

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtminc.org Today's Date: April 19, 2020

Redeemed From Darkness, Sent to Bring Light to the Darkest Places

by Dan Trygg

“Seeing this in advance, [David] spoke concerning the resurrection of the Messiah: He was not left in Hades, and His flesh did not experience decay.³² This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.³³ Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear...³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Acts 2:31-33,36

“...since the day we heard of [your faith], we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,¹⁰ so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;¹¹ strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.¹³ For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:9-14

When Peter explained the phenomenon of the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, he mentioned how David had prophesied of the resurrection. He had said, “You will not abandon my soul in Hades, nor let Your Holy One experience decay.” Peter pointed out that David could not have been speaking about himself, because he *did* die, and his body *did* decay. In fact, his tomb was still with them in that day. No. Peter said that because he was a prophet, David was speaking about someone else, his descendant, the Messiah. Peter pointed out that because Jesus was risen from the dead, He was *not* abandoned in Hades (Yes, He *went to* Hades between His crucifixion and resurrection – 1 Pet. 3:18-20; 4:6; Rom. 10:7; Eph. 4:8,9), and His body did *not* have time to decay. Peter and the rest of the group with Him were witnesses of Jesus’ bodily resurrection. God had raised Him from the dead, and when He ascended into heaven, He was seated at the right hand of God the Almighty. At that time, Jesus received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, which He then poured out on His redeemed people. It was *this* that caused the speaking in tongues, and enabled everyone to hear the great things of God in their own language. Peter’s conclusion was that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ. *He was the anointed King of Israel, the promised Christ or Messiah.*

Jesus was much more than that, however. He was much more than a king of some relatively backwoods minor country at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. He was more than a king, in distinction from other earthly kings or civil rulers. He was the King of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Dan. 2:34,35,44,45). His kingdom was like a stone that was cut out of a mountain without any hands or tools, ...a kingdom that will never be destroyed, ...a kingdom that will crush and displace all the other world kingdoms, and will fill the earth. It would start out small, ...as a stone examined and rejected by the “builders” (Matt. 21:42-44; Act. 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7), which would become the chief cornerstone of a kingdom that will grow, expand and fill the world. *More than a political and material kingdom however, it will be a spiritual kingdom.* It is not set so much against the political structures of this world, as it is in opposition to the spiritual powers behind them. *It is a kingdom of light in the midst of a dark age. It is the kingdom of the Son of God, set in opposition to the kingdom and authority of darkness, the reign and rule of Satan.*

Jesus had already spoken of that to the disciples. In Matthew 16:13-19, about a year earlier, Jesus had taken His 12 disciples to Caesarea Philippi, the headwaters of the Jordan river at the foot of Mount Hermon. It was an eerie place. There was a cave cut into the cliff, and the waters gushed out from within that cave. *It was a place of pagan worship.* The cave had been widened and turned into a worship center. There were temples there, and many idols and shrines cut into niches in the cliff or scattered all around. In the pre-exilic times, Israel had worshiped Baal in that place. Later, it became a site dedicated to the Greek god, Pan. *The sacrifices and worship offered there centered around fertility and lust. There was cult prostitution, and sexual immorality was celebrated with impunity,* ...even sexual activity with goats, since Pan himself was half-goat and was the god of unbridled lust and immorality. *The cave was the focal point,* because it was the source of life-giving water, gushing right out from the mountain. *The pagans thought of it as the entrance to the underworld itself.* They thought that the gods returned to live under the mountain in the winter, and this cave was the entry to their abode. *These practices would have been going on at the very time Jesus and His disciples visited that place. They would have seen the many people offering sacrifices to their idols, calling out their petitions before the cave, the gate to the underworld.* They would have seen them going into the temples and tents where they engaged in lude acts. *To a godly Jew, it was a vile, disgusting place. But Jesus brought his disciples there. This was the setting where He asked them who people*

