



# The Living Word

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# **The Living Word**

**By David A. DePra**

***God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. (Heb. 1:1)***

This verse not only tells us that today God is speaking to us by His Son, but it says so in contrast to the other ways in which He spoke prior to the New Testament. And while this new way of speaking to us by Christ does include all the actual words of Christ that are recorded in the NT, God is not here saying that God speaks to us through the Bible. No. He says that God is

today speaking to us by His Son – the Living Christ. In short, Jesus Christ is the Living Word Whom God speaks – reveals – in His people.

Now, what does this mean? A look at the Greek helps. First of all, in the Greek, the phrase, “by the prophets,” is better translated, “in the prophets.” This shows that the message of the prophets was MORE than just what they spoke. Rather, it included what God was doing in their person, and in their lives. THEY were God’s message. We see that expressed in a number of cases where God told them to do this or that, or put them through this or that experience, as a living parable to His people. But just

as the phrase, "by the prophets," ought to be translated, "in the prophets," so it is with, "by His Son." It actually reads, "IN His Son." Indeed, there is no, "His," in the original. Thus, the entire phrase reads, "God....has in these last days spoken unto us by Son." In fact, it could read, "God is speaking unto us SON-WISE."

Just as God at one time spoke IN the prophets – as explained above – so since He became a man is God speaking to us IN HIS SON. How? Yes, by the words of Christ. And certainly by what Jesus accomplished in the Redemption. But more than even that, God speaks to us today IN

HIS SON in that Jesus Christ is the revelation of the Father. In other words, God speaks to us in His Son by the revelation of Jesus Christ to us.

As noted, some Greek commentators say that this phrase could be translated, "God is today speaking to us Son-wise." In other words, Jesus Himself is the language by which God speaks. The revelation of Christ to us is the means by which God conveys to us all Life and all Truth about Himself. Sure. Jesus said, "I am the Truth."

Now, again, it is easy to limit this revelation through Christ to what is written in scripture – easy to think that all you need

to do is read or memorize that -- and certainly nothing God ever says or does will ever contradict scripture. But the scripture itself tells us that God wants to continually reveal His Son, yes, TO us, but also IN US. In short, today God is speaking to His people through an on-going INWARD revelation of Jesus Christ. The Bible itself declares this:

***But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: (Gal. 1:15-16)***

***My little children, of whom I  
travail in birth again  
until Christ be formed in you.  
(Gal. 4:19)***

***(Paul) I cease not to give  
thanks for you, making  
mention of you in my  
prayers; That the God of our  
Lord Jesus Christ, the Father  
of glory, may give unto you  
the spirit of wisdom and  
revelation in the knowledge  
of him: The eyes of your  
understanding being  
enlightened; that ye may  
know what is the hope of his  
calling, and what the riches  
of the glory of his inheritance  
in the saints. (Eph. 1:15-18)***

Can we see that these  
passages are talking about an



INWARD revelation – something that is beyond merely an intellectual or emotional grasp of Christ? Sure. In fact, by contrast, we are directly told that unless God gives us an inward revelation of Christ – which is by the Spirit of God – we cannot hope to receive the things of God.

***But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (I Cor. 2:14)***

If within our natural makeup we have some sort of built in capacity to receive and understand the things of God –

indeed, a capacity to know Christ – then Paul could not make such a statement. But natural man cannot truly receive the things of God's Spirit. The, "best," that RELIGIOUS natural man can do is conjure up a Christ out of his religious imagination, thinking, bias, emotions, and background. This supposed Christ might even be glued together with some Bible verses. But this is not revelation. It is imagination – even if factual to a degree.

No one born in Adam has the true knowledge of God in Jesus Christ born in them. Neither is it possible for them to get it through any effort of their own. They cannot drag it down from heaven, and they cannot

get it through brain power. There is only one way to receive a revelation of Jesus: You have to receive Jesus Himself. In other words, you must be born from above. You have to receive that which originates from above – and is given from the outside of you INTO you: Jesus Christ by the Spirit of God. And then God must unfold Him to you by His Spirit. That is how you receive revelation – and it will be an INWARD revelation that comes out of the Christ who is in you into your life and understanding.

