

A photograph of a traditional wooden house built on stilts, situated in a lush tropical environment. The house has a corrugated metal roof and a balcony. A wooden bridge leads to the house from a riverbank. The background is filled with dense green foliage and trees.

Preaching the  
Whole Counsel  
of God to the  
Whole World

Volume 1

Sermon Outlines

Louis Rushmore

**Preaching the  
Whole Counsel  
of God to the  
Whole World  
Volume 1**

**Sermon Outlines**

**Louis Rushmore**

© 2015 Louis Rushmore  
rushmore@gospelgazette.com  
www.gospelgazette.com

World Evangelism  
Media & Missions  
705 Devine Street  
Winona, Mississippi, 38967

662.739.3035  
www.worlddevangelism.org

## Author's Preface

I attempted to preach my first sermon on the third Sunday evening of October in 1973. Shortly thereafter, I began preaching on Sundays at various little churches, and in 1974, I assumed my first *fulltime* congregational work. I soon realized that my Catholic background left me ill-equipped to prepare multiple Bible lessons and sermons weekly. However, it was reassuring to discover that my feeble studies arrived at the same doctrinal conclusions attained by brethren and honest students of the Bible before me. Subsequently, studying under the feet of mature preaching brethren, digesting the literary fruit of studious Christians as well as my own unending biblical studies has helped me to learn God's Word more fully.

As I pen this *Preface*, more than 40 years have passed since my feeble first attempts at preaching the Gospel of Christ. Between then and now, it has been my pleasure to have preached in numerous states in the USA and in five foreign countries. Beginning in 1995 and for 10 years, it was my delight to serve on the faculty of a stateside school of preaching. I have written numerous books, several tracts and many hundreds of religious articles over the decades. Since 1999 through the present, I have edited and published to the Internet the religious journal *Gospel Gazette Online*, and since 2007 I have been an Associate Editor of the quarterly magazine *The Voice of Truth International*. In addition, I am a Staff Writer for the *Global Harvest* publication, and my articles have appeared in several brotherhood magazines, besides a prolife newspaper, of which I was the Associate Editor.

By nature, I have a keen interest in the *organization* of sermons and their agreement with a lesson's stated thesis. I encourage preachers to present a *smooth flow* from section to section and point to point throughout a sermon to avoid choppiness and to prevent an abrupt movement from the introduction to the body of the lesson, to the conclusion and, finally, to the invitation.

I strongly believe in *book, chapter and verse* or *thus saith the Lord preaching*. Yet, the tendency to simply amass Scripture references without sufficient explanation should be avoided. **Biblical and effective preaching involves 'reading in the book in the law of God distinctly, and giving the sense, and causing the hearers to understand the reading' (Nehemiah 8:8).** The first seven verses of Nehemiah 8 portray other admirable characteristics worthy for imitation by both preachers and those to whom they preach (i.e., holding God's Word in the sight of the people when reading from it; the devotion of hours to the Word of God; the demonstration of reverence for God and His Word by preachers and auditors).

The hardest and most time-consuming aspect of sermon preparation is the selection of the topic. Hours and days are often *wasted* trying to pick the sermon that the auditors need to hear. However, apart from being aware of something in particular that a congregation overall or certain persons need to hear, preachers should spend less time on selection of sermon topics and more time on sermon preparation.

Regardless of what topic one chooses, it will serve some auditors better than others. The best that any public communicator can hope to achieve is to teach something

previously unknown to some of his audience and cause the rest to be reinforced in those things of which they are already aware. Seldom do faithful Gospel preachers present anything that is *new* to their audiences; frequently, we cause the brethren to *remember* God's truths. Therefore, concern yourself less with *what to preach* and devote more time to the preparation to preach. What is important is that the Gospel is faithfully preached, irrespective of what in particular from God's Word is preached on any given occasion.

**The whole counsel of God needs to be preached, but not at one sitting!** A humorous story I once heard illustrates this facet of preaching.

One Sunday, only one old farmer showed up for worship services. The young preacher felt funny about preaching to just one person and inquired whether he should go ahead with his sermon. The farmer replied that if only one of his cows came to be fed, he would still feed it. Emboldened by this encouragement, the young preacher preached, and preached and preached some more. Afterward, the preacher asked the farmer regarding his sermon. The farmer remarked that though he would feed the one cow, he certainly wouldn't feed it *the whole wagonload!*

Presuming future opportunities will come, preaching the whole counsel of God can be spread over several occasions, perhaps spanning many years. The significant point to remember is to preach the Word of God, preach all of it, but not necessarily at the same time. Though listeners need to devote themselves to concentration on the preaching of God's Word, no preacher truly succeeds if his auditors quit listening before he is done speaking!

The organizational pattern of a sermon can almost be reduced to filling in the blanks for its various sections (i.e., title, text, thesis, song, introduction, body, conclusion and invitation). The most critical part of the sermon is the *thesis*. Everything included in the sermon must correspond to fulfilling the goal of the thesis. Nothing that does **not** directly relate to the thesis should be included in the sermon. The *introduction* prepares the hearer for the main teaching of the sermon and may include an encapsulated foretaste of the body of the lesson. The *body* emphasizes and makes the case for whatever from God's Word is being taught. The *conclusion* briefly reviews the teaching just completed in the body and does not introduce new material.

The *invitation* is most effective when it naturally flows from the rest of the sermon and is connected to it with a *transitional sentence*. For a sermon to be as useful as it needs to be, it will not only provide information, but it will also challenge the listeners to make whatever corrective action may be needed in their lives. A sermon that provides information only or identifies the sin problem without presenting the needed action or cure for sin in our lives is sadly incomplete.

