hearts" (4:7). Why proclaim this? Because our Lord Jesus does speak to His own.

Through the presence of His Spirit within the genuinely born again, our Lord Jesus is alive and active in ruling His followers and directing our path. He's not just a historical Deity whose life is detailed in the Bible but Who is far removed from our everyday life. His Spirit still speaks to His own! How else could we render account to His Lordship if we don't know the specific purposes our heavenly Father wants us to fulfill as His children, and the power of His Spirit to accomplish these? To the genuinely born again our Lord Jesus confirms hearing the voice of His Spirit: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word [rhema***] that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Paul reinforces this distinctive "hearing from God" in describing our faith walk in military terms: "Take the **helmet** of salvation and the **sword** of the Spirit, which is the **word [rhema]** of God" (Ephesians 6:17). The reality of hearing a specific *rhema* of direction or guidance from God was no surprise to the earliest followers of Jesus. But the *theological intelligentsia* have eradicated this biblical reality from most of contemporary Christianity.

***Two different words for "word"— **logos** and **rhema**—are used in the original Greek of the Newer Testament. Both the Older and Newer Testaments are God's *logos*, the written testimony He wants mankind to know about Him and His timeless ways, His love and power, His redemptive plan, and His righteous commands to apply to our way of life. (Jesus too is referred to as the Logos Word of God.) By contrast, through *rhema* the indwelling Holy Spirit commands/prompts/reveals to followers of Jesus our Father's specific will so we can be about His purposes under the Lordship of Jesus.

From Corrie ten Boom in her devotional, *Each New Day*

"We must not make our own plans without God's guidance. Do your planning while in prayer. Be sure that the Lord is walking before you and that you are not recklessly rushing ahead of Him. 'He leadeth me! Oh, blessed thought! Oh, words with heavenly comfort fraught. Whate'er I do, where'er I be, Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.' (Joseph H. Gilmore). *'And the Lord shall guide thee continually...'* (Isaiah 58:11). Lord, give us patience to wait for Your guidance. Keep us from rash actions, no matter how right they seem at the time."

When we hear of Christians doing "Christian" works and/or making decisions without first having the *rhema* of the Spirit, we are disheartened by their self-determination. Without the absolute assurance beforehand that's provided by hearing the inner voice of the Holy Spirit, the self-reliant gripe at every problem or setback that comes during the course of their labors. But when you have Divine assurance from the beginning, you can discern that what *seems* like negative circumstances is in reality our Father 🙏 testing your trust in Him, and/or 🙏 redirecting your attitude or actions. If you have absolute assurance beforehand, you can respond confidently, ***"My heavenly Father knows this is happening."*** Here's an anecdote a Navy chaplain told Mike almost 50 years ago about a perceived setback being a blessing. Maybe you've had a similar "blessing in disguise" yourself!

Jerry and another classmate were driving home in the snow from Wheaton College for the Christmas holidays. They were following close behind a semi-truck on a two-lane country road when their radiator hose blew. Annoyed at the delay, they trudged to a nearby farmhouse for help. A kindly farmer came to their aid. Since the break was near one end of the hose, the farmer cut the hose cleanly and reconnected it. After refilling their radiator with fluid, the two young men drove off into the growing darkness. About a mile further the road did a hairpin turn down a steep hill. *The semi they had been following earlier had jackknifed completely across the road.* If they'd been on the heels of that truck, they would have crashed into it, unable to stop on the snow and steep grade. The delay which had initially been a source of irritation turned into praise to our Lord for redirecting them through a blown hose!

This anecdote has saved us from many potential annoyances over the years. ***"When God closes one door, He's opening another. Just look for it!"***

Our Self-Reliant Sin Nature Loathes Seeking the Holy Spirit's *Rhema*

The Bible leaves no doubt about our **rebellious sin nature**: we're born wanting life our way! By His grace God gave each person **free will**, the ability to make choices. We can choose: 🙌 to be ruled by our Lord Jesus Who loves us, 🙌 to willingly enact His commands, and 🙌 to intentionally live to fulfill our Father's will. *But* there's also the **dark side of free will**, sinful rebellion: 🙌 to not be ruled by the Lordship of Jesus, 🙌 to resist His commands as commanding us, or 🙌 to disregard fulfilling our Father's purposes. This dark side describes Christianity today! Supported by an array of theological intelligentsia who have set aside the Older Testament in particular as "irrelevant or outdated or inconsequential", too many Christians have allowed their rebellious dark side to influence their lives. Even among the genuinely born again are many who resist our Lord's rule in their lives.

