

Messages From The Epistles

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Introduction from the Book of Acts

The Roman Empire had two predominant religions before Christ's atoning sacrifice.

Judaism,

The Jews worshiped a living God with commands to be obeyed and acts to be performed. By obeying their God's commands and performing acts, future forgiveness and salvation was earned.

Paganism,

The Pagan gods were either mythology or man-made gods, they could not speak so there were no commands. Their acts of worship focused on satisfying sensual desires.

Temples were established with male and female prostitutes. Emperor Domitian titled himself as "God of the Earth" insisting he be acclaimed as such refusal resulted in persecution.

The book of Acts begins with the ascension of Christ back to Heaven to be with "The Father". Fifty days later on Pentecost Christ poured out His Spirit on all people not just the Jews. Because it was Pentecost there were in Jerusalem Jews, from all over the Roman Empire. The disciples were together in Jerusalem as Jesus had instructed.

"Suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting." Upon hearing the mighty sound, the Jews rushed to the sight where the disciples were. (Acts 2:2)

"Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. The prophet Joel prophesied 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'" (Acts 2:14-17)

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it." (Acts 2:22-24) David "seeing this before spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the

right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing." (Acts 2:31-33)

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:36-39)

The word and in the phrase repent and be baptized is from the Greek word kai" a connecting word. It connects repent and baptism together. Another Greek word de also translated "and" separates two words rather than combining them.

"The word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people." Some "disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking." So, they brought in "false witnesses who stated "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law." (Acts

6:7-10, 13) Stephen recounted the history and prophecies of the Jews about Christ to the assembled leaders of the Jews. He then asked "Which of the prophets did not your fathers' persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it. Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him." And Saul, later to be known as Paul, approved of his execution. (Acts 7:52-55) For fear of losing their power and position the religious leaders begin to persecute Christians immediately.

"There arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ." "But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord went on his way, he approached

Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' And he said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.'" (Acts 9:1, 3-7) The Lord said to Ananias, "'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.' So, Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight

and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For some days he was

with the disciples at Damascus. And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." (Acts 9:15-20)

"Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year, they met with the church and taught a great many people." While they "were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" (Acts 11:25-26 ... 13:2) Paul began traveling throughout the cities in Asia Minor proclaiming Christ. He wrote letters to Christians in several of these cities encouraging them to remain faithful and live righteously.

In the book of Romans, Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by His resurrection.

The Gospel is the life, atoning sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth. This Gospel is the power of God for salvation.

The righteous live by faith while the life of the ungodly brings God's wrath. God's eternal power can be perceived by the complexity of His creation.

The ungodly in their futile thinking replace the immortal God with images man created and by myths.

The unrighteous are evil, malicious, covetous, and envious and approve of those who practice ungodly acts.

A Christian's life must reflect God otherwise his message is void.

The righteousness of God is manifested by acts of Christians based on faith in Christ and justified by His Grace.

God's love is now in Christians through the Holy Spirit which He gave to those justified, redeemed, and reconciled by Christ's Blood.

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and in this way, death came to all men, because all sinned." (Romans 5:12)

"And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden,

but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (Gen 2:16-17)

But eternal Life became available through Christ's atoning sacrifice by man's trust and obedience to His commands.

"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that,

just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (6:3-4)

A former Christian's sinful life died and was buried in Christ's blood through baptism. Their former religious beliefs, and traditions, are not to be part of their new spiritual life in Christ. This relationship can be broken by entering into a relationship with Satan through sinful acts which brings spiritual death unless forgiven by seeking

forgiveness and returning to Christ. This is just like a marriage covenant that is dissolved by unfaithfulness to the marriage covenant. Unfaithfulness to the covenant with God or spouse is adultery.

The covenant or "law" given by God through Moses, ceased to exist when Christ was nailed to the cross and resurrected back to life. In its place, God established a new and better covenant through His Son with all who put their faith, trust, and obedience in Christ.

God put the Holy Spirit in those He raised from their baptism in Christ's blood, and constantly searches the inner man's heart and mind as He communicates with God.

The will of God will be accomplished by those who love Him and are maturing by conforming to His image.

God allows people with unique dispositions, good or evil, to come to power to accomplish His purpose and to show His power.