Make the following sermons your sermons by adapting them for your use in preaching the Gospel. Further, learn from them how to effectively organize and write your own sermons. I hope that in some small way this collection of sermon outlines proves useful to readers and glorifies our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Louis Rushmore**

# Table of Contents

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Come Meet Jesus as the Creator .....  | 7   |
| Come Meet Jesus as Pre-Incarnate God .....  | 10  |
| The Deity of Jesus Christ.....  | 18  |
| Come Meet Jesus as the Incarnate God .....  | 23  |
| The Birth of Jesus Christ.....  | 30  |
| The Childhood of Jesus Christ.....  | 35  |
| The Earthly Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ .....                                   | 41  |
| Come Meet Jesus as Master Teacher.....  | 47  |
| Come Meet Jesus at the Cross.....   | 53  |
| The Three Crosses .....   | 60  |
| The Vicarious Suffering of Christ.....  | 63  |
| The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ.....  | 66  |
| Bruised for Our Sins .....  | 69  |
| Is Jesus Christ an Historical Person?.....  | 73  |
| Come Meet Jesus as the Savior .....   | 78  |
| Come Meet Jesus as Messiah and King.....  | 81  |
| Come Meet Jesus as High Priest.....   | 86  |
| Come Meet Jesus as Mediator, Intercessor & Advocate .....                             | 89  |
| Come Meet Jesus as Lawgiver and Prophet .....   | 93  |
| Come Meet Jesus as Head of His Church, Head of His Body<br>and Head of His House..... | 98  |
| Come Meet Jesus as the Judge.....   | 102 |
| Come Meet Jesus as the Preeminent One .....   | 105 |
| The Preeminent Christ.....  | 110 |
| The Authority of Jesus Christ .....   | 112 |
| The Resurrection of Jesus Christ.....   | 115 |
| Focus on Jesus.....   | 118 |
| The Humility of Christ.....   | 121 |
| Jesus Christ: Our Example of Humility .....   | 126 |
| Jesus Christ: Our Example .....   | 129 |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Jesus Is My Everything!</b> .....                            | <b>132</b> |
| <b>The Lord Is the Strength of My Life</b> .....                | <b>134</b> |
| <b>Be With Me Lord</b> .....                                    | <b>138</b> |
| <b>The Gospel of the Empty Tomb</b> .....                       | <b>140</b> |
| <b>Another Jesus, Another Spirit &amp; Another Gospel</b> ..... | <b>147</b> |
| <b>A Stone of Stumbling</b> .....                               | <b>152</b> |
| <b>Why Was Jesus Hated?</b> .....                               | <b>156</b> |
| <b>The Goodness and Severity of God</b> .....                   | <b>158</b> |
| <b>God Is</b> .....   | <b>161</b> |
| <b>Proof That God Exists!</b> .....                             | <b>164</b> |
| <b>The Promise of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit</b> .....      | <b>178</b> |
| <b>The Baptism of the Holy Spirit</b> .....                     | <b>190</b> |
| <b>The Remarkable Parables</b> .....                            | <b>194</b> |
| <b>The Parable of the Unjust Judge</b> .....                    | <b>198</b> |
| <b>The Parable of the Sheepfold</b> .....                       | <b>201</b> |
| <b>The Parable of the Ten Virgins</b> .....                     | <b>205</b> |
| <b>The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard</b> .....        | <b>209</b> |
| <b>The Parable of the Tares</b> .....                           | <b>212</b> |
| <b>The Parable of the Sower</b> .....                           | <b>215</b> |
| <b>The Parable of the Talents</b> .....                         | <b>218</b> |
| <b>The Parable of the Marriage Feast</b> .....                  | <b>221</b> |
| <b>The Parable of the Vine and the Branches</b> .....           | <b>225</b> |

# Godhead

## Come Meet Jesus as the Creator

### John 1:1-3

**Thesis:** To decisively demonstrate from Scripture that Jesus Christ is Creator of all.

#### **Introduction:**

1. Jesus Christ is principally responsible for the creation of all that exists.
2. In addition, Jesus Christ is responsible for the continued existence of all creation.
3. The array of passages are numerous that directly attribute to Jesus Christ the role of Creator.

#### **Body:**

#### **I. The Godhead, comprised of three divine persons, created everything.**

- A. The Godhead is comprised of three persons.
  1. Commonly, this Bible doctrine is known as the Trinity or the Triune God; the Trinity deserves a biblical study dedicated to it, though here-in we only have time to introduce it.
  2. Three persons of the one Godhead appear in several New Testament passages (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 1:30-35; 3:21-22; 24:49; John 14:16-17, 25-26; Acts 2:32-33; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6; 5:18-20; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Titus 3:4-6; 2 Timothy 1:3, 13-14; Hebrews 2:3-4; 6:4-6; 10:29-31; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 5:4-6; Jude 20-21).
  3. Old Testament passages also acknowledge the three divine persons in one Godhead (Isaiah 42:1; 61:1-2; Luke 4:18; Hebrews 1:10; Psalm 102:25-27).
  4. Otherwise, Scripture refers to the three persons in one God as the Godhead (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9).
  5. We may find it difficult to understand, but the Father and the Son (Jesus Christ) are one in that Godhead (John 10:30).
- B. The collective cooperation of the divine persons in the one Godhead created everything that exists.
  1. Plural pronouns in Scripture evidence the plurality of divine persons responsible for creation (Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7).
  2. The plural noun for God [*Elohim*] in Scripture indicates the plurality of divine persons responsible for creation (Genesis 1:26).

The supreme moment of creation arrived as God created man. The narrative presents God as calling on the heavenly court, or the other two members of the Trinity, to center all attention on this event. (Wycliffe)



# Godhead

The text tells us he was the work of 'ELOHIYM (OT:430), the Divine Plurality, marked here more distinctly by the plural pronouns US and OUR; and to show that he was the masterpiece of God's creation, all the persons in the Godhead are represented as united in counsel and effort to produce this astonishing creature. (Clarke)

Its form is plural, but the construction is uniformly singular, i.e. it governs a singular verb or adjective, unless used of heathen divinities (Ps 96:5; 97:7). It is characteristic of Hebrew that extension, magnitude and dignity, as well as actual multiplicity, are expressed by the plural. (*ISBE*)

## II. Scripture emphasizes the role of Jesus Christ in creation.

- A. Many New Testament passages frankly attribute creation to Jesus Christ.
  - 1. Jesus Christ was coeternal with God the Father, and Jesus Christ created everything that was created (John 1:1-3).
  - 2. Jesus Christ was the Agent of God the Father for the creation of everything (1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9).
  - 3. Jesus Christ the Creator of the world came to the world (John 1:10).
- B. Scripture also affirms that Jesus Christ sustains all creation.
  - 1. The same power with which Jesus created everything, He uses to sustain that creation (Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:2-3).
  - 2. Hence, Jesus Christ is the Ruler of His creation (Revelation 3:14).

“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation” (Revelation 3:14 NIV).

“And to the messenger of the assembly of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the witness--the faithful and true--the chief of the creation of God” (*Young's Literal Translation*).

