

The Living God

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One of the clearest and most significant passages in the Bible is where Jesus confirms to His disciples that He is the Messiah. The Pharisees and Sadducees had challenged and opposed Him and He warned the disciples against their teaching. Then He asked his disciples “**Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?**”. They responded with the various speculations and then Jesus followed up and asked “**But who do you say that I am?**”. Peter then answered “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God**”. It was an astonishing statement and Jesus confirmed it was so. He was the Anointed One that had been prophesied and the living God was His Father. He then told the disciples to tell no one what His Father had revealed (Matthew 16:1-20).

Peter’s statement that Jesus was “**the Christ, the Son of the living God**” (Matthew 16:16) was in recognition of the validity and harmony of numerous Old Testament scriptures. The term “**the living God**” is used thirty times in scripture, half in the Old Testament and half in the New. In every case, it refers to God the Father. Hosea gave evidence to that when he prophesied “**And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, You are not My people, There it shall be said to them, You are the sons of the living God**” (1:10). Paul quoted that passage in Hosea when he wrote “**And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, You are not My people, There they shall be called sons of the living God**” (Romans 9:26). Both Hosea and Paul understood the same thing. The meaning of the passages in Hosea and in Romans is the same.

That the living God is the Father is also confirmed in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians where he stated “**For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people. Therefore Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty**” (2 Corinthians 6:16-18). The LORD Almighty who will be a Father to His sons and daughters, is the living God.

The scriptures are consistent. It was “**the living God**” who spoke to Israel from Mount Sinai (Deuteronomy 5:25-26), and it was “**the living God**” who Joshua told Israel would go before them as they crossed the Jordan River (Joshua 3:9-10). It was “**the living God**” that David declared Goliath was defying (1 Samuel 17:26,36), and it was “**the living God**” that Hezekiah stated that Sennacherib was defying as well (2 Kings 19:4,16). It was also “**the living God**” the sons of Korah thirsted for (Psalms 42:2) and whose heart and flesh cried out for (Psalms 84:2). Jeremiah referred to Him as “**the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God**” (Jeremiah 23:36). He was also “**the living God**”, “**the God of Daniel**” (Daniel 6:20,26). Simply put, the living God of the Old Testament that choose Israel and called them to worship before Him, is the One who became the Father.

Jesus was persecuted, and some even sought to kill Him, because He said that God, the living God, was His Father (John 5:18). He stated that it was “**the living Father**” (John 6:56) who had sent Him, and the Jews knew who that was. Jesus had told the Samaritan woman at the well “**You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews**” (John 4:22). Jesus said that the Jews knew who they worshipped, and they worshipped the Father. Prior to his crucifixion, when Jesus was called in before the Sanhedrin, the high priest demanded “**I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!**” (Matthew 26:64). Again, the living God is the God that the Jews recognized from the Old Testament record and knew.

Spirit led believers are members of **“the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth”** (1 Timothy 3:15). The God who is referenced by **“the house of God”** and **“the church of the living God”** is the Father. He is **“the living God, who is the Savior of all men”** (1 Timothy 4:10). God is our Savior because He offered His Son in sacrifice for our sins (John 3:16; 1 Timothy 1:1) and Jesus Christ is our Savior because He was the sacrifice for our sins (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 10:10; Revelation 13:8).

There is no conflict. As it states in the book of Hebrews **“Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”** (9:11-14).

Throughout the Bible, the record is the same. Paul stated **“You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart”** (2 Corinthians 3:2-3). **“The living God”** of the Old Testament is **“the living God”** of the New Testament.

God’s promise, that He is going to dwell in the midst of His people, and with His children, is recorded throughout the Bible. God’s faithful servants have looked to that promise, and taken courage in it, for millennia. Abraham **“waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God”** (Hebrews 11:10). That city is New Jerusalem. It is **“the city of the living God”** (Hebrews 12:22) and it is to the promise that we will dwell in New Jerusalem along with God and Jesus Christ, that we look to and take courage in as well (John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:22-23).