said that He was. They said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” Then He asked them, “Who do you say that I am?” There, surrounded by all those lifeless, vain statues and graven images, Peter boldly declared, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!” Jesus commended him for that realization and confession. “Blessed are you, Simon, son of John, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father in heaven.” He went on to say, “And I also say to you that you are Peter (*petros* – a masculine noun, meaning “boulder, detached rock”) and upon this rock (*petra* – a feminine noun, meaning “bedrock”) I will build My called-out people (*ekklēsia* – ones called out for a purpose, congregation, caucus, gathered-people), and the gates of Hades shall not be strong against it, ...or prevail or be dominant against it.” The obvious thing in the language is that Peter is *not* the rock, ...**the realization and confession are what was significant**. Because Peter had come to see this truth, he was like a first building block of an assembly of people, called-out to follow and serve Jesus as the Christ, the King. Again, do not miss the significance of where they were standing. They were standing opposite of all the deception, corruption, ignorance and immorality of the powers of darkness. They were overlooking the proverbial “gates of Hades”, ...and Jesus said that **“the gates of Hades will not, ...will not..., be strong against My called-out people.” It was Jesus’ purpose to point out who the enemy was, and to focus His people not on a fight over topography, but over the hearts and souls of people**. Jesus’ kingdom-people are to come against the lies, deception, false beliefs, degradation and bondage of the kingdom of darkness, the false gods and demonic powers that hold people captive to lies and futility. We are not to shrink back in fear, or in disgust. **Jesus’ clear purpose is that His people are going to advance with the message that Jesus is the true King, and He will set free those held in bondage.**

That was certainly a powerful word picture at the time, one not easily forgotten. But now, a year later, Jesus Himself had died and **had gone to Hades, ...and Death and Hades could not hold Him!** He arose from the dead. He arose from the grave. He arose triumphant over the powers of darkness, deception and bondage. He defeated the devil. He *proved* that Hades was not able to prevail over or dominate HIM. **No wonder that Peter boldly proclaimed, “Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ – this Jesus whom you crucified.”** Here Peter is again proclaiming the *same revelation* he had confessed a year before. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. *This* is the bedrock, the truth to which Jesus will call out His people. And, as Peter proclaimed this message, **people were cut to the heart, and asked, “What shall we do?” Peter told them to change their perception, believe and be baptized in the name of Jesus the Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, and they would also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father.** Over 3,000 people received this word, and were added to the called-out company of believers, the church.

The story does NOT end there. In fact, that is only the beginning! We read next of the ongoing discipleship training that these new converts were participating in. They were meeting daily in the temple courts, after the afternoon/evening sacrifice, ...then they would meet as small gatherings in homes for teaching, sharing, eating together, and prayer. **Through these regular investments of time, they grew strong in faith, and they learned how to minister to one another. Soon that spilled over into ministering to other people,** who were not part of their little group, and these new followers of Jesus began to share what they were learning and experiencing with other family members, friends and acquaintances. They had favor with people, and the Lord was adding to their numbers daily.

Fast forward about 30 years to the church at Colossae. Paul had never been there, but he had been indirectly responsible for the church that was initiated there. During the three years he was at Ephesus, he was teaching daily in a rented school, and apparently attracted significant numbers of people. Luke records that “all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord” (Acts 19:9,10). Paul’s friend, Epaphras, told him of the church, and about some of the challenges they were dealing with (Col. 1:1-8). Paul wrote a letter to them to offer guidance and encouragement. In the first chapter, he mentions that **he had been praying for them, ever since he heard of them.** He was asking that they would be filled with true knowledge of God’s will with all spiritual skill and understanding (putting-the-pieces-together), so that they may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the experiential knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power to become steady, patient and joyously thankful to God, who has qualified us or made us sufficient to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

That is a lot. Go back and read through that. Paul was praying this for them. Clearly, he did *not* think it was going to happen automatically. **It requires prayer, skill, discernment, application, and service to consistently experience God at work in your life.** These experiences, over time, can create stability and steadiness, and a joyful heart that can really appreciate that God has made us His own, and has so much for us. And then, Paul puts it all into context, against the backdrop of these two kingdoms. **We were under the authority and control of the kingdom of darkness, BUT Christ drew us to Himself and transferred us into His kingdom, by means of redemption** (purchasing our *freedom* through His own death) and the forgiveness of sin. **Now we are part of His called-out company. C’mon, we have a job to do. We need to get established and sturdy, so we can do our part in the work of the kingdom.**