The beginning of the creation of God...Not the first of creatures as the Arians held and Unitarians do now, but the originating source of creation through whom God works (Col 1:15,18, a passage probably known to the Laodiceans, John 1:3; Heb 1:2, as is made clear by Rev 1:18; 2:8; 3:21; 5:13). (*Robertson's*)

The beginner, or author... (*Vincent's*)

## Conclusion:

- 1. Jesus Christ is the Master of many roles: God in the flesh or incarnate, Master Teacher, Sacrifice, Savior, King and Judge.
- 2. Jesus Christ is also the Creator, and Sustainer of creation.

# Godhead

## Invitation:

1. Jesus Christ who created all things is also the only one through whom mortals have access to redemption and the Father (Mark 16:16; John 14:6).
2. Erring Christians who have strayed can return to the Lord for another cleansing (Isaiah 44:22; Jeremiah 24:7; Hebrews 8:10-12).

## Works Cited

- Clarke, Adam. *Adam Clarke's Commentary*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft, 1996.
- International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (ISBE)*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft, 1996.
- Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, 1997.
- Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft, 1997.
- Wycliffe Bible Commentary*. CD-ROM. Chicago: Moody P., 1962.

# Godhead

## Come Meet Jesus as Pre-Incarnate God

### Philippians 2:5-11

**Thesis:** To examine the pre-incarnate (pre-existence of) Jesus Christ.

#### **Introduction:**

1. The pre-existence of Jesus Christ, as it is usually described, has to do with the one we know as Jesus Christ before His incarnation (i.e., when He took fleshly, bodily form through the Virgin Birth).
2. Technically, though, the Second Person of the Godhead had not adopted the roles of Jesus Christ yet in His pre-incarnate state.

There was no Jesus, no Messiah, no Christ, no Son of God, no Only Begotten, before the reign of Augustus Caesar. The relation that was before the Christian era, was not that of a son and a father, terms which always imply disparity; but it was that expressed by John in the sentence under consideration [John 1:1]. The relation was that of God and the "word of God." This phraseology unfolds a relation quite different from that of a father and son—a relation perfectly intimate, equal, and glorious. (Alexander Campbell qtd. in Mosher 313)

3. The pre-existence of Jesus Christ is axiomatic given His participation with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the creation of the universe and all that is in it (Genesis 1:26-27; Colossians 1:15-17).
4. The pre-existence or the pre-incarnate nature of Jesus Christ is also definitively taught in Scripture.

Any proper study of Jesus Christ must include not only His earthly span of some 33 years, but His eternal existence as well. The Bible plainly teaches that the Savior had an eternal existence prior to His earthly incarnation. (Jackson 1)

5. Herein, you are cordially invited to "Come Meet Jesus as Pre-Incarnate God."

#### **Body:**

- I. Old Testament Scripture teaches the pre-existence or pre-incarnate nature of the member of the Godhead we best know as Jesus Christ.**
  - A. The very **creation** in which the second member of the Godhead participated along with the Father and the Holy Spirit bespeaks of our Lord's pre-existence.
    1. The Godhead created the world (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 1:20).

# Godhead

2. Jesus Christ had an instrumental part within the Godhead in the creation of the world (1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:15-17; John 1:1-3).

## **B. Old Testament prophecy** intimates the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

1. One of the most obvious prophecies that implies the pre-incarnate state of Jesus Christ is **Micah 5:2**—the virgin birth of eternal God into fleshly form.

When Micah prophesied concerning the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, he was careful to stress that Christ's goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. (Mic. 5:2). It is evident from the context that the Lord's eternal goings forth are put in contrast to His coming forth as a child in Bethlehem of Judea. It would be difficult to imagine the prophet's intention in using such terminology if they mean anything less than the eternal pre-existence of Christ. (Vestal 129)

2. One learns by comparison of Old and New Testament passages that **Daniel 7:13-14** pertains to the Virgin Birth, the means by which God came to dwell on earth (cf. Isaiah 7:14; John 1:1-3, 14; Galatians 4:4); therefore, Daniel 7:13-14 implies the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.
3. The apostle Peter cited the prophets respecting the pre-existence or pre-incarnate nature of Jesus Christ (**1 Peter 1:10-11**).

The Spirit of Christ having been in the prophets, it follows that Christ existed during the times of the prophets, and this verse thus becomes an important text in support of the deity and pre-existence of the Lord Jesus. (Woods)

## **II. New Testament Scripture teaches the pre-existence or pre-incarnate nature of the member of the Godhead we best know as Jesus Christ.**

### **A. Jesus Christ Himself** affirmed his own pre-existence or pre-incarnate nature.

1. An article in the *ISBE* quickly amasses biblical evidence from several passages in which Jesus Christ claims to have had a pre-existent or pre-incarnate state.

That He was of higher than earthly origin and nature, He repeatedly asserts. "Ye are from beneath," he says to the Jews (8:23), "I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (compare 17:16). Therefore, He taught that He, the Son of Man, had "descended out of heaven" (3:13), where was His true abode. This carried with it, of course, an assertion of pre-existence; and this pre-existence is explicitly affirmed:

## Godhead

“What then,” He asks, “if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before?” (6:62). *It is not merely pre-existence, however, but eternal pre-existence which He claims for Himself.* “And now, Father,” He prays (17:5), “glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (compare verse 24); and again, as the most impressive language possible, He declares (8:58 the King James Version): “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am,” where He claims for Himself the timeless present of eternity as His mode of existence. In the former of these two last cited passages, the character of His pre-existent life is intimated; in it He shared the Father’s glory from all eternity (“before the world was”); He stood by the Father’s side as a companion in His glory. (“Person of Christ” emphasis added)

2. Wayne Jackson emphasizes some occasions on which Jesus claimed for himself a pre-existent (i.e. pre-fleshly) state.

The Master asserted His heavenly origin when in debate with the Jews He said, “Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.” (John 8:23). And shortly before His death, He could pray, “Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” (John 17:5) (Jackson 2)

3. Roy H. Lanier, Sr. in his book, *The Timeless Trinity for the Ceaseless Centuries*, comments on John 16:28; compare Galatians 4:4.

Just as surely as his leaving the world and going to the Father means that he was first in the world before going back to the Father, so his coming from the Father to come into the world means that he existed with the Father in heaven before he came to the world by birth of Mary in Bethlehem. (Lanier qtd. in Mosher 311)

- B. The *apostle John* distinctly taught the pre-existence or pre-incarnate nature of Jesus Christ.