If you remember, the Israelites were collectively dominated by a **reprobate attitude** toward God, His righteous commands, and the prophets He sent to them, many of whom they imprisoned or mur-

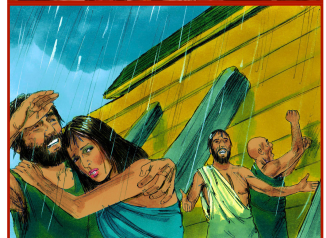
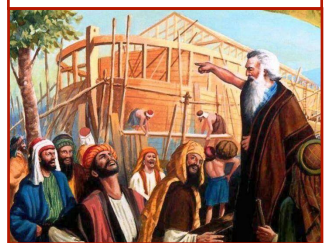
dered. (Lacking conscience or principles, the lives of *reprobates* are marked by *depravity, shamelessness, perversion and immorality.*) The tragic result of Israel's rebellious *self-rule* and clinging to the dark side of free will was expulsion from the land God had promised them. Their rebellion and its consequences serve as a warning for us today whose sinful compromise with the world's ways remarkably mirrors what's detailed in Jude's no-nonsense letter. (You may want to visit his brief yet descriptive message.) And when the stiff-necked rebelliously resist the rule of Jesus, **chastisement always ensues.**

In Love-grounded Obedient Trust You Must Live Repentant Before It's Too Late

Picture living repentantly with your sins fully covered under the blood of our Lord Jesus as akin to God commanding Moses to have the people protected from the angel of death by putting blood around the doorposts of their homes (Exodus 12:22). Why is this important to you? An unrepentant person who is rebelliously holding onto unconfessed sin is exposed and not under the blood of Christ. And there are consequences for their choices and actions...

Even a cursory study of God's Word lays bear the reality of devastating consequences for ongoing, unrepentant reprobate lives. Recall for example the narrative of the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Book of Judges, and the eviction of the reprobate Israelites from the Promised Land. Don't overlook that our God is compassionate and long-suffering with sinful mankind! **But** there comes a day when He executes judgment/chastisement when people refuse to change through repentance. We wrote our series, [Repentance Leads To Christ-like Character](#), to clarify a necessary component of repentance: It not only restores fellowship with our Father as we receive anew the forgiveness we need. Repentance also is a means for the Spirit to keep transforming us into Christ's character so we can more fully fulfill our Father's will.

Our God is long-suffering, yet He acts suddenly!



In our *Repentance Leads To Christ-like Character* series we discuss repentance in terms of how you can discern if you may be inadvertently sinning against our Father. AND we discuss the many ways in which the Spirit of our Lord can then use your life, your marriage, and your faith family to lift up the glorious Name of Jesus through you! From your Father's perspective your life is a journey of transformation into ever-increasing Christ-likeness until the moment the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS proclaims your name to the hosts of heaven—the **culmination of your salvation.**

In transforming you into ever-increasing Christ-likeness, our heavenly Father would prefer that you cooperate with the Holy Spirit in applying His good and righteous commands to your *way of life*. But when you do sin, repentance is the means by which our Father through the Holy Spirit keeps transforming you. Your repentance is accepted by our Father as genuine when you hate your sin and its control over your life and are willing to turn from it. You are turning away from your sin so that by His grace and power you can then press on in the way that pleases Him. Each time you repent by turning from your sin and turning toward Father's good and righteous ways, you're agreeing with Him how much you need to be forgiven through the shed blood of Jesus on your behalf. To reiterate: Repentance is our **Father's means of transforming you** by His Spirit to become more like His Son, Jesus. And that's a great thing!

The Greek word for repentance, *metanoia*, doesn't mean only that you don't want to do that particular sin again, whether attitudinal or action, omission or commission. It also indicates that you're pained over what you did. That grief is the "*godly sorrow [that] brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret*" (2Corinthians 7:10; see also Acts 2:37-39). Your pain drives you to seek the forgiveness of your loving and holy Father through trusting that the blood of our Lord Jesus covers you. Father sees Jesus having paid for your sin. And because of *His love for you*, you desperately want Him to replace your wrongful way with His righteous response through the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

In the first chapter of his first epistle, the apostle John writes to followers of Jesus and hammers home in verses 5-10 their need for confession and repentant living. He points out that *if* we fail to (or refuse to) recognize our sin, we are liars and make God out to be a liar. That's really bad! And failing to both confess and repent for your sin is a two-fold insult to Jesus. First, by not confessing your sin you nullify His sacrifice on the cross to pay the penalty which your sin warrants. Second, by refusing to turn away from that sin and pursue the transformation that only His Spirit can provide, you insult the King of the Kingdom. If you persist in your willful denial and rebellion against Him, there may come a tragic day when He says, "*I never knew you; depart from Me, you [reprobate] who practice lawlessness!*" (Matthew 7:23).

When God Gets Fed Up With The Reprobate, Prayer May Not Help

*"So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance;
truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter"* (Isaiah 59:14).

"The wicked strut about everywhere when vileness is held in general esteem" (Psalms 12:8).

After many years of urging Christians to live repentantly, suddenly one day the Holy Spirit ordered Mike, "*Do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer on their behalf, for I will not listen when they call to Me in the time of their trouble*" (Jeremiah 11:14). The Spirit then went on to remind Mike about what God said to Jeremiah about the reprobate Israelites: "*Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before Me, My heart would not go out to this people. Send them away from My presence! Let them go!*" (Jeremiah 15:1). Surely at this time, years after these orders from the Spirit, our society has sunken even lower in terms of injustice, unrighteousness, lies, and dishonesty. And can you deny that today, "*vileness is held in general esteem*"?

Even if this entire nation and countless others who say they're Christian are reprobate, don't you be! The blood of Christ is a costly price to pay for your sins. Get covered in it, and purpose in loving and obedient trust to stay there. Finally, when we see flags and signs declaring, "**God bless America!**", we cringe. We'd far rather see this proclamation, "**God bring us to our knees in repentance.**"

Mike & Sue