

BELIEVING THE WORD IS KNOWING THE WORD (ACTS 13)

Knowing the "Word" has a two-fold meaning for us. The Word is the inspired by God and written Word of what God our Creator wants us to know about Himself and His plan and purpose for His creation. And then, in the words of the Apostle John, "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 the centurion to heal his servant, he said to Jesus, "but speak the word [logos] only and my servant will be healed" (**Matthew 8:8**) Many different men of God though, were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write for us the different books of what we now have as the Holy Bible. Those writers were all uniquely different, just as we all are uniquely different, coming from many different backgrounds and experiences. Yet they were all moved by God to **do His will** and to then write His inspired word, while also giving us a look at who they were and their personality, their perspective, but most importantly, what God wanted and wants us to know. Regarding then the written Word of God, the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, calling the Word of God "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, 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**) **Hebrews 4:11-13** ties in both meanings of the Word of God saying, "For the word [logos] of God is **living and powerful** [energes], and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

It certainly behooves us then to know **God and His Word**. As Jesus stated, "**For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required.**" (**Luke 12:48**) We've been given a most precious of gifts, the inspired and written Word of God. That "word of God" that is "living and powerful" is His written Word, as it is in the context of the whole of the Word, and it is also revealed to us that Jesus, is also the Word, who is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (**Matthew 16:16**), Who is intended by God to be our Savior and Lord! Just as Paul said, "that if you confess with your mouth the **Lord** [Kurios] **Jesus** and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (**Romans 10:9-10**) That certainly speaks then to our salvation not just being a one-time experience, and it is also our knowing Him and honoring Him, not just with our words [rhema, utterances] but also in our deeds. The Israelites, that we can read about in the Old Testament, were good at giving God lip-service but not honoring Him

as their Lord, as El Elyon, God Most High. Through Isaiah the prophet God said, "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men." (Isaiah 29:13) Their rhema (words) were not lining up with the Logos, The Word. That was **Isaiah 29:13**. Interestingly, in **Jeremiah 29:13**, God says, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." As Jesus told His disciples, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever." (John 14:15-16) Right after that Jesus continued, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me." (John 14:21-24) How does one keep His Word? For starters one has to know what Jesus' word is. Secondly one has to know Him! That's really what **John 15** tells us. Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away [lifts up]; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that **My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.**" (John 15:1-11)

"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and **the world did not know Him**. He came to His own, and His own did not **receive Him**. But 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 1:10-13) There are many who know of Jesus but don't know Him. The Apostle Paul, in speaking about no longer being under the Mosaic law said, "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the **knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom**

I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found **in Him**, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through **faith in Christ**, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may **know Him and the power of His resurrection**, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." (**Philippians 3:8-11**) The world has and will mock God's people, His children about that. They mocked Christ, they mocked His disciples/apostles, they mocked God's prophets, and they will mock you too, and try and take advantage of you, and trample over you, etc. As Jesus said to His disciples, just prior to Him being betrayed and crucified, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (**John 16:33**) Indeed, the writer(s) of Hebrews begins their letter saying, "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds [aeones]; 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 1:1-4**)

For context to **Acts 13**, in building on the foundation that we have in Christ Jesus, we obviously have 12 chapters of stuff that happened prior, in the book of Acts. Most notably was the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and then the spreading of the gospel of Christ Jesus, to the Jews first and then also to the Gentiles. From Luke the physician's viewpoint, that context to what he recorded for us in Acts, follows his gospel account of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus, in what we now call, the book of Luke, or the gospel according to Luke. From a book called "Who's Who in the Bible", they said this about Luke: "Paul knew him best as a traveling companion, a "fellow worker", a "fellow prisoner", and as the "beloved physician". Luke accompanied Paul as he traveled from Troas [the western shore of Turkey near the Mediterranean Sea] to Philippi [Philippians], and later from Philippi to Jerusalem. He also accompanied Paul during his final voyage to Rome." In fact, when Paul said "Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you", he was writing to the Colossians while he was imprisoned in Rome (Prison epistles: Philemon/Ephesians/Philippians/Colossians). Why do I mention all of that? They are examples of how the Word of God, and those who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write His Word for us, and to abide in His Word, ties together in a unity of God's Word, as it then pertains to us, the inspired Word of God, and the Word that became flesh and died on a cross for our sins. You begin to see all of these tie-ins or connections, and as it is God's revealing

of His redemptive plan for mankind through the sacrifice of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. Who's Who continues by saying of Luke that he is "the only non-Jewish author of a New Testament book. Luke spoke for the poor and oppressed of society; the gospel he presented included people normally rendered unacceptable by the religious or social elite of the time. Luke presents Jesus as the universal Savior, both in terms of history (tracing Jesus' genealogy back to Adam and Eve) and in terms of ethnic inclusivity. Luke's gospel addresses the Gentiles, Romans, Samaritans, women, lepers, children, tax-collectors, and prostitutes-any and all who fell outside the purview of ancient Judaism. Some scholars believe Acts was written [partly anyways] as a treatise [logos] for Paul as he defended the Christian faith to the authorities of the Roman empire."¹ As Luke had addressed Theophilus (friend of God) in Luke and Acts.

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Acts 13 [Paul and Barnabas Are Sent to the Gentiles]

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to **Cyprus**. And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John [Mark] as their assistant. Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer [magos], a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the **straight ways of the Lord**? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the **teaching** [didache (di-dah-kay), doctrine] **of the Lord**. [they were teaching the Word of God, the doctrine, the teachings of Christ Jesus]

[At Antioch in Pisidia]

Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the

1 Who's Who in the Bible, Dietrich Gruen, Publications International, 1998.

synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on." Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. [Stephen, before he was martyred, started his message similarly] Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, **a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.**' From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus—after John [the Baptist] had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of **repentance** to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.' Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you **the word [logos] of this salvation has been sent.** For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because **they did not know Him**, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.' Therefore He also says in another Psalm: 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.' [Paul referred to the written Word to point to the Word that became flesh!] For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: 'Behold, you despisers, marvel and perish! For I work

a work in your days, a work which you will by no means believe, though one were to declare it to you.' "

[Blessing and Conflict at Antioch]

So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, **the Gentiles** begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were **filled with envy**; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' " [Sound familiar? **Isaiah 9:2**, "The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined."] Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and **glorified the word of the Lord**. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. But they **shook off the dust from their feet** against them, and came to Iconium. **And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.**

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Jesus gave His Great Commission to His disciples/apostles saying, "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**) Those apostles has given us His Word and now it is upon us to pass that along, to encourage others to know Him and His Word. That therefore speaks of our need of **knowing Him and His Word**. "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." (**John 14:15-18**) Immanuel, God is with us. After being asked what is the great commandment of God, "Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment

greater than these." So the scribe said to Him, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." (Mark 12:29-34)

What was he lacking? "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Mt 11:27-30)

Elsewhere we can read how the disciple "Thomas said to Him [Jesus], "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:5-6) If you know the Way, you know the Word. If you know the Truth, you know the Word. If you know the Life, you know the Word. And believing the Word is knowing the Word, as you WILL be seeking Him with all your heart. Finally, if you believe in the Word and know the Word you will abide in the Word. As Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32)