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KEEP SEEKING THE THINGS ABOVE

"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory," (Col. 3:1-4). As we continue to serve our Lord, let us be mindful of Paul's admonition that we keep our minds centered and focused where He is. Paul candidly reminds us of Christ's location, at the right hand of God in the glory of heaven, encouraging us to keep our attention and affections centered and focused there right where He is. Paul emphasizes this by reminding

us of what happened to us in baptism. We died to this world and were raised up to be in fellowship with Christ who is no longer in this world but with the Father. There is a deliberate parallel Paul makes between Jesus ascending to the heavenly places and our fellowship with Jesus in his letter to the Ephesians. *"These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places," (Eph. 1:19-20).* Note how Paul uses the same language of being seated in the heavenly places when he describes our spiritual rebirth through obedience to the gospel. *"...even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with*

Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus," (Eph. 2:5-6).

This is the point Paul is making when he admonishes us to keep seeking the things above where Christ is. Let's keep our minds focused where we have been raised up to dwell...with Christ in the heavenly places. Imagine being on a plane headed towards a beautiful tropical paradise where you would spend the rest of your life in absolute splendor and joy, and the whole trip there all you could talk about was the gift shop back at the airport where you took off from. This wouldn't exactly suggest you were all that excited about where you were headed. In the same way, we who have been given new life in Christ, having died to the things of this life, often spend much of our time as we are headed to inhabit the heavenly places where Christ is thinking and talking more about the "gift shops" of this world rather than the actual spiritual dwelling place where our fellowship lies. Paul reminds us to shift the focal point of our thoughts and desires from

this temporary dwelling place to the eternal home where Christ is. Paul gives us several practical exercises which when diligently followed will help us achieve this redirection of focus Paul wants us to make.

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father," (Col. 3:15-17).

Spend plenty of time reading and meditating on the word of Christ. Paul says let it richly dwell within us. We need this daily time in the Word to keep us focused on where we are headed and what our mission is to be while we are here for a short while. It is the word of Christ which will redirect our focus and remind us how much better life will be when we finally dwell with Christ in heaven. *"For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house*

not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord – for we walk by faith, not by sight – we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord,” (2 Cor. 5:1-8). We are also admonished to spend much time singing together in worship, admonishing one another to stay focused on our spiritual dwelling place in heaven. Paul also reminds us to do everything in this life in Jesus’ name, for His purposes giving thanks through prayer. Paul reminds us earlier in the letter of this important thought necessary to help redirect our focus. All things were made

by Him and for Him, and the more we are brought to remembrance of this point, the better we will be to maintain our focus on the things above where Christ is. “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything,” (Col. 1:15-18). – Dan Ruegg



Angels were present when God created the world. ‘...Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?...while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?’

People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



STONE OF KING DAVID

More than a quarter of a century of excavations at Tel Dan in the north of Israel at the foot of Mount Hermon produced little in the way of written material. The excavations have been directed through the years since 1966 by Dr. Avraham Biran, distinguished Israeli archaeologist. Then on July 21, 1993, while work crews were preparing the site for visitors, a broken fragment of basalt stone was uncovered in secondary use in a wall. Surveyor Gila Cook glanced at the stone in the rays of the afternoon sun and saw what looked like alphabetic letters. On closer examination it turned out that, indeed, they had found an inscribed stone.. The discovery was of a fragment of a large monumental inscription, measuring about 32 cm. high and 22 cm. at its greatest width. Apparently the stone had been purposely broken in antiquity. It turned out that the stele fragment mentions King David's dynasty, "the House of David." As the preparatory work for tourism proceeded, two additional fragments of the stele were recovered in two separate, disparate locations in June of 1994. The partially reconstructed text reads as follows:

1. [... ...] and cut [...]
2. [...] my father went up [against him when] he fought at [...]
3. And my father lay down, he went to his [ancestors]. And the king of I [s-]
4. rael entered previously in my father's land. [And] Hadad made me king.
5. And Hadad went in front of me, [and] I departed from [the] seven [...-]
6. s of my kingdom, and I slew [seve]nty kin[gs], who harnessed thou[sands of cha-]
7. Riots and thousands of horsemen (or: horses). [I killed Jeho]ram son of [Ahab]
8. king of Israel, and [I] killed [Ahaz]iahu son of [Jehoram kin-]
9. g of the House of David. And I set [their towns into ruins and turned]
10. their land into [desolation ...]
11. other [... and Jehu ru-]
12. led over Is[rael ... and I laid]
13. siege upon [...] [6]

The pavement and the wall where the fragments were found was laid at the end of the 9th or beginning of the 8th century BC, according to pottery fragments recovered in probes beneath the flagstone pavement. Since the fragment and the entire pavement was covered by the debris of the Assyrian destruction of Tiglath Pileser III, in 732 BC, it could not have been laid latter than that year. The surmise is that Jehoash, grandson of Jehu, or Jehoash's son, Jeroboam II, and more likely Jehoash, was the monarch who had this reminder of Aramaean domination smashed. It is further assumed that Hazael was then king of Aram-Damascus, because Hazael fought against Jehoram of Israel and Ahaziah of Judah. The discovery provides an archaeological connection to the biblical references to the ruling dynasty established by King David approximately two centuries before the events in the inscription.