This is the Truth that sets us free – a personal, inward knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is the way in which God is today speaking to us IN HIS SON. And

yes, all of this will fully agree with what is written in scripture – indeed, the Bible itself tells us that God wants to reveal to us His Son in exactly this way.

## **Christ In You**

***Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Col. 1:27)***

“Christ in you,” or if you prefer, “you in Christ,” is the core of Christianity. You probably could not find a better one sentence definition of Christianity than, “Christ in you.” If you are saved it is because Christ, who is our life (Col. 3:4) is in you. If you are to be sanctified, then it is because Christ who is made unto us to be sanctification (I Cor.

1:30) is in you. If you have been declared righteous by God through faith, God is able to do so on the basis of Christ, who is made unto to be righteousness. (I Cor. 1:30) When Paul said, "Christ, who is our life," He meant exactly that: Christ is all to us unto God.

How does Christ dwell in us? Paul said, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him." (I Cor. 6:17) If you are joined to the Lord and are one spirit with Him then you are one in spirit with all that He is and all that He has done. That is a finished reality. But from that point on, the Christ with Whom you are one must be revealed to you. That is the speaking that

God does today to His people,  
and IN His people. God is  
revealing Christ to us in an  
inward way.

## **God's Direction**

Many of us are always asking  
God to speak to us – to give us  
information – to tell us what to  
do. In other words, we want  
God to LEAD us. Some of us  
actually believe that many of the  
thoughts we have each day, and  
even many of the feelings that  
we experience, are OF GOD –  
simply because the Spirit of God  
is in us. There has developed  
over the last hundred years a  
body of teaching as to how to be  
lead of God that has become so  
ingrained into the thinking of  
many Christians that few

question it. But while God can lead, and does lead – God's leadings need to be understood in the light of how God primarily speaks to His people today: IN HIS SON. Through a revelation unto the knowing of the Person of Christ.

For example, some Christians read, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:14) To many, this makes the, "leadings of God," central to Christianity. But if you look into the original, and take note of the context in which Paul wrote this statement, it is clear that it ought to read, "For as many as are governed by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The context is one of

whether we will be governed by the flesh or the Spirit. The context is NOT how to hear God's voice and follow His directions.

The Bible teaches that, yes, God can lead us today – He can give us directions or information if He sees we need it. But this is NOT the primary way in which God speaks to His people, or leads them. God today is speaking to us in His Son. He is revealing to us His Son in an inward way. If I am growing to know Jesus Christ in an inward way according to the Truth, then how many see that I am going to know God's direction and leadings more often than not? I won't need some special word from God, or for God to say



something to me in some miraculous way. No. I will KNOW Him. And if I know Him, I will be governed by knowing Him. That will cover most of what I need.

What a sorry Christian experience it would be if God simply talked to me and gave me marching orders as to what to do next – but I never knew Jesus. That is possible. Indeed, so many people today who say they hear from God don't seem to know Him. No. God is speaking to us today in His Son. If we know Christ we will most often know His will and His mind. We won't need a sign or wonder.

If you read the NT, you will not find hardly any teaching at all about, "how to be led by God." You will find a few instances in the lives of the disciples after Jesus ascended where they were told this or that through the Spirit. But by and large, and certainly in a growing way, what we see in the Bible, is a Christianity that is based in CHRIST IN US – and a growing revelation IN US of that Christ. Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God. HE is God's Word for us today.

## **Other Voices**

If God is today speaking to us in His Son, then this means that God is NOT speaking to us through other vehicles. We have

already noted that in Hebrews 1:1 this declaration of Jesus as God's revelation to us is CONTRASTED over and against other ways in which even God Himself spoke in times past. The general thought is that God is not only speaking to us through Christ today – the revelation of the Christ who is in us – but the general thought is that God is NOT speaking to us in any other way. Or, to put it another way, if Jesus Christ is the Truth – if, "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ, (Col. 2:3) then we are on shaky ground looking for revelation, Truth, wisdom, or knowledge, through any other means than that of knowing Jesus Christ. Indeed, read Colossians 2. Paul warns

Christians against doing so – it is a formula for deception.