Those who confess Christ as God in the human body of Jesus of Nazareth who God resurrected from the grave will be saved if their faith produces the action of obedience.

The Gospel is God's call for obedience to those who open their heart.

God regrets that some of His people become contrary and fall away, but they can be restored if they return to Him seeking forgiveness, otherwise, they will be lost eternally.

A living sacrifice by a Christian is a life that does not conform to a worldly life even when tested.

The Church Christ built is like the human body as both have many parts all functioning together but performing different tasks. Some of the people functions in His Church are:

- Delivering His message of forgiveness

- Teaching how to live righteous lives

- Encouraging faithfulness

- Supplying the needs of those in destitute conditions

- Leading and training others to mature into the likeness of God

- Showing mercy in love

Christians are to:

- Live in peace.

- Avoid confrontations.

Not quarrel, fuss and fight.

Not defy authority.

Pay obligations timely.

Not passing judgment on a brother's interpretation of scripture that does not agree with your understanding. But study with him.

Avoid those whose interpretation of some teaching is the only possible correct one and

who insist their understanding must be accepted by every Christian everywhere and at all times.

The next book is 1st Corinthians.

Divisions in the local congregation are created by Christians following an individual or his

teaching. Therefore, the Body of Christ is not a united functioning body of Christians. Following a teacher or preacher does not glorify God or Christ.

To those in Christ's church, Christ is the power and wisdom of God. Not many who accept Christ

are rich and powerful. They may be lacking in this world's goods and education, but are rich in faith.

The gospel of Christ should be proclaimed in simplicity and humility, not by an orator with lofty words.

God put the Spirit in those resurrected from the burial of baptism. This Spirit knows your thoughts and is constantly communicating with God.

Division and jealousy within the church body prevents growth. They are unable to understand instructions on how to mature into God's likeness.

The gospel foundation is laid first by someone. Then others teach and equip God's "new creation" how to live pleasing to Him.

Christ's servants are to be faithful to Him. They are not to judge the hearts of fellow Christians.

Christian teachers must instruct others about the teachings of Christ and His apostles.

Those proclaiming the gospel are not to be a burden on those being taught, even if working at a secular job becomes necessary.

A Christian's ungodly actions that are unacceptable by the community must never be

condoned. Any such action when ignored by the church body indicates approval. It is their responsibility to confront and correct the individual. But, if the brother does not change, they are not to fellowship him in order to encourage his repentance and return to Christ.

Grievances and disagreements among Christians are to be settled by the church body, not in a court of unbelievers.

It is better for one to be defrauded by a brother than be judged by non-Christians, to do so causes ridicule and dishonors Christ.

The sexually immoral, greedy, marriage covenant breakers and evil-doers will not enter Heaven.

Everything that is good and acceptable, may not be helpful.

Do not allow some secular action to dominate your life.

Living with someone in a marriage relationship but not joined together in marriage is immoral.

Neither married spouse should withhold themselves from fulfilling fleshly passions – sex, affection, companionship, and love.

In times of stress or persecution, it is better not to marry, which can create more stress.

Those married are not to separate, but if separation occurs, they are to remain unmarried or be reconciled.

Do not divorce an unbelieving spouse if they desire or are willing to remain faithful in marriage.

If one not married is unable to control their fleshly passion, it is best to marry than lust or become sexually immoral.

A widowed Christian, man or woman, should not marry an unbeliever.

Proclaimers of the Gospel should be compensated by other Christians for their work as servants of Christ.

When the Israelites departed from their Egyptian bondage, they passed through water, and under God's cloud, they became children of God under a covenant given by God through Moses. They also ate God's food and drank His water as they matured as His children. This serves as an example of how individuals are immersed, that is baptized, into Christ's blood becoming Children of God under the New Covenant given by Christ.

Temptation occurs today – "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation, he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." (10:12-13) Always seek to do what is best for others over your personal desires. Recall Jesus said the second great commandment was "Love your neighbor as yourself."

(Matt 22:39) Those watching out for the spiritual wellbeing of the Christian family are to be honored by your actions, as they are responsible for your welfare and that of others.

Husbands and wives are dependent upon each other as they are joined together as one in marriage.