1. Most Bible students suppose that the Gospel According to John is the lone historian of the Gospel records that treats the pre-existence of Jesus Christ: “John is the only one of the gospels that gives us insight into Jesus’ pre-existence” (Winkler 32); “John’s Gospel teaches the pre-existence of Christ” (“Christology”).

2. John’s special use of the Greek word, “*Logos*,” teaches the pre-incarnate nature of Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3, 14).

## Godhead

In the description of the incarnation given by the evangelist John there appears the term "Logos" in a sense new to the Scriptures, and among New-Testament writers peculiar to him. Some have maintained that it supplies an indubitable [unquestionable] ascription of personal existence to the Word, in some sense distinct from the personal existence of the supreme Father; that this Word is the Logos of the New Testament; and, consequently, that the phrase is a proof of a belief among the ancient Jews in the pre-existence, the personal operations, and the deity of the Messiah, "the Word who became flesh, and fixed his tabernacle among us." ("Incarnation")

...the repeated "with God" (verses 1, 2) compels us to distinguish the Logos from God; the words "became flesh" (verse 14) cannot be said of an attribute of God; and the Baptist's testimony, verse 15, in direct connection with this introduction (compare also such sayings of Christ as in chapters 8:58; 17:5), show clearly that John attributes personal pre-existence to the Logos. Similarly, every attempt to explain away this profound sense of Logos is inadequate, and most are ungrammatical. ("Logos")

3. Wayne Jackson forcefully makes the point respecting the relationship between John's use of "Logos" and the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

There is an interesting contrast between the eternal existence of the LOGOS and the incarnate sojourn of the Son of God. "In the beginning was (a verb of continual timeless existence) the Word." Yet, "the Word became (a verb denoting the commencement of His human existence in time) flesh." In similar fashion, Christ Himself said, "Before Abraham was born (definite origin), I am (always existing)." (John 8:58). Thus, the LOGOS had a prehuman, timeless existence. (Jackson 1)

4. The apostle John recorded the words of John the Baptist at the baptism of Jesus, which affirmation implies the pre-existence of our Lord, John 1:15.

*After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.* [As a man John was six months older than Jesus, but Jesus was the eternal Word. The Baptist therefore asserts here the pre-existence of our Lord.] (McGarvey)

5. In 1 John 1:2, the apostle avowed both the pre-incarnation and the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

## Godhead

This life had been with the Father prior to the incarnation and is thus eternal. Here is the first of four stages indicated in the sacred writings regarding the second person of the Godhead and points irresistibly to his deity: (1) his pre-existence in eternity as the Word prior to creation. (Woods)

- C. Each passage where Jesus Christ is *called God* equates to Him the same eternity as the other two members of the Godhead, and since Jesus Christ took a bodily form, refer to His pre-existence or pre-incarnate nature (John 20:28; Acts 20:28).
- D. The *apostle Paul* repeatedly taught the pre-existence or pre-incarnate state of Jesus Christ.

- 1. The apostle Paul taught that Jesus Christ, prior to His incarnation, had an earthly role (*1 Corinthians 10:4, 9*).

1 Cor 10:9 I have already supposed, in the note at 1 Cor 10:4, that Christ is intended by the spiritual rock that followed them: and that it was he, not the rock, that did follow or accompany the Israelites in the wilderness. This was the angel of God's presence who was with the church in the wilderness, to whom our fathers would not obey, as Stephen says, Acts 7:38 and 39. (Clarke)

1 Cor 10:4 The literal sense of that Rock was Christ is no more to be pressed than is the literal sense of "I am the true vine" (John 15:1). The was, rather than is, may, however, point to Christ's pre-existence (cf. 2 Cor 8:9; Gal 4:4). (Wycliffe)

The rock to which Paul referred here was clearly stated: "The rock was Christ." The miracle of Moses' bringing forth water from the rock in the wilderness (Exo. 17:5ff) provided literal water for Israel; but much more than that is in evidence here. As Marsh said, "The rock was Christ, not 'is' or 'is a type of'...and this is a clear statement of the pre-existence of Christ." (Paul W. Marsh qtd. in Coffman on 1 Corinthians 10:4)

The view preferred here is that Paul meant "Christ," the same being another reference to his pre-existence, and indicating that our Lord's pre-incarnation activity included that of shepherding the chosen people in the wilderness. (Coffman on 1 Corinthians 10:9)

- 2. Consider *2 Corinthians 8:9*.

By the Spirit, Paul was led to write concerning Christ, "though

# Godhead

he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor..." (II Cor. 8:9). If Jesus did not preexist in grandeur and glory before His birth, when was He rich? Certainly not while on earth! He was born in a borrowed stable, rowed the Sea of Galilee in a borrowed boat, fed the multitudes with borrowed food, rode into Jerusalem on a borrowed beast, ate His last meal in a borrowed room and finally was buried in a borrowed tomb. He once announced, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Luke 9:58). (Jackson 2)

3. No passage more directly or more dramatically attests to the pre-existence or pre-incarnate state of Jesus Christ than *Philippians 2:5-11*.

In this context, with one majestic sweep of his pen, Paul embraces Christ's 1. *Preexistence* (equality with God), 2. *Incarnation* (made in the likeness of men), 3. *Coronation* (God highly exalted Him). ...Similarly, the Hebrew writer notes: 1. He made the worlds-indicating His pre-existence. 2. He made purification of sins having been sent in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin (Rom 8:3)-this involves the incarnation. 3. He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Heb. 1:2,3). (Jackson 2 emphasis added)

### III. How does the pre-incarnate role of Jesus Christ relate to other roles correctly ascribed to Jesus Christ?

- A. What was the pre-incarnate role of the member of the Godhead we best know as Jesus Christ?
  1. Jesus Christ participated in the creation (Genesis 1:26-27; John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:2-3).
  2. Jesus Christ interacted with the Israelites in the wilderness wandering (1 Corinthians 10:4, 9).

Christ is represented in the passages by Paul and John as pre-existent before coming to the earth, and presiding over the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness. ...Here he designates him as the one who accompanied Israel in the cloud through the wilderness, and gave them deliverances when they needed. (Lipscomb and Shepherd)

It is possible that Paul is saying that Christ was present with His people all along the wilderness journey and that He was sustaining them spiritually by every word that proceeded out of His mouth for their direction, protection, and encouragement. (Applebury 183)



# Godhead

- B. What was the role of Jesus Christ after His incarnation?
  - 1. Jesus came “to seek and save” the “lost” (Luke 19:10).
  - 2. This was accomplished through His ministry, death on the cross, resurrection and Ascension (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Mark 16:19).
  - 3. Jesus Christ became the world’s Savior (1 John 4:14).
- C. What is the role of Jesus Christ since His Ascension back to heaven?
  - 1. Jesus Christ is Mediator and Intercessor (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:25).
  - 2. Jesus Christ will come again to retrieve the saved (John 14:3).
  - 3. Jesus will come again to punish disobedient souls (Hebrews 10:29-30; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
  - 4. Jesus will judge all humanity of all time (John 5:28-29).

## Conclusion:

- 1. Flavil Nichols concisely summarizes the pre-existence of Jesus Christ:

From all eternity in the direction of the past, Jesus Himself, in His pre-fleshly state, not only was “in the form of” Deity (Phil 2:6), was “with” Deity [the Father and the Holy Spirit], but He also (Himself) “was” Deity (John 1:1-3). He had “glory” with the Father “before the world was” (John 17:5)-which He surrendered to be our Savior! (25)

- 2. More extensively stated, it is reasonable to deduce from Scripture the pre-existence or pre-incarnate nature of Jesus Christ (though we do not subscribe to a human spirit of Christ in addition to His divine spirit per the context of the citation).

1. *Christ is represented as his Father’s messenger, or angel, being distinct from his Father, sent by his Father, long before his incarnation...* The appearances of Christ to the patriarchs are described like the appearance of an angel, or man really distinct from God; yet one in whom God, or Jehovah, had a peculiar indwelling, or with whom the divine nature had a personal union. 2. *Christ, when he came into the world, is said, in several passages of Scripture, to have divested himself of some glory which he had before his incarnation. ...*(John 17:4,5; 2 Cor 8:9). ...Nor can it be said of Christ, as man, that he was rich, if he were never in a richer state before than while he was on earth. 3. ...that the soul of Jesus Christ should pre-exist, that it might have an *opportunity to give its previous actual consent to the great and painful undertaking of making atonement for man’s sins.* ...The covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son is therefore represented as being made before the foundation of the world. (“Pre-Existence of Jesus Christ” emphasis added)

# Godhead

3. The Jewish people, who for centuries were the custodians of Sacred Scripture and before that the beneficiaries of Patriarchal oral instruction, were thoroughly convinced about the pre-existence of the Christ: "...The Jews uniformly maintained the pre-existence of the Messiah" ("Pre-Existence of Jesus Christ").
4. Everything carefully evaluated, we can be assured from the Bible of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ and His respective roles then and since: "Any view which fails to include the Divine preexistence of Mary's Son is certainly erroneous" (Jackson 2).

## Invitation:

1. The first time Jesus Christ came to this earth, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17).
2. However, upon the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, our Lord will retrieve the saved or obedient and punish the disobedient (Hebrews 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
3. What will Jesus do with you upon his return (Mark 16:16; 1 John 1:9)?

## Works Cited

- Applebury, T.R. *Studies in First Corinthians*. CD-ROM. Joplin: College P., 1963.
- "Christology." *McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft, 2000.
- Clarke, Adam. *Adam Clarke's Commentary*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft, 1996.
- Coffman, James Burton. *James Burton Coffman Bible Study Library*. CD-ROM. Abilene: ACU P., 1989.
- "Incarnation." *McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft, 2000.
- Jackson, Wayne. "The Pre-Existence and Birth of Jesus." *Spiritual Sword*. 1.3. (1970): 1-4.
- Lipscomb, David. *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles: First Corinthians*. J.W. Shepherd, ed. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1987. CD-ROM. Austin: Wordsearch, 2005.
- "Logos." *McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft, 2000.
- McGarvey, J.W. and Philip Y. Pendleton. *Four-Fold Gospel*. Cincinnati: Standard, 1914. CD-ROM. Austin: Wordsearch, 2004.
- Mosher, Keith. "The Pre-Existence of Jesus." *Jesus Christ: The Gift of God's Grace and the Object of Man's Faith*. Curtis A. Cates, ed. Memphis: Memphis School of Preaching, 1992. 310-317.
- Nichols, Flavil H. "For He Himself Knew What Was in Man." CD-ROM. *Spiritual Sword*. 18.3 (1987): 25-26.
- "Person of Christ." *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (ISBE)*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft, 1996.
- "Pre-Existence of Jesus Christ." *McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft, 2000.
- Vestal, Mike. "The Triune Nature of God." *The Godhead: A Study of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit*. CD-ROM. Southaven: Southaven Church of Christ, 1998. 119-139.
- Winkler, Daniel. "The Life of Christ." CD-ROM. *Spiritual Sword*. 30.4 (1999): 29-33.
- Woods, Guy N. *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles: Peter, John and Jude*. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1991. CD-ROM. Austin: Wordsearch, 2005.
- Wycliffe Bible Commentary*. CD-ROM Chicago: Moody P., 1962.

# Godhead

## The Deity of Jesus Christ

### Colossians 2:8-10

**Thesis:** To prove that Jesus Christ is divine or possesses the nature, character and attributes of God, and that He is, therefore, God or Deity.

#### **Introduction:**

1. Presumably, each person present today recognizes that the Bible is the final, absolute, complete, divinely inspired and inerrant Word of God.
  - a. As such, the Bible is the standard for the Christian by which he can discern between mortal and immortal or humanity and deity.
  - b. The Bible's testimony is sufficient to prove to every honest student of the Bible the deity of Jesus Christ.
2. Probably all or at least most present today already acknowledge the Deity of Jesus Christ.
  - a. Therefore, the study today will reinforce the confidence of those who already admit the Deity of Jesus.
  - b. In addition, any present who may be unsure or have reservations, the lesson will embolden one's confidence respecting the Deity of Jesus Christ.
  - c. We are aware that since some religions deny the Deity of Jesus Christ, it is possible for some present today to be confused about the matter (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, Buddhists, etc.).
3. A statement such as "Jesus is God" may be a difficult and confusing declaration for some people.
  - a. The phraseology or terms may be unfamiliar even to persons who readily acknowledge the Deity of Jesus.
  - b. However, the word "God" is equivalent to the word "Deity," respecting divinity.
  - c. Jesus Christ is one of three members of the Godhead, hence, God-the-Son (cf. God-the-Father and God-the-Holy Spirit, Matthew 28:18-20; 3:16-17; Ephesians 4:4-6).
  - d. Hence, a word not appearing in our English translations (though not an anti-biblical reference), "trinity," commonly refers to three persons in one Godhead.

#### **Body:**

1. **Prophecies and fulfillment of prophecies concerning the Messiah prove that Jesus Christ is God or Deity.**
  - A. Prophecy foretold that God ("The Mighty God") would appear as the Messiah through the lineage of King David (Isaiah 9:6-7).
  - B. The Gospel records confirm the fulfillment of such prophecies and apply

# Godhead

them to Jesus of Nazareth (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31-33).

- C. The Isaiah 9:6-7 prophecy occurred about 700 years before its fulfillment in the first century A.D.

## II. The pre-fleshly existence of Jesus Christ proves Jesus Christ is God or Deity.

- A. Jesus claimed to have existed before the time of Abraham (John 8:58).
- B. Jesus existed before creation, participated in creation and maintains the created universe (Colossians 1:14-17; John 1:1-3, 14; Genesis 1:26).
- C. At a time chosen by God, the second person of the Godhead came to earth in the form of mankind (Galatians 4:4).

## III. Jesus Christ claimed to be God or Deity.

- A. Jesus Christ on several occasions claimed to be God.
  - 1. The first century religious leaders understood that Jesus affirmed that He was God (John 5:17-18).
  - 2. Jesus avowed to the Samaritan woman at the well that He is God (John 4:24-26).
  - 3. Likewise, Jesus clearly stated to the Sanhedrin that He was the Messiah, the Son of God, hence, Deity Himself (Mark 14:61-62).
- B. Jesus could not have been a good prophet of God and not the Son of God (Deity), as some claim regarding Jesus of Nazareth.
  - 1. Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and ascribed Deity to Himself.
  - 2. Therefore, He was either all that He said that He was, or He was not a good prophet sent by God, but instead a liar or deluded person.

## IV. The testimony of others affirms that Jesus Christ is God or Deity.

- A. The enemies of Jesus Christ testified that He is Deity or God, which testimony because they were the enemies of Jesus is especially powerful testimony regarding the Deity of Jesus.
  - 1. Despite claiming to be the King of a non-earthly kingdom, Pilate 'found no fault in Him at all' (John 18:33-38).
  - 2. Judas who betrayed Jesus acknowledged that Jesus was innocent (Matthew 27:3-5).
  - 3. The centurion at the foot of the cross remarked that Jesus is the Son of God, Deity (Matthew 27:54).
  - 4. The demons acknowledged that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God (Luke 4:34).
- B. Friends of Jesus Christ also avowed that He is God or Deity.
  - 1. John the Immerser affirmed that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, Deity (John 1:29, 34).
  - 2. The apostle John wrote the words of Jesus claiming to be God or Deity (Revelation 1:8).
  - 3. The apostle Peter affirmed that Jesus is the Christ, hence Deity (Mat-

# Godhead

threw 16:16).

4. The apostle Thomas plainly referred to Jesus as “God” (John 20:28).
5. On the road to Damascus, the apostle Paul acknowledged the Deity of Jesus Christ (Acts 22:6-10)—and subsequently as well (Philippians 3:7-11).
6. Angels declared that Jesus is Christ, hence, God or Deity (Luke 2:10-11).
7. God-the-Father affirmed that Jesus is the Son of God, hence, Deity or God (Matthew 3:17; 17:5).
8. Simeon the prophet declared that Jesus is God (Luke 2:25-32).
9. Anna the prophetess also declared that Jesus is God (Luke 2:36-38).

## V. Jehovah (ASV) of the Old Testament is God, some of which references either apply to the second person of the Godhead or are also true about Him.

- A. Jehovah is the Creator (Isaiah 40:28; John 1:3).
- B. Jehovah is the Savior (Isaiah 43:11; John 4:42).
- C. Jehovah raises the dead (1 Samuel 2:6; John 5:21).
- D. Jehovah is the great Judge (Joel 3:11-12; John 5:27; Matthew 25:31-33).
- E. Jehovah is the everlasting Light (Isaiah 60:19-20; John 8:12).
- F. Jehovah is the Great I Am (Exodus 3:14-15; John 8:58).
- G. Jehovah is the great Shepherd (Psalm 23:1; John 10:11).
- H. Jehovah is the glory of God (Isaiah 42:8; John 17:1, 5).
- I. Jehovah is the first and the last (Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; Revelation 1:17; 2:8).
- J. Jehovah is the Redeemer (Hosea 13:4, 14; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:7; Titus 2:14).
- K. Jehovah is the Bridegroom (Isaiah 62:3-5; Hosea 2:16-19; Matthew 25:1-13; Revelation 21:2).
- L. Jehovah is the Rock (Psalm 18:2; 1 Corinthians 10:4).
- M. Jehovah forgives sins (Jeremiah 31:34; Mark 2:7, 10).
- N. Jehovah is worshipped by angels (Psalm 148:1-2; Hebrews 1:6).
- O. Jehovah resides in heaven and is addressed by mortals there (Acts 7:59).
- P. Jehovah is the Creator of angels (Psalm 148:2, 5; Colossians 1:16).
- Q. Jehovah is confessed as Lord (Isaiah 45:21-23; Philippians 2:11).

## VI. The resurrection of Jesus Christ proves that He is God or Deity.

- A. Jesus Christ was neither the first nor the only one resurrected from the grave.
  1. The son of the widow of Zarephath was raised from the grave (1 Kings 17:22).
  2. The son of a Shunammite was raised from the dead (2 Kings 4:35).
  3. A dead man who fell against Elisha’s bones resurrected (2 Kings 13:21).
  4. Jairus’ daughter was raised from the dead (Matthew 9:18-25; Mark 5:22-43).
  5. The son of the widow of Nain was raised from the dead (Luke 7:11-15).
  6. Jesus resurrected Lazarus (John 11:44).