Even the ministry of the NT saints is supposed to be unto the edification of Christ in believers. This means unto the building up of Christ in each of us. That is talking about the same revelation of Christ. Indeed, when Jesus spoke of the work of the Spirit of God after He ascended, He continually emphasized that the Spirit would reveal Him, testify to Him, and take what belongs to Him and reveal it to us. Thus, if that is the work of the Spirit of God – to speak to us from God in His Son – then again, we are on shaky ground trying to hear from God through any other means than that which

God has said He will speak: In Christ.

One of the primary, "other voices," with which all of us must contend is that of our own natural man. Our natural man will react to life. We will FEEL, and THINK, and REACT – and as Christian people, it is easy to assume that how we feel is reflective of how God feels. There are lots of people who think that because the Spirit of God is in them that how they feel is that Spirit of God indicating the Truth. This is dangerous and grave error.

It is here that we must see the meaning of what the Bible calls the, "dividing between soul and spirit:"

For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Heb. 4:12-13)

In Adam, all of us have a dead human spirit, feelings, emotions, a soul life, a brain, a will, and many other psychic capacities. But none of these are of the new birth. We are all born completely void of light and Truth. We have no life

whatsoever in us. That which is born of the flesh IS flesh, and flesh is all that we can ever be. But when we are born from above, Christ makes us one with Himself in Spirit. Our human spirit is then indwelt with Christ. From that point on, the possibility is there that we can grow to know Him, and that the natural part of our makeup can grow to be governed by Christ.

The above passage is a description of a person in whom Christ dwells. You will note that when we are joined to Christ in spirit that our natural makeup does not disappear. The old nature is not obliterated. No. Rather, we are joined to Christ in spirit despite it – all the while the old nature

remains. Indeed, rather than annihilate our flesh, the joining of ourselves to Christ creates a division or separation in each believer – a separation between our soul, or natural man, and the Christ who dwells in us through His Spirit. The saved person has two natures.

Note again what creates the separation between soul and spirit: Christ in us. Before we were in Christ there was ONLY US. There was only our natural makeup – there was no separation. There was no division. But once we are joined to Christ, there is introduced an entirely new life. This new life does not obliterate the old. Rather, Christ is added or joined to us while the old



remains. The presence and possibility is always there in the believer, even though we have to learn that the POWER of the flesh is broken through a greater power in Christ – that of death and resurrection.

Once we see this separation between soul and spirit we can understand the definition of the new creation in Christ Jesus. The new creation in Christ Jesus (see II Cor. 5:17) is the new man that is born out of the joining of ourselves to Christ. If I am IN CHRIST I am a new creation because I am joined to the One in whom there is new life. But again, this creates a separation – all that is within the union of myself with Christ is the new creation. But

all that is outside of that, that is, the old natural man, is not of the new creation. It remains of the old creation.

Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new...and all things *are* of God. (II Cor. 5:17)

Now, I've said all of that to get to a point. The point is this: God is speaking to us in His Son – He is speaking to us in the One with Whom we are joined. He is revealing Christ in us and to us. And because of that, Paul is able to say, "all things (of the new creation) are from out of God." In other words, the Christ with whom you

are one, and Who dwells in you, is the source of all that is of God. He is the source of Truth. He is the means by which God is speaking to you. Thus, by definition, YOU and YOUR old nature is not the means by which God is speaking. Your old nature cannot speak for God. Your natural man cannot tell you the Truth or reveal to you the Truth. Christ is the Truth. And He is the source of all from God – and He is IN YOU.

And yet how many of us look to OUR feelings, and to OUR emotions, and even to OUR human understanding, to try to figure out God, get direction from God, and cure what ails us. No. There is no Truth in us. The Cross has put all that

under death – all that is outside of the new creation in Christ is under death. Only that which is IN CHRIST is life and Truth.

From a practical standpoint, you can dismiss your feelings and reactions as the indicators and standard for Truth. No. Jesus Christ is the Truth. You have to know Him. It is possible to have feelings, fears, emotions, that are so strong and overwhelming – in a way that seems to impossible to deal with – and yet for them all to be in error. It really doesn't matter. These are not of Christ. He alone is God's revelation.

## **The Old Nature**

Man without Christ within is void of all life and all Truth. To natural man in Adam, this condition of utter and complete barrenness is NORMAL. It is all we have ever known. What makes this all the more daunting is the fact that we don't have any point of reference for Christ within – we don't know there is something, "other than," what is normal to us. Indeed, as we have already seen, natural man cannot receive the things of God – the reality of Christ within will seem absolutely ABNORMAL to natural man.

So what we have here are actually two different kinds of humanity – that which is born of

the flesh in Adam. And that which is born of the Spirit in Christ. The two are contrary to one another. Or, to put it another way, we have God's normal – the new creation in Christ Jesus – and we have man's normal – natural man in Adam. What is normal to those in Adam is abnormal to God. What is normal to God is abnormal to Adam. And yet talking about all of this, and even realizing it as a fact will, in itself do nothing. A person MUST be born again to even so much as get started.

Now, as noted earlier, we have TWO natures in us. We have all that is within the union of our human spirit with that of Jesus Christ. This is the new

creation in Christ. But we continue to have the old nature in Adam – all that is outside of that union with Christ. But again – all that is outside of our resurrection union in Christ is going to seem NORMAL to us. Before being born from above, it is all that we knew. We were at home in it. And all that is of Christ will seem, at times, utter ABNORMAL, if not impossible and beyond us. Thus, God must show us the TRUTH about the old nature. He must show us the Truth about Christ in us. But more than that – we must become changed and adjusted to Christ.

You will note that God must show us the TRUTH. Isn't this

what Jesus Christ promised would be the work of the Holy Spirit – to guide us into all Truth. What do we think He meant? That the Holy Spirit would merely dictate to us the meaning of Bible verses, or help us in our study of doctrine? No. Truth is infinitely more than that. God has to show us the TRUTH about our old nature. He will use many ways and means to do so. And as He shows us the Truth about our old nature – if we embrace and accept that Truth – and that is a BIG, “IF” – then we are going to see the utter corruption, death, and empty creature that we are in Adam.

Notice that I did not say that God was going to make us



weak, or condemn us, or put us down. No. All God has to do is show us the Truth. If you and I see the Truth about our old man in Adam, and open ourselves to it, we will desire to LOSE our lives into the hands of Jesus Christ. We will run to the Cross. We will cry out as Paul did, "O wretched man that I am!" This reaction will not be the result of religion. It will not be the result of my reading the Bible and simply accepting that I am a wretched man. No. I will see and experience the fact that I am. This is what happens when God shows us the Truth. The Truth will absolutely free us from all UNTRUTH, and expose all things – especially ourselves – for what they are before God.

How many realize that repentance of sin and the renunciation of the old life is the result of LIGHT given and received? Sure. Those things are not the result of practicing some religious command to repent. You have to see the Truth to repent. The Truth won't force you – you are free to reject the Truth about yourself in favor of your own righteousness. But if you will be open to God and face the Truth, the result will be repentance. As I said, if you see the Truth about your real condition in Adam, you will repent. You will want to lose your Adam life at the Cross. You will want deliverance. You will fall to your knees and know that the only

hope that you have is the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

So many of us are stumbled by the failure and deficiencies of our old nature in Adam. We try to live out the Christian life by presenting to God an emotional life and a soul life that we think represents a Christian. We try to FEEL like we believe. We try to make ourselves behave. Yet without realizing it, we are actually trying to make our natural man righteous. We might deny it, but we are doing exactly that. We are trying to grab ahold of ourselves and organize ourselves emotionally and spiritually and present ourselves to God in a way that we think He will affirm. We are actually trying to produce from

out of ourselves what we think will please God – because we probably think we are supposed to. But this is ALL DECEPTION. God will never listen this nonsense.

Have you ever fallen for the lie that if you feel good about yourself that this must surely mean that God feels good about you? Or that if you feel bad about yourself, that surely God is displeased with you? We may base these things on outward works, or maybe we base how we feel about ourselves on the inward life. Maybe, if have no longer think that we can please God with our works – maybe we try to, “generate faith,” up to God and try to please Him that way. Call it what you want, but

can we seek that this is all nothing more than being under a form of law? It may not sound legal – but we are trying to produce from OUT OF OURSELVES what we think will please God. This again, is deception.

