Spot On #21

👉Restoring the Hebraic understanding of God's Word.
👉Reemphasizing obedience-based loving trust in our Lord Jesus.
👉Reaffirming the way of our Lord that glorifies our heavenly Father.

Figuratively, the center of the bullseye is the point around which everything else revolves.

A Life Revolving Around The Lordship Of Jesus Is An Empowered Life!

In Spot On #20 we wrote that each of God's commands that you apply to your life is another step to spiritual maturity – both in guiding your way of life in our Father's will and in conforming your character to that of our Lord Jesus. Your resolute commitment to put God's commands into practice as your way of life in grateful love for Jesus is an essential identifier of the **Lordship-committed**. But take note: Living your life under the Lordship of Jesus entails far more than just obeying God's commands. It's a life of being empowered by the Holy Spirit!

> Throughout both Testaments the Holy Spirit empowers those whom our Lord uses to serve His purposes. And today, under the Lordship of Jesus, an empowered life enables you to be our Lord's effective gift in others' lives through the *spiritual division of labor* that's required to extend His Kingdom.

Over the centuries anti-Semitic theologians eradicated the true nature of the Lordship of Jesus in the life of His followers. You may be familiar with some of their restrictive lies: •Jesus' primary (and even only) purpose is to be a Savior providing a free ticket into heaven; •"getting saved" and trying to be a "good Christian" is the highest priority Jesus has for His people; •a "good Christian" reads and studies the Bible like an academic textbook of historic facts. But wait. From the limited framework of these boxed-in perceptions, do you see any commitment to the Lordship of Jesus in actually using God's Word as an Operations Manual for your life? A military Operations Manual specifically directs your actions to effectively fulfill your mission. And God's Operations Manual directs you into how to serve our Lord Jesus and please our Father in doing His will. It's indispensable for your effective participation in Kingdom living.

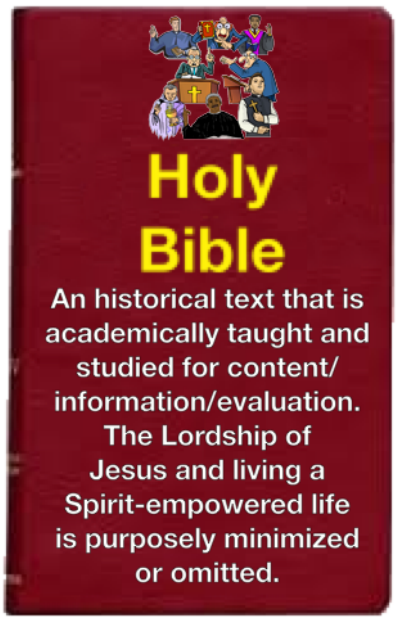
Lordship-committed

The Bible is our Lord's Operations Manual!

📌The *genuinely* born again and Lordship-committed view the Bible as our Lord's "Operations Manual" for their way of life. It specifically prescribes how He'd have them live in obedient trust. Upon entering the New Covenant, their life is in union with our heavenly Father, purposing by grace to fulfill His will to His glory under the Lordship of Jesus.

📌When they embrace the New Covenant, they are baptized with the Holy Spirit. He apportions specific gifting to them with the spiritual power to do their part in mutually fulfilling our Lord's purposes for them in His Kingdom.

Religiously-mired



"...be transformed by the renewing of your mind, <u>that you may prove</u> what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2).

The Hebraic foundations, including walking in love-grounded, obedient trust as a way of life, were disregarded for far too long. But now they are being restored in our lifetime.

✅ With their restoration is the divine criterion of Jesus being LORD of all who claim to belong to Him.

✅ Under Jesus' Lordship, His followers serve Him with the spiritual power provided by His Spirit.

To live in the Lordship of Jesus, it's paramount that we free ourselves from all vestiges of being religiously-mired and viewing Scripture academically like a historical textbook. The Bible in itself doesn't transform you. But the same Holy Spirit Who inspired its writers is also the Person you need to transform your mind. From beginning to end the Bible speaks of Spirit power, from Creation in Genesis 1 to showing John the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:10.

It's with this breadth of understanding which the Bible discloses about the Holy Spirit that <u>the Lordship-committed turn inwardly to His divine presence</u>. For the *genuinely* born again this verse is a living reality: "If we <u>live by the Spirit</u>, let us also <u>walk in the Spirit</u>" (Galatians 5:25). The Bible, our "Operations Manual," tells us that our God repeatedly uses people and situations <u>to show Himself all-powerful</u>. Why shouldn't He, because He is! When you remember the amazing miracles He did on behalf of the enslaved Hebrews to free them from Egypt, remember one of His goals: "...that I might <u>show you My power</u> and that <u>My name might be proclaimed in all the earth</u>" (Exodus 9:16).

And, it was on Mount Carmel that Elijah victoriously faced down the Jezebel-sanctioned prophets of Baal as the indecisive Israelites looked on. God's prophet asked the Israelites the same question that Christians today need to answer when it comes to either resolutely serving our Lord with the Holy Spirit's power ***or*** being lackadaisical like the religiously-mired:

"How long will you waver between two opinions?" (1Kings 18:21).

Throughout the Newer Testament the Holy Spirit's power is emphasized as the avenue to making known our God, the one true God of *power* and *love*. Jesus was well aware that His followers would have to engage in power encounters with demons for the souls of mankind. That's why before His ascension He told His disciples (and all of us who would be counted as His own), "For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be <u>baptized with the Holy Spirit</u>" (Acts 1:5; see also Acts 19:1-6). Our Lord Jesus went on to promise, "But <u>you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you</u>; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8; see also Acts 2).

