

***My words will not pass away.*** (Joh 1:18)

\* Dear Friends, at late hour when I was sitting in company with my books, many people were attending New Year's Eve parties. I'd known that bells would soon start ringing, sirens would sound, firecrackers would explode; and the crowd at Times Square would shout "Happy New Year!" Frankly, it didn't make me jealous realizing the festive activities said goodbye to me; rather I became indifferent to that moment of joy. As I started thinking that the problem is in me, one thought came after another. *There is nothing wrong with you*, let's say, it is just a new leaf that was turned over for you; *To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter or purpose under heaven*: says the Word of God, (Ecc 3:1). Therefore, I understood, my time for fun was over, now was the time to look for the truth and to write sermons. Friends, you know, I am glad to do this; It makes me happy, especially when I assume that through the written and spoken words God may enlighten your hearts and renew your faith. Well, as it was before, it also is going now; God has ordained the holy office of the ministry so that His Word may be preached and explained to all who come to hear it. That is what I am going to do now. It will be good if we start with posting a statement. Here it is, **having heard God's Word, Christians should keep it, be honest with it, and practice it.** Therefore, according to how you treat *the Word of God, He will treat your bread and meat*, says an old folk saying.

\* Now let's come closer to the lesson of this day, (Joh 1:1-18). It is a combination of several theological statements and personal testimonies. Significantly, the statements and testimonies came to us from eyewitnesses, not from theoretical perceptions. The tradition says that the Apostles assigned John to write this Gospel. Where the Gospel says, *And we have seen his glory*, (Joh 1:14), it points towards eyewitnesses whom Christ appeared after Resurrection. In addition, our text mentions John the Baptist, who also bore witness about Christ, (Joh 1:8). His witness is found in the (vv.30,31). John said, *After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me. I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.* These testimonies were recorded for us, the post apostolic Christians, who have not seen and yet have believed in Christ, and by believing may have life in his name, (Joh 20:29-31).

\* When I thought in what way our Gospel reading can be helpful to us, especially those of you who like *solid food*, I was puzzled with my task to find something we still don't know or something that may contribute to our beliefs. For example, if a preacher would preach a topic that related as far back as we can go in thought, then we were taught that there was One with God called the Word who was God and who is identified as the Son of the Father. The Son himself was the source of life and the light for the universe. There

are some other beliefs in our text that were included in a doctrinal corpus of the Ecumenical Creeds with which we are familiar. They are as follows: - the light brought salvation and life to people, but many didn't recognize and accept this light; - the salvation took place through a divine action upon those who believed; - the Word came into the world through the incarnation, which means the Word took on the form of a human being called Jesus. Then the preacher might say, because Jesus is yet the only One, himself God, who reveals God, we should distinguish him from the giver of the law of Moses because Jesus embodied grace, truth and love through whom the disciples have all received grace upon grace.

\* Now, after hearing these things, did the preacher satisfy our appetite for a *real and solid food*? Probably, *not much*, we might say. Actually, the preacher didn't tell anything new that would contribute to or strengthen our beliefs better than the readings of the Nicene Creed during our regular Sunday's worships. On the other hand, the prologue of John's Gospel may seem as clear as day; believe me, it remains very complicated. For example, there were found at least seven paradoxes with which theologians were mystified until now. For this reason let us to leave the things we are not given to understand, but rather believe in them by faith. Now let us look for something simple. \*

While the synoptic Gospels begin with the identification of Jesus as the Messiah, as God's human agent, who comes to establish God's kingdom, then ask yourselves, *Why in John's Gospel, in connection with Jesus' identification, does the evangelist chose the term Word?*

When the question is asked, then in humble awe we will bow down before our awesome God beseeching him for guidance and understanding. O Mighty God, You show me Your power and majesty in every manifestation of the natural creation and You also reveal Yourself in dealing with me through Your eternal Word in acts of forgiveness of my sins, renewing my faith, and blessing me throughout this life. I have entrusted myself to Your boundless mercy beseeching for the name of my Lord, Jesus Christ to keep my reason in captivity to obedience of Your Word. Strengthen my faith in You, and let me cling firmly to Your Word and to the testimonies of men to whom You revealed Yourself. Let me show my faith by my works, adding to my faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, brotherly kindness, and charity. O my soul, bless the Lord, my God; O my soul, praise Him throughout all eternity! Amen \*

You may have noticed that after the prologue the term 'the Word' is no longer applied to Jesus but instead the attributes of the eternal Word such as the light, glory and life were revealed in and through Jesus.

Significantly, the light, glory and life primarily were revealed through the words spoken by Jesus Christ.

Friends, could we say something and it come to life if there is no one who can do it? If you are not a king

surrounded by servants, you probably have to do it by your own hands. But if God says something, it certainly will come to life because there are myriads of servants who obey His words!!! Of course, if there were not even one servant, it would not stop God from doing whatever His heart desired.

\* Thinking over the miracles Jesus made during his earthly life, we recall stories when by spoken words he stopped storms, multiplied bread and fish, cast out demons, raised Lazarus from the dead and so forth. On top of that, Jesus Christ will judge the nations by the words of his mouth; his words were compared with a sharp two-edged sword, (Heb 4:12; Rev 19:15). Does it surprise anyone? It does not surprise us, if we believe that Jesus is the eternal Word, himself God. By the way, the authorities in Jerusalem and Pharisees were greatly surprised when they heard and observed the attributes of the eternal Word, (Mat 14:36; Joh 6:11; Joh 11:43). Significantly the answer to the officials, *By what authority are you doing these things?* (Mar 11:28), is not hidden from us; the answer is here: **Jesus is God whom John's Gospel calls the Word!** \*

Now I want to draw your attention to another point. If a person believes that Jesus is God, then he receives the new spiritual body from Him and that spiritual body wants willingly obey God's words due to its nature, (1Jn 5:18). Let's say it another way; if Almighty God became our Father, through faith in Jesus Christ, He born in us a new spiritual body that cannot disobey Him due to the nature of that body belongs to God; as Jesus said, *I have revealed your name to the men you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have obeyed your word,* (Joh 17:6). Furthermore, in virtue of God's awesomeness and righteousness, all living beings bow before God and fear God; they prefer to obey God rather than to fall into the hands of the living God. Friends, all creation obeys God except the ungodly men and women; and second, except for us when we don't obey God in full due to our sinful flesh, (Rom 7:23). However, our and their disobedience will not last forever; by the natural process of death our sinful nature has already been judged, (this is the first death); and by the words of God's mouth the ungodly will be judged at the Last Day, (Joh 12:48), *and whose name was not found written in the book of life, he/she was thrown into the lake of fire.*

*This is the second death,* (Rev 20:14,15). \* Beloved, because we believe and follow the Word, He brings us out of disobedience into righteousness, out of the second death into everlasting life. Jesus says, *Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house but could not shake it, because the house had been well built,* (Luk 6:47-48). Surprisingly, but a key to our prosperity, peace and other numerous blessings is here, **it is in our obedience to the words of God spoken to us by his Son** through whom also He

created the world. This is 100% truth. About this all prophets, apostles and evangelists also witness that Jesus is the Son of God, the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, to whom we must honor and glorify, not by mouths only but by deeds of righteousness, (2Co 5:9,10). Amen.

Beloved the peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen