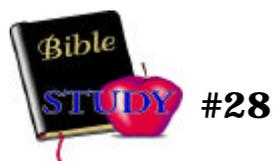


## Journey Into God's Word



I Chronicles 1-9

Ezekiel 25-32

II Corinthians 1-13

My Dear Friends,

Do you have any idea what it means to be in Christ Jesus? II Cor. 5:17 says, "If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" You repent of your sins and commit your life to Jesus; living daily under His direction is what it means to be in Christ Jesus. As a result you are not just reformed, rehabilitated or reeducated, but you are recreated (a new creation) living in union with Jesus Christ. "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." (Col. 2:6,7) The time has come to stop wavering between Jesus and the world. "I tell you now is the time of God's favor, now is the Day of Salvation." (II Cor. 6:3) Live in the reality of Salvation and discover what it means to be a recreated, new creation in Christ Jesus.

Living in the reality of being a new creation means God, "the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over in our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows." (II Cor. 1:3-5) But there is more. Have you truly been saved? Then live like it. Let the love and comfort of Christ flow through you into the lives of the poor, fatherless, homeless and hurting. Stop letting fear, disappointment and discouragement defeat you. Remember, "it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come." (II Cor. 1:21,22)

Let's take a look at some of the dynamic individuals mentioned in I Chronicles 1-9 who dared to believe in the fact that God loved them and had a plan for their lives. In I Chron. 1:4 we see Noah mentioned. His life story is told in Genesis 6-9. From Noah's life of faith, we learn that great rewards come from obeying God. In I Chron. 1:27 Abraham is listed. This man, whose steps of faith

are described in Genesis 11:26-25:10 showed us that it is by faith that one is made right with God. Now please go on to describe what can be learned from the lives of others that are mentioned in I Chronicles. Individuals like Isaac, I Chron. 1:28 (his life story is found in Genesis 21-35); Jacob, I Chron. 2:1 (whose life is described in Genesis 25:20-50:13); Boaz, I Chron. 2:12 (see the book of Ruth); Jesse, I Chron. 2:13, (I Sam.16); David, I Chron. 2:15, (The books of I and II Samuel); Solomon, I Chron. 3:5 (I Kings 1-11); Aaron, I Chron. 6:3, (Exodus 4-Numbers 20); Joshua, I Chron. 7:27, (The book of Joshua); Jonathan, I Chron. 8:32, (I Samuel 14-31). The lives of each one of the above had a direct impact because they believed God. Now it's up to us. "Since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God."(II Cor. 4:1)

The time has come for us to arise and believe God's word! We must renounce the god of this age who blinds the minds of those who refuse to believe the Word of God. As a result, "they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness, made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.'" (II Cor. 4:4,6,7) If you believe this there is no limit to what God can do through you. Sure, we encounter difficulties but "we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen, is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."(II Cor. 4:16-18) What does this mean to you personally? When you go through tough times, are you going to be able to concentrate on experiencing the inner strength that Ephesians 3:16-19 describes? Remember we live by faith, not by sight." (II Cor. 5:6) "In the power of God: with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left;"(II Cor. 6:7) "For we are the temple of the Living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them and I will be their God, and they will be my people.'" (II Cor. 6:16) As a result of the fact we are a new creation through Christ Jesus we will desire to "purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God."(II Cor. 7:1) Please study Ezekiel 25-32 noting what judgment came upon those nations which did not purify themselves and instead with pride in their own abilities turned against God.

Growing in God through Jesus Christ means that, "just as you excel in

everything in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.”(II Cor. 8:7)  
 Remember “God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” (II Cor. 9:7,8) As a new creation, alive in Christ Jesus, we are now abounding in God’s grace and as a result we should abound in every good work. There are so many opportunities to serve. According to II Cor. 9:12-14 what are the results of such service?

Remember, by being in Christ we are “a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (II Cor. 5:17) That verse is our theme here at the New Life Evangelistic Center. As a community, “though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have the divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” (II Cor. 10:3-5) What does this mean to you personally in the midst of your daily struggles? How are you able to use this divine power to demolish strongholds? What are these strongholds that are hindering you in your walk and work in the Lord? How is Christ helping you to overcome them? Perhaps you have prayed earnestly for something, but have not yet seen the answer. Don’t give up, Paul encountered the same situation. He tells us, “there was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger for Satan, to torment me. Three times pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness!’” (II Cor. 12:7-9) What is your reaction to this statement? Paul’s reaction was, “for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (II Cor. 12:10)

Now you are challenged to, “examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you – unless of course you fail the test?”(II Cor. 13:5) Each day is a test. Don’t give up. Continue to trust God’s love for you. “For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that One died for all and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live shall no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and was raised again.” (II Cor. 5:14)

Christ is Risen. “Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of live and peace will be with you.”(II Cor. 13:11) Let

us continue to live daily in the reality of the resurrection. This week please join me in reading I Chronicles 10-29, Ezekiel 33-48, I Thessalonians 1-5.

Have a blessed week. “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”(II Cor. 13:14)

Yours in Christ service,

Larry Rice