The fact is, if you and I were able to produce out of ourselves the most wonderful product of works – both inward and outward – and get to the point where we were totally convinced that God was pleased with us because of this, we would be DECEIVED. Even if we were able to do that – and it is, of course, impossible – but even if we were able to do it – God would say to us, “You are producing all of these supposedly wonderful

things from out of yourself. Yet I have already told you that you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. I don't base my relationship with you on anything about you, good or bad, but only upon the Christ who is one with you in spirit. Abide in Him by faith. That is all I desire."

Again, because we are so at home with natural man, and this is NORMAL to us, even after we are saved we will easily believe that natural man is the new creation. We won't realize, of course, our mistake. We will try to make natural man act like a Christian because we are supposed to – to us, natural man IS the new creation. Most of us think that Christianity is a

matter of God ACTING UPON US by His Spirit and transforming natural man into a Christian, or enabling natural man to act like a Christian, or we think that God wants to make natural man look like Jesus. Nope. This is all in the wrong realm, the wrong creation, and is doomed to failure. Again, it is deception.

Christianity is Christ in us. The work of the Spirit of God is to form Christ in us, to unfold Christ to us, and then form us together with Christ. The result will impact natural man. But natural man is not made to look like Jesus. Rather, Christ is to be manifested THROUGH us. There is a big difference.

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (II Cor. 4:10-11)

Here we see that rather than be made to LOOK LIKE JESUS, our natural man is to be under the work of the Cross – the flesh is under death. But what emerges is not a better flesh or natural man. No. What emerges if the flesh is under the work of the Cross is the life of Jesus Christ THROUGH each person.



It is a tremendous thing for a Christian to come into a realization of the Christ who dwells within them! To see that everything God is doing is not only based upon Christ, but that all things that are of the new creation are OUT FROM this very same Christ. If we see HIM – and come into a realization and knowledge of Him – we will begin to discover what the Bible means by the separation of soul and spirit. We will understand what Paul meant when He cried, “I travail until Christ be formed in you!” (Gal. 4:19) The word, “formed,” means to inwardly realize and express.

If Christ is formed in me, then the fact that God is today speaking to us in His Son

becomes a living and ever abiding reality. To know Christ is to know the fullness of God's message to us. God is speaking to us in His Son – He is speaking Son-wise.

## **The Evidence of God**

It would seem that we spend much time and energy either looking for evidence in our natural man, or creating an evidence in our natural man, that we are truly born again; that we are truly Christian. We do this because, again, we think we are supposed to – we think that natural man IS the new creation. Thus, we try to live from out of natural man, and we try to live based upon the flesh. And the reason we make

this mistake is that we have not come into a full realization of Jesus Christ. Come into a realization of Christ and you will see natural man for what it is – broken down and under the Cross. And your faith will shift from being based on you over to being based upon the Christ who dwells in you.

If we cannot find evidence in our natural selves of new life, we may doubt our Christianity. Or, if we do find think we have found evidence in ourselves, we probably think this means we are a good Christian. But God says there is no evidence in us – and that includes works or condition. THE EVIDENCE of

Christianity is Jesus Christ Himself – Christ in us.

***If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (I John 5:9-11)***

Again, God is speaking to us in His Son. When we receive Christ, we have received THE EVIDENCE of God. He is an

evidence that may be obscured at first by the operation of our old nature. But as Christ is formed in us, He will become more and more the evidence or witness of God in us.

Notice that is Christ in us is the evidence of God that we, our natural man, is not the evidence of God. The natural man is not a true witness of God – the natural and the flesh is, in fact, contrary to God. Such is the folly of mistaking the natural man for the new creation in Christ.

God is seeking to get us to the point where we can leave our natural man alone into His hands. Indeed, as noted earlier, if we actually see the Truth

about ourselves, we will realize that there is nothing we can do BUT leave ourselves alone. Yet this is freedom. We can stop trying to fix up our natural man and start abiding in Christ for all life.

## **The Living Word**

God is speaking to us Son-wise. He wants His revelation of Jesus Christ to come to govern us. This is not about intellectual knowledge. It is about spiritual knowledge that sets a person free to be able to walk according to the Truth.

For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the

knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Col. 1:9-10)