There can be teachings and practices in a church assembly that cause division. This results in fractured unity and fellowship.

Bread eaten at the "Lord's Supper" is to remind Christians of Jesus, who offered His sinless

body as the only sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin. The fruit of the vine represents the blood of His atoning sacrifice which brings forgiveness. Participating in His memorial feast without

focusing on Christ's body and His blood sacrifice is an unacceptable ritual – taken in an unworthy manner.

When Christians assemble for the purpose of a common meal, unity, and fellowship should exist.

The Spirit gives different activities for members of Christ's Body to perform. Therefore, every member is not expected to do every function. These different activities include:

- encouraging others to be faithful,

- teaching how to live acceptable and pleasing to God,
proclaiming the Gospel, and

- assisting all members toward maturity through their teaching, their example, and by observing their activities.

Without love the spiritual man is nothing. When time ends hope becomes reality and faith ceases as all things are seen. But love is God's essence and endures forever.

When those in Christ assemble together, all are expected to participate. But all

participating at the same time causes confusion and outsiders consider them weird and out of their mind. To eliminate confusion, individual speakers should speak in sequence, one at a time, for the purpose of training and encouraging. There is no mention of a prepared message by a professional speaker; such as a pulpit preacher.

Wives of the one speaking must show honor and respect by waiting to ask for clarification in the privacy of their home. "As the law says" was probably a tradition among the Jews.

The Gospel is Christ. the atoning sacrifice for sin, His burial, resurrection, appearance, and ascension.

Adam through disobedience brought death. Christ through obedience brings life.

One's companions have a great influence over their actions, both good or evil.

The physical seed must die before new life can begin. This is also true for spiritual seeds. There must be a death to the sinful life, a burial in Christ's blood, also referred to as baptism, before a new spiritual life can be resurrected by God.

Bodies of the physically dead will be changed into imperishable ones.

When one commits to providing financial assistance to the needy, they are to regularly set funds aside and not wait until the last minute.

In 2nd Corinthians Christians learn that God comforts His Children in their afflictions which should cause one to rely on God rather than self.

Prayer comforts and helps others overcome trials and stress.

God's Spirit was put into the risen new creation as His seal. This spirit is in constant communication with God.

Removal of fellowship, by the majority, from a willingly sinning brother may be necessary in order to bring about repentance.

A living sacrificial life replaces personal desires.

The Old Covenant brought death. The New Covenant brings life and freedom; and ultimately a transformed body into the likeness of God.

Pleasures of life are the "gods" of this world and they bind the mind of the unbeliever.

The physical body is a temporary residence. The permanent residence of the spiritual body of those in Christ is a "house not made with hands." Paradise is now in Heaven as evidenced by Paul being "caught up into Paradise" and heard "things which man may not utter."

A "new creation" results from death to sin, a burial in Christ's blood, and a resurrection to a new life, thereby becoming an ambassador to reconcile others to God through Christ. This new life

Does not be united in fellowship with unbelievers.

Rejoices when a brother repents and returns to Christ.

Gives self to Christ results in doing what is best for others.

Finishes commitments willingly, not regretting making the commitment.

Understands that God will multiply one's efforts toward righteousness.

Is alert! Some deceitful people disguise themselves as a brother but they do not teach Christ.

Paradise is now in Heaven as evidenced by Paul being "caught up into Paradise" and heard "things which man may not utter."

Examine your faith continually so you do not fall away.

At first glance, the epistle to the Galatians appears to be addressed to Christians who were drifting back or clinging to their traditions of Judaism. Some of them were demanding

Gentile Christians also accept the Old Covenant doctrine of circumcision required of proselytes.

A "righteous proselyte" is a Gentile who has converted to Judaism. He is bound to all the doctrines and precepts of the Jewish religion and is considered a full member of the Jewish

people. The proselyte is circumcised as an adult, if male, and immersed in any natural collection of water to formally effect the conversion.

Christians today have their own tradition by their interpretations of scripture, then demand others to follow them to be in fellowship with them and Christ. Often these traditions are from their former religious teachings. Therefore, it is incumbent on every Christian to search Christ's message, understand what God desires, then obey through faith and trust. When man demands compliance, and obedience, to his interpretations he divides Christ's Body - His Church.