# Godhead

7. The apostle Peter raised Dorcas (Acts 9:36-41).
  8. All of these, however, died a second time and returned to the grave—unlike Jesus Christ!
- B. Jesus Christ was the first to be raised from the grave never to die again (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23).**
1. Jesus prophesied of His own death and resurrection (Matthew 16:21; Mark 9:9).
  2. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was announced by angels (Matthew 28:1-6; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-9; John 20:12).
- C. Hundreds of persons saw the resurrected Christ (Acts 3:14-15):**
1. Mary Magdalene (John 20:1-18; Mark 16:9).
  2. Another disciple named Mary (Matthew 28:9-10).
  3. Two male disciples (Luke 24:13-31).
  4. The apostle Peter (Luke 24:34).
  5. The apostles except for Thomas and Judas (John 20:19-24).
  6. Thomas and the disciples (John 20:26-28).
  7. More than 500 brethren at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6).
  8. The apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:8; Acts 9:3-8; 22:6-11).
- D. Our resurrected Lord sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Ephesians 1:20).**
- VII. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ proves that He is God or Deity.**
- A. The virgin birth was prophesied (Isaiah 7:14).
  - B. The prophecy of the Virgin Birth was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth (Matthew 1:23).
  - C. God brought about the Virgin Birth at a time suitable to Him (Galatians 4:4).
- VIII. The perfect, sinless life of Jesus Christ proves that He is God or Deity.**
- A. Jesus committed no sin (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22).
  - B. Our Lord's enemies found Him guiltless (Luke 23:4).
- IX. Oneness with God-the-Father proves that Jesus Christ is God or Deity.**
- A. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are persons of the one Godhead (Matthew 28:18-20).
  - B. The Father and the Son are one (John 10:30; 14:9; 17:21).
- X. The supernatural knowledge of Jesus Christ proves that He is God or Deity.**
- A. Jesus possessed supernatural knowledge (John 1:47-49; 2:24-25; 4:28-29).
  - B. Some others had supernatural knowledge because that information was given to them by God (Acts 9:10-17; 21:10-11).
  - C. Having supernatural knowledge and affirming oneself to be God or Deity proves Christ's Deity.
- XI. The miracles of Jesus Christ prove that He is God or Deity.**
- A. Jesus performed miracles (John 3:2; 5:36).

# Godhead

- B. Miraculous power was also given to various servants of God (Acts 2:4; 3:4-8).
- C. Having miraculous power and affirming oneself to be God or Deity proves Christ's Deity (John 20:30-31).

## **Conclusion:**

- 1. The Bible affirms repeatedly that Jesus Christ is God or Deity.
- 2. Jesus Christ, God incarnate, walked on the earth, died for us, resurrected from the grave and is now back in heaven.

## **Invitation:**

- 1. Jesus Christ, God incarnate, who died for us and rose again, will save all who will obey Him (Hebrews 5:8-9).
- 2. Erring Christians need to repent and pray for the forgiveness of their recent sins (Acts 8:22).
- 3. Unbaptized believers need to repent and be immersed for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38).

# Godhead

## Come Meet Jesus as the Incarnate God

### 1 Timothy 3:16

**Thesis:** To demonstrate from the Scriptures that God came to earth in a fleshly body.  
**Introduction:**

1. The incarnation (or taking a fleshly body) of Jesus Christ is essential and foundational to Christianity; the incarnation of Jesus Christ cannot be over-emphasized.
2. Without the substitutionary sacrifice of the incarnate God on Calvary's cross there could be no forgiveness of sins.
3. Without the resurrection from the dead of incarnate God, death would not have been vanquished so that we also may resurrect from the dead someday.
4. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is so vital to Christianity that it is a chief test of fellowship!

**Body:**

- I. **First, we must define what we mean by the incarnation of Jesus Christ.**
  - A. The English word "incarnation" does not appear in our translations.

Neither the noun 'incarnation' nor the adjective 'incarnate' is biblical, but the Gk. equivalent of Lat. in carne ('in flesh') is found in some important NT statements about the person and work of Jesus Christ. (*New Bible Dictionary*)

INCARNATION A theological term for the coming of God's Son into the world as a human being. The term itself is not used in the Bible, but it is based on clear references in the New Testament to Jesus as a person "in the flesh" (Rom 8:3; Eph 2:15; Col 1:22). (*Nelson's*)
  - B. The word "incarnation" summarizes or represents in short an indisputable Bible doctrine.

That very person who was in the beginning—who was with God—and who was God, John 1:1, in the fullness of time became flesh—became incarnated by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the virgin. Allowing this apostle to have written by divine inspiration, is not this verse, taken in connection with John 1:1, an absolute and incontestable proof of the proper and eternal Godhead of Christ Jesus? (Clarke)

- I. The Virgin Birth was the means by which the incarnation of Jesus



# Godhead

Christ came about, Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:31-35; 2:11; Galatians 4:4; cf. Genesis 3:15.

Jesus was born “according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:3), in order that “through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death” (Heb. 2:14); and further, that he might be “made like unto his brethren” so as to be a merciful and faithful high priest (Heb. 2:17). The incarnation was necessary in order for Jesus Christ to accomplish these purposes. The virgin birth was necessary in order for him to become flesh. (Highers 22)

Absolutely essential to the Christian system is the Incarnation of Christ-and, the virgin birth is the how and the when of the Incarnation. (Cates 301)

2. John 1:1, 14 makes it clear that “the Word became flesh” “by being born in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary” (McGarvey and Pendleton).
  3. Briefly, the incarnation pertains to God coming to earth in bodily form (i.e., with a literal body, Hebrews 10:5).
- C. The incarnation (or taking a fleshly body) of Jesus Christ is essential and foundational to Christianity; the incarnation of Jesus Christ cannot be overemphasized.

The doctrine of the incarnation is fundamental to Christianity, and is the basis upon which the entire fabric of revealed religion rests. It is presented to our faith from the plane of the miraculous, and is to be considered as the one all-comprehensive miracle of Christianity. (*McClintock and Strong*)

- D. The subject of the incarnation of Jesus Christ necessitates the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

Incarnation of the Savior. God manifested in the flesh. Jesus didn't begin His life in Bethlehem. He was there when Bethlehem's site was created (John 1:1-14). He was eternally God and equally God. John describes his incarnation in four words where Luke used hundreds (Heb. 5:7-8). “Who in the days of his flesh.” (Clark, “Members” 262)

Christ was the Word in His pre-existent state, not the Son until the incarnation: Luke 1:35; John 1:1)... (Mosher 312)

- E. We hasten to acknowledge that Jesus Christ, though incarnate, retained His full Deity.
1. Thomas acknowledged the humanity and Deity of the resurrected Lord (John 20:27-28).

# Godhead

2. The apostle Paul affirmed the simultaneous humanity and Deity of Jesus Christ (Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 2:9).

## II. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is the subject of Scripture in both testaments of the Bible.

### A. The Old Testament predicted the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

1. The apostle Paul affirmed that the incarnation of Jesus Christ was “promised fore by his prophets in the holy scriptures” as pertaining to “the seed of David according to the flesh”(Romans 1:2-4).