When Paul began persecuting the Way in Jerusalem, Philip headed to Samaria to bring the Good News of Christ to them (Acts 8). As a man who was known to be "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom", Philip had been chosen by the disciples in Jerusalem to help with the ministry to widows. Through word and deed the Spirit then empowered Philip to prepare the Samaritans to follow Jesus. "When the crowds <u>heard Philip and saw the signs he performed</u>, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed" (Acts 8:6,7). Not long after, Peter and John came to Samaria and laid hands on the new believers so they would receive the Holy Spirit.

Paul himself had a power encounter with our Lord Jesus on his way to Damascus to persecute Jesus' followers (Acts 9:1-18) Later, as he was fulfilling his ministry to the Gentiles, the apostle would proclaim, "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but <u>with a demonstration of the Spirit's power</u>, so that your faith might not rest on hu-

man wisdom, but on God's power" (1Corinthians 2:4,5). Paul would also encourage the Lordship-committed, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power." (1Corinthians 4:20). And to the Thessalonians Paul could attest, "because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction" (1Thessalonians 1:5).

Our Lord sent His earliest followers forth to evangelize the world around them with spiritual power as they spoke the message of Christ. If you pursue for yourself why spiritual power is ignored or even denied by religious leaders, you'll run into Nicolaitan domination as the reason Christianity has gone on for centuries devoid of the power of the Spirit and silent about Him. Nicolaitanism relies on adherents being religiously mired in complacent spiritual passivity!

Two Distinct Yet Incompatible Approaches

Evangelism By The Lordship-Committed

The Lordship-committed deeply yearn for the Person of our Lord Jesus and the ways of His Kingship in their lives to be made known to an unbelieving world (Acts 28:31). Living in the manner that the Bible, their Operations Manual, prescribes, they are keenly aware that they've been entrusted with spiritual power as they represent Jesus to a world which relies on humanism and scientific proof. Through such simple actions as praying for and laying hands on an unbeliever (Acts 28:7-9) they reveal a God of power who delights in working through those who love and trust Him. And that power includes confronting demons who attempt to interfere with Father's will being done: these unclean spirits are evicted in the Name of Jesus (Luke 10:17; Acts 16:16-18; 2Corinthians 10:3-5).

Unbelievers who experience the power of our Lord Jesus need no convincing that He is real. You have their attention! They are more open to hear about their own sin nature and what our Lord Jesus has done for them on the cross and their need to repent in order to be reconciled with Father God. Some may refuse to repent and enter into the Lordship of Jesus. But those who do respond to Father drawing them as they first experience the power of our Lord Jesus perceive Him with grateful awe and loving trust as they serve under His Lordship.

Evangelism By The Religiously Mired

People who are religiously mired view Jesus solely through the historical text of the Bible. They teach the Bible to others as factual content. But intentionally or out of unbelief, they deny the importance of the spiritual power which our Lord Jesus promises His own. Unbelievers are told from the Bible text what our Lord Jesus did on their behalf. But too often the gospel is shared more as "fire insurance —"get saved and avoid hell." Or they are told to "ask Jesus into your heart" and they are guaranteed eternal bliss no matter how they choose to spend the rest of their earthly existence. In neither scenario is there an awesome and grateful regard for the holy and just God who lovingly calls His own to a new life of obedient trust. As a result, as with the parable of the different soil types (Mark 4), many "Christians" who agreed in prayer with certain Bible verses deny Jesus later when the going gets difficult or interferes with their own pursuits and worldly values.

One of our great sorrows over the years in which we have loved and served our Lord is to see the woeful effects of false gospels which peddle conversion as fire insurance and a ticket to heaven. The most common of these easy-sell gospels promise an inquirer, "Once 'saved', always 'saved'." For a few centuries now, attendees at crusades both here and abroad have gone forward to be guaranteed acceptance into heaven no matter how they live afterward IF they repeat a prayer about Jesus. What's woeful about that vastly misleading approach? Numerous fol-

lowup surveys of people who were evangelized this way reveal that less than 10% are "Christians" a year later. The 90% who fell away are placed in the camp that "they were never really saved in the first place". Or in even greater error are people (often churched parents whose offspring now want nothing to do with God) who sigh complacently, "At least they're saved!"

True Doctrine Takes Everything Into Consideration!

When you ascribe to any doctrine, it must be substantiated by all the pertinent passages that apply to it. The problem with the "once saved, always saved" fraud is that it completely eliminates key warnings found in God's Word about those who do "fall away" from whatever they had believed about a relationship with Christ:

- "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned" (Hebrews 6:4-8).

- "For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them" (2 Peter 2:20,21).

- "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth" (1John 1:5,6).

Our Lord's first Hebraic followers who embraced the New Covenant fully understood the Scriptural truth that being *genuinely* born again is just the beginning of your journey ***to*** your salvation. En route to your salvation those who love and serve our Lord Jesus know the sequence of representing Him rightly to a sinful and desperately needy world: first His power, and then the wisdom of His Word. This divine sequence wasn't just for Paul. It applies for all the Lordship-committed:

"[Our] message and [our] preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power" (1Corinthians 2:4,5).

If you hold dearly to the Word of God, then live what it promises you. Try this. When you hear an unbeliever speaking about a problem they're facing, step up and ask them if you could pray for them — right then and there! Don't be cowardly. Put your hand on them as you pray in the mighty name of Jesus. Introduce them to Jesus through His power as you trust that Father will hear and answer your prayer. This may sound like a spiritual baby step. But it's a big step if you haven't regularly released the power of Jesus through your prayers of trust! You'll be as much in awe of Him as the person you prayed for.

Our Lord's invitation to His first followers is being extended to each of us today, **"Come, follow Me."**

Mike & Sue