Forgiveness of sins is Christ, God's gift of Grace. A gift can be accepted or rejected but not earned.

The New Covenant message is accepting Christ as one's atoning sacrifice and living according to His life and teachings through faith in Him and obedience to His

commands. "For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse" for one cannot keep all the Old Covenant Laws perfectly. But "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" "so, that we might receive the promised Spirit through

faith." The Law "was added because of sins until the offspring, Jesus, should come to whom the promise had been made."

The Old Covenant referred to as the Scriptures imprisoned everything under sin so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Now before faith came they were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a

guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ

Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise." Christ's gift of forgiveness and salvation is not restricted by nationality, race, or gender.

"But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn

back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?"

“For freedom, Christ has set us free; stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision (accept reliance on Moses – another gospel), Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision (becoming bound by its doctrines and precepts) that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.” (Galatians 5:1-4)

As “sons” of God, do not follow the desires of flesh for those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. These desires include

sexual immorality
impurity

sensuality
idolatry
sorcery

enmity
strife

jealousy
fits of
anger

rivalries dis
sensions

divisions

envy drunk
enness

orgies

But as “sons of God”, through faith and obedience, live a life producing fruit of Spirit: which are:

Love
joy
peace

patience
kindness
goodness
faithfulne
ss gentlen
ess self-co

ntrol

Those in Christ are to gently restore a fellow Christian caught up in sin

Those who were taught and accepted God's are obligated to take care of the needs of proclaimers of the Gospel.

The life you live is the seed you sow. Therefore, the seed of fleshly desire will reap corruption. Whereas the seed of the spirit reaps eternal life.

Ephesians begins with a statement about God's nature, image, and likeness with the ability to choose.

Knowing that ultimately His creation would choose their desires over His commands. He predestined, planned in advance, a way to reconcile them to Him.

Deity, in the form of the human Jesus of Nazareth, would become the atoning sacrifice as the gift for forgiveness. Then any Jew or Gentile who chose to accept this gift by trust and

obedience to Christ was put in His Church, His Body. It is in Him one is forgiven, redeemed, and reconciled.

Those IN CHRIST have:

Redemption
Unity

An inheritance
Hope

Access to the Spirit of God
Dwelling place with God
Eternal life

These redeemed are to be united, striving to mature into God's nature and likeness

Humble
Gentle

Patient

Merciful
Loving

Speaking
truth

Sharing with anyone in need
Doing honest work

Putting off deceitful desires
Not sinning when angry

Not stealing

Avoiding sexual immorality, filthy and foolish talk, crude and obscene jokes

When Christ ascended, He gave some specific functions:

- a. Apostles, eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ - to announce the Good News that the Savior and His gift of forgiveness and salvation is available to all who accept His gift.

b. Prophets to give God's revelation received from the Holy Spirit.

c. Evangelists to proclaim the Good News, Christ, to the lost.

- d. Pastors and Teachers – to guard, watch, teach, and guide brethren to maturity and unity in Christ, not opinion

All in Him are to:

- a. Observe how they live their spiritual life
- b. Withstand fleshly body desires
- c. Understand God's will
- d. Be filled with God's Spirit – His nature
- e. Put the needs of their brethren above personal desires

For protection against the dark powers of Satan, Christians must surround themselves with God and His armor which is:

- a. Truth
- b. Readiness of the gospel
- c. Faith
- d. Word of God
- e. Salvation
- f. Prayer

Specific instructions were given to certain groups of Christians:

Wives – honor, respect husbands, and do what pleases God

Husbands – provide for wife's physical and spiritual needs

Children - listen attentively, heed to a command or authority

Bondservants, one who is completely given over to another
serve as you would Christ, not eyeservice but doing the will
of God from the heart.

All Christians are to:

Perform functions needed by the Body of Christ

Obey the teaching of Christ and His apostles

Do good works pleasing to God

Proclaim in various ways the resurrected Christ and His message

The Christians are partners of the gospel. In this case Paul and the Philippians. All

Christians everywhere are to encourage evangelists and provide for their physical needs as they proclaim the gospel. Visiting them where they work is an excellent means of

encouragement and a way to communicate the congregation's love and concern for the dedicated servant who suffers many hardships as he proclaims Christ.

Paul, as today's evangelists should do, sent his thanks, love, and concern to the Philippians. He encouraged them to live a life worthy of the gospel of Christ, to abound with knowledge to discern what is pure and blameless, and to continue living a life pleasing to God:

Be united.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition.

Look to what is best for others.

Do all things without grumbling or disputing.

Hold fast to the word of life.

Diligently strive to attain the goal of Eternal Life with God.

Watching and observing those enemies of Christ who try to convince you to return to your former way of life.

Servants of Christ should not quarrel but agree in the lord. Do not worry or be anxious about the physical or spiritual. Do not argue over opinions and personal interpretations.

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” A congregation should provide for their evangelists’ physical needs but also express their love and concern, so he does not feel he is alone.

To the Colossian Christians, Paul wrote that a Christian needs to be filled with the knowledge of Christ’s will and be able to live worthy and bear fruit. Christ has delivered those who have put their trust through obedience from Satan’s domain of darkness and transferred them to the

Kingdom of Christ by forgiveness through Christ’s atoning sacrifice. Christ is the exact image and mystery of God

All things were created by and through Him in Heaven and on Earth.

He holds all things together.

God dwells in Him.

He is reconciling all things to himself through His blood sacrifice. IF Christians continue in faith not moving away from the Gospel, He will make them holy. By implication, those who do not continue in faith have moved away from Christ and will not be made holy.

Christ is the mystery hidden from Jew and Gentile. For in Him, there is the opportunity of forgiveness and redemption.

Warning to Christians.

Do not allow human traditions to deceive you and make you a captive of Satan.

Remember Christ is deity. He dwells in Christians as they have been circumcised spiritually by the removal of the body of sin and buried in Christ’s blood known as

baptism or immersion. After which God forgave their sins, he resurrected them and put them in the Kingdom of Christ, His Church.

The regulations of festivals and things not to eat or drink are of the earthly Old Covenant

which was only a shadow of the better Heavenly covenant. This heavenly covenant would come directly from Jesus - God in a human body.

Do not rely on self-abasement, or asceticism, to make you holy. Holiness comes from being in Christ.

Christians must rid themselves of

Earthly sexual and impure passions

Covetousness

Anger

Malice

Slander

Obscene talk

Lying

Become a new spiritual person. Live as Christ lived in love which will bind all good things together. Knowledge of God's will produce

Compassionate hearts

Kindness

Humility

Meekness

Patience

Teach, admonish, and encourage one another in the name of and by the authority of Christ. Treatment of others is to be based on what is best for the relationship.

Wives, husbands, children, bondservants and masters are to treat all in the manner and love of Christ who is Lord of all.

In 1st Thessalonians, Paul stated that those in Christ should be examples of faith, labor of love,

and steadfastness. They are to stay alert to Satan's temptations and encourage one another while doing the will of God which is

Proclaim in times of trials and conflicts

Are to be aware of those who preach for money, power or prestige.

Must not be focused on what pleases the hearers

Will be tested

Work so as not to be a burden to others

Exhort and encourage

Aspire to live quietly and mind your own affairs

The Resurrection of the Christian dead

The time of the Second coming of Christ, the resurrection, is unknown. But when it occurs the bodies of Christians in the grave will be resurrected and transformed into an immortal spirit body and meet Christ in the clouds. Then the living in Christ will join them.

Honor and respect

Esteem those who devote their life to the work of Christ
Live in peace not conflict

Encourage, pray, rejoice and be patient
Seek ways to do good

Give Thanks in all circumstances

Keep body, soul, and spirit blameless

In 2nd Thessalonians, Paul told them not to be alarmed by rumors regarding Christ's return. Christ will not come again until Satan deceives those perishing because they refuse to love the truth in order to be saved. He will deceive by working through others by his power and fake signs and wonders. When Christ comes, He will administer justice with vengeance rendering eternal death, on those who persecuted His people.

Since the time of Christ's Second Coming is unknown, continue as servants of Christ by proclaiming the Gospel, doing good works, and living a life glorifying Him. Do not feed or supply necessities of life to those who are able but refuse to provide for themselves. In fact, do not associate, or have fellowship, with them. But do not treat them as enemies.

Paul wrote to his close companion Timothy to confront those who teach Christians must keep traditions of their former religious beliefs. Beliefs that were contrary to Christ's and the apostle's teachings. They have turned away and gone back to their former religious beliefs.

Make intercessions and prayers, for all people, including rulers of countries.

Pray without the stain of unforgiven sin.

Teach women not to call attention to the sensual by dressing that entices, as do the rich and influential.

Men who desire to lead their brethren to become righteous servants desire a good or noble work. This leading function is not an office of power and prestige but a work of love. Their work is to help those in Christ to mature into the likeness of God, by teaching and guiding them to do

God's will. They "must be well thought of by outsiders, so that they may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil."

Some Christians will devote themselves to deceptive lies. Thus they sear their consciences with such practices as forbidding one to marry and abstain from eating certain food.

Do not use harsh words when correcting aged men or women.

Children and grandchildren must take care of their needy parents

Some teach for personal gain messages other than those of Christ, not found in the Bible.

People who desire to get rich set their hope on the uncertainties of money rather than God.

The rich should be generous and ready to share with those in need.

Always encourage servants of God, especially those away from home proclaiming Christ. A Christian's eternal destiny is simple:

If we have died with Christ, we will also live with Him;

if we endure, we will also reign with Him;

if we deny Him, he also will deny us;

if we are faithless, He remains faithful for He cannot deny himself."

Do not quarrel about your personal interpretation. Christian brothers can depart from the body of Christ. There are some in Christ's Body, who need to grow spiritually so they can become God's servants.

Some brothers will be lovers of self, greedy, proud, and arrogant. They may have the appearance of Godliness - You should have nothing to do with them.

Brothers and sisters who live a Godly life in Christ will be preserved.

All in Christ who live faithfully, while performing God's will, have the assurance of Heaven.

Desires of Christians, whose lives are not under control revert back to their former worldly life.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching and training.

Recognize and be aware of those who oppose Christ and His message.

Titus was instructed to confront elders and teachers Elders must confront teachers who are greedy for

money, power, or prestige. They teach myths and salvation based upon something other than Christ causing brothers away from Christ.

He was also to teach

Older men - to be self-controlled, sound in faith, and clear thinkers.

Older women - to be reverent in behavior, self-controlled, not slanderers, not addicted to

alcohol, and to teach younger women to be affectionate to their husband and children, self-controlled, keepers of the home.

Young men - Self-controlled, model of good works, have integrity and dignity.

Employees – perform the task your employers assign without arguing or complaining and not to take what belongs to the employer.

Christ came to earth to bring forgiveness and salvation, and to renounce ungodliness and worldly passion. He saves by mercy and obedience - not by works. Titus also reminded believers to

Be submissive to governmental authorities

Be ready to perform good works

Speak evil of no one

Avoid quarreling

Be gentle and courteous to all people

Devote yourself to good works

Avoid foolish controversies such as the Jews do by attempting to show one is “God’s chosen” by their genealogy as children of Abraham.

Paul writing to his coworker Philemon encourages him to share his faith to refresh the hearers. Because of your life and love for the Gospel, God can and often uses undesirable events to be a great influence on others. Grateful and glorify God for using you to do His will.

The book of Hebrews appears to have been written to Jewish Christians reminding them of the greatness of God, encouraging them not to return to Judaism and to be faithful like their ancestors.

Adam and Eve were created as righteous earthly beings and placed in a paradise to live in God’s presence. But they

- a) chose to listen to the lie of Satan, a rebellious angel;
- b) desired Satan’s promise;
- c) rejected God’s commands;
- d) received the consequences of their actions – pain, and death.

Following Satan’s lies and man’s sin, God revealed to Satan that an offspring of man would destroy his hold over man which is death. So, at just the perfect time Deity in the human body of Jesus chose to come to earth and live among His creation to be the

only and perfect sin offering. The Father accepted Jesus' sin offering as evidenced by His resurrection, the Victory over Death. Now the sins of the righteous under the old Covenant were forgiven.

Thereafter forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation became available to all who seek forgiveness by obedience.

This reconciliation process is described in many places in the Holy Scriptures beginning on the first Pentecost following Jesus' resurrection and ascension as recorded in Acts 2. The forgiven also have a choice to live righteously or yield to their earthly desires. Yielding

means accepting Satan's lie to return to their former sinful life and enjoy their "temporary earthly pleasures".

The writer of Hebrews issues a stern warning to those in Christ's Church, who are tempted by Satan's lies. Be aware, listen carefully to Christ's and the apostle's teachings or you may drift away and ultimately reject His saving grace. Having established the superiority of Christ over all creation, Christians are warned about becoming unfaithful by returning to their former non-biblical religious teachings.

God initially spoke directly to man and later through prophets. But NOW, He speaks through Christ, His Son, the resurrected Christ, who is superior to all creation both man and angels.

Christ is the Mediator between God and man, a Christian's high priest. A high priest that is not dependent on an inherited position, as were the High Priests under the covenant given through Moses.

The world to come both eternal life and everlasting death are subject to Christ.

Christ is now at God's side having offered His human living body as the only sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin. By doing so, He fulfilled the promise to Abraham and made the Covenant established through Moses obsolete by establishing a new covenant. All who choose Christ through obedience will be cleansed spiritual beings when they:

- a) confess Jesus as God
- b) Turn from sin,
- c) are buried in His blood and put by God into Christ's Body, His Church.

Just as a cleansed physical man can become dirty again so can a cleansed spiritual man.

If this were not true then there would be no need for a mediator or to warn Christians not to fall away and turn back to one's former sinful life. Consider the following warnings.

A brother could give way to an unbelieving heart and fall away from God.

Do not harden your heart and do not reject His voice, His message.

Strive to enter into His rest, Heaven, so you do not fall by disobedience.

Hold fast – don't turn loose - know only Christ's death, burial, and resurrection but also His life and how to become mature in His likeness.

For those enlightened and forgiven who return to their prior sinful life, it is difficult for them to return to Christ.

There is no sin sacrifice for those who go on deliberately (continue) sinning. "Do not throw away your confidence which has a great reward."

"My righteous one shall live by faith and IF he shrinks back my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed." Those "who have faith and preserve their souls." One can hear but not understand, understand but not enough to believe, and believe but be unwilling to have sufficient faith to commit and trust. Those who trust will take action proving their faith and trust by their actions. It is by faith that

Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice.

Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance.

Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death.

Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household.

Abraham went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land.

Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, 'Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.' He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau.

Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff.

Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin."

Moses left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible."

Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

They all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having (hope) acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

James in his writings offers many observations.

God does not tempt anyone. However, he allows the testing of one's faith to produce steadfastness when one remain faithful.

Temptation occurs from desire. When one gives into their desire sin occurs. When angry, be slow to speak as wrath is not of God.

Christ's message of salvation when obeyed and retained in the inner being, produces faithful living and workers, not pew-sitting spectators.

Christians worship when by desire take care of widows and others in need.

Treating the rich better than the poor displeased God for the poor are rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom.

Mercy negates the punishment of justice demands.

One's actions display their degree of love and faith - no action no faith.

What is spoken can produce good or evil. So, if one cannot control what and how they speak they should not teach.

Ambition to achieve power and prestige causes jealousy and dishonor rather than gentleness, mercy, and peace.

A Christian who breaks his covenant relationship with God through his relationship with the world is a spiritual adulterer.

A constant relationship with God keeps the Devil away.

Do not speak evil or slander anyone.

Riches acquired by greed cry out to God.

Godly and righteous people do not need to call upon others to attest to their word. They have no reason to swear.

Brothers can wander away from Christ. They need help and encouragement to remain faithful.

Peter wrote to Christians stating that through the resurrection of Christ, there is hope of eternal life for all who are born again. They are born again by dying to sin, being buried into Christ's blood, raised a new spiritual body, and put into Christ's Kingdom by God. Trials will occur to test one's faith.

Prophets foretold of God's Grace through Christ's life.

Those who accept Christ's message are to prepare themselves for action as God expects all His servants to work and do His will.

Do not continue living as you did before obedience to Christ. You are to be holy in your conduct and glorify God.

God foreknew, predestined, that He would be manifested through the one He would raise from the dead. Thus, faith and hope would rest upon Him.

Purification, that is being cleansed, comes through a rebirth from a pure, trusting, and obedient heart.

Christ's life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension is the Goodnews that offers forgiveness of sins to everyone TODAY and ever after. Those who accept His offer are to consume spiritual food in order to mature and grow into their salvation.

Christians as priests to serve God are to offer their lives as living sacrifices, as priests to proclaim Christ's message of reconciliation. So, abstain from passions of the flesh.

Live in accord with governing rulers, to the demands of employers while being free in Christ.

Wives are to honor and respect their husbands for by their gentle and humble nature they may penetrate the heart of their unbelieving husband.

Husbands are to show honor to their wives by understanding their concerns and needs.

Be united in heart and mind with your Christian family without any desire to get even.

Prepare yourselves to explain why you are different from the majority.

Christ delivered a message to those in Hades, the abode of the souls of those who have died.

Noah obeyed God and built the Ark saving him and his family through water which is an example for those who call on God to forgive through their act of baptism in Christ's blood.

The gospel was to be preached to those who were alive but now dead so they might LIVE in spirit.

When you suffer as a Child of God, you glorify God. Suffering as a result of an evildoer, such as a theft or murderer, does not glorify God.

Men who willing, not for gain, devote their lives humbly leading, not driving, their brethren to mature in God's nature and work as His servants are examples of love and humility.

Always be on alert looking for agents of the Devil who desire to devour and destroy one's faith. Therefore, you grow in faith by growing in:

Virtue - high moral standards

Self-control of desires and actions

Faithfulness

Godly affection

Love – God's

nature

Be diligent in practicing these qualities

Christ's message as recorded in the Bible did not come from man's knowledge or his interpretation but from God.

Some brothers deny the deity of Christ. They teach for greed - money, power, fame claiming Christ was only a phantom. They are condemned.

Angels have sinned. God sent them to the deepest part of Hades until Christ returns and then the judgment.

Some people who indulge in passion and despise authority attempt to fellowship with Christians. But their heart is trained in greed. "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness."

God wants everyone to have the opportunity to turn from sin to Him. He is patient as time is meaningless because He is eternal.

Some teachings are difficult for those with little knowledge of God or His will. Some perhaps by

choice but others due to teachings of others who have twisted the meaning of the scriptures to conform to their belief.

John in three short letters testifies that Jesus was a real person attested to by those constantly with Him who heard, saw, and touched him. They are eyewitnesses.

God is righteous and those in Christ are in fellowship with Him because of Christ's cleansing blood. His atoning sacrifice makes one holy, IF they keep His commandments. This means we have the option to obey or refuse to obey Him and His teachings.

Since God is love anyone who wishes evil rather than good does not "live" or "walk" in Him.

Those in Christ who desire passions of the flesh and are proud rather than humble are of the world. They have abandoned Christ.

Some within Christ's church, who deny Jesus was God in a human body, are the antichrist. Those who have accepted Christ and abide in Him have eternal life.

Occasional sin can be forgiven but "Christians" who practice living in their sin, do not abide in Christ.

Christ's message is "God is Love" – one can choose either to abide in love or death.

God answers prayers offered by the authority of Christ when asked according to His will.

All who believe show their belief by their actions of love and obedience.

Christ is Eternal Life, so one continuing in sin leads to everlasting death.

Deity came to earth in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth and offered His message of forgiveness and salvation to all people. Those who accept Him and His message through obedience have Eternal Life.

Christians are warned that deceivers have gone out, no longer in His Church, because of their love for worldly things. They deny Jesus is the Christ.

Christians who do not live according to Christ's teachings have abandoned Him.

It is right for Christians to assist those who proclaim Christ and His message of forgiveness and salvation.

There will be some "Christians" who desire to control the lives of other Christians with power and authority. Therefore, be aware of them as they are living and teaching contrary to Christ. Therefore, do not encourage them by providing assistance.

Jude in his short letter issues warnings to the faithful in Christ.

There are ungodly people who assemble with the Christian body for personal gain. They rely on opinions outside of Christ and His teachings leading some astray. "These are grumblers,

malcontents who follow their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.”

“There will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions. It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.”

These ungodly people and scoffers were formerly in His Body but now follow their worldly desires while still assembling as if a Christian.