2. Genesis 3:15 is the very first intimation of the then future incarnation of Jesus Christ.

The first announcement of the divine incarnation was given not while Adam and Eve remained in a state of innocency, but after they had rebelled against their Maker. (Pink)

3. God’s promise to Abraham about the blessing upon all humanity through a descendant of Abraham was found to be further intimation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Genesis 12:3; Acts 3:22-26).
4. The inspired prophecy of Moses respecting another Prophet/Lawgiver (of the New Testament) coming from among the Israelites was found to be further intimation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; Acts 3:22-26).
5. Prominent Old Testament passages about the Virgin Birth of “the mighty God” foretell the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6).

When one deals with the virgin birth of our Lord, he deals with the incarnation of Jesus. (Clark, “Virgin Birth” 188)

6. Old Testament prophecy that the Being “from everlasting” who would “be ruler in Israel” and come from Bethlehem speaks to the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Micah 5:2).

In the OT prophecies, which represent Christ as a person both human and divine, He is set forth in “the seed” of the woman, a descendant of Abraham, of Judah, and of David, “a man of sorrows.” But He is also called “the Mighty God,” “the Eternal Father,” “the Son of God,” “the Lord [Jehovah] our righteousness.” Although these familiar Scriptures do not formally state the doctrine of the incarnation, they logically suggest or lead up to it. (*New Unger’s*)

### B. The New Testament is filled with doctrinal statements about the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Although the doctrine does not rest for its authority upon iso-

# Godhead

lated proof texts, but rather upon the Scripture revelation as a whole, still there are certain utterances of great weight in which the truth is distinctly, and we may say even formally, stated (see John 1:1-14, cf. 1 John 1:1-3; 4:2-3; Rom 1:2-5; Phil 2:6-11; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 2:14). The only way in which the force of these teachings can be set aside or lessened is by proving lack of authority on the part of the Scriptures. (*New Unger's*)

1. John 1:1 and 14 are unexcelled in reference to the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Even the most casual of readers must be impressed with the logical and verbal connection between verse 1 and verse 14 of this remarkable chapter. The Word was (evermore existed) and became flesh (at a specific point in time) and dwelt among men. (Woods)

2. Philippians 2:7-8 avows that Jesus Christ "was made in the likeness of men" and "in fashion as a man."
3. The "Son of man" passages affirm the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Daniel 7:13; Matthew 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8, 40; 16:27-28; 17:9, 12; 19:28; 20:18; 24:27, 30; 25:31-46; 26:24, 64; Mark 10:45; 14:61-62; Luke 9:43-44; 19:10; John 1:51; 3:13-14; 6:27, 53; 12:23; Acts 7:56; Revelation 1:13; 14:14).
4. Scripture is riddled with passages respecting the incarnation of Christ so that hardly any other doctrine has more biblical support.

### **III. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is an indisputable fact.**

- A. The apostle Paul affirmed that the incarnation of Jesus Christ was "without controversy" (1 Timothy 3:16).

Paul emphasizes that there is no dispute about the truth which he is about to state. It is "without controversy." He continued by saying, "Great is the Mystery." The truth about to be stated had been a great mystery, but is not at this time a mystery at all. (Cook 116)

- B. Even the divinely given names of Mary's child indicate the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

The name Jesus was given to emphasize salvation (save His people from their sins), and the name Emmanuel was given to emphasize incarnation (God with us). (Webster 478)

- C. Denial of the incarnation of Jesus Christ is heresy!

1. Ralph Gilmore correctly assessed Scripture when he wrote that "...

# Godhead

the *doctrine* of the incarnation of Jesus is a matter that presents a test of fellowship” (207)

The apostolic writers clearly see that both the deity and the manhood of Jesus are fundamental to his saving work. . . . We should, therefore, expect the NT to treat any denial that Jesus Christ was both truly divine and truly human as a damning heresy, destructive of the gospel; and so it does. (*New Bible Dictionary*)

2. Anyone denying “that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh...is that spirit of antichrist” (1 John 4:2-3; 2 John 7).
3. Jesus Christ Himself plainly proclaimed that He came bodily (Luke 24:39).
4. The apostle Paul affirmed that mankind knew Jesus Christ “after the flesh” (2 Corinthians 5:16).
5. The apostle John affirmed that he and others had “looked upon” and “handled” the flesh of Jesus Christ, which also he preached (1 John 1:1-3).

#### **IV. The purposes of the incarnation of Jesus Christ are many.**

- A. The incarnation of Jesus Christ permitted God to experience the temptations that humans face (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15).

The mystery of the Incarnation would have been needless and fruitless, had His Humanity not been subject to all its right and ordinary conditions. (Edersheim)

- B. The incarnation of Jesus Christ enabled mankind to have a perfect High Priest between humanity and God (Hebrews 2:17).
- C. The incarnation of Jesus Christ provided a perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world (Hebrews 9:26; 10:12).
1. Jesus Christ was “put to death in the flesh” and “suffered in the flesh” (1 Peter 3:18; 4:1).
  2. Humanity is “reconciled in the body of his flesh through death” (Colossians 1:21-22; cf. Ephesians 2:15-16).
- D. The incarnation of Jesus Christ was God’s special means of seeking and saving the lost (Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15; Hebrews 9:26, 28; 1 John 3:5).
- E. The power of death over humanity was destroyed through the incarnation of Jesus Christ and His subsequent resurrection from the grave (2 Timothy 1:10; Hebrews 2:14-15).
- F. The incarnation of Jesus Christ was God’s means to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).
- G. Mankind has the opportunity to enjoy an ‘abundant life’ through the in-

# Godhead

carnation of Jesus Christ (John 10:10).

- H. The incarnation of Jesus Christ was victorious over the flesh, whereas the rest of humanity faltered in the flesh (Romans 8:3).

## Conclusion:

1. With Edersheim one must wholeheartedly exclaim: "The Incarnation of Christ was the link which bound earth to heaven..."

The incarnation was the ultimate act of communication. It testifies to the extent of God's love as he reached out to his creation. He not only knew his audience, he became one with them. (Adcox 5)

2. Imagine the awesomeness of the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

The incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest miracle of all human history. That God Almighty, who made this world and made man, would condescend to the level of man, that the Son of God would take upon himself the form of man and become a servant and live among men, that he would be born of woman, whom he created, that he would subject himself to his own law and then live accordingly, are truly remarkable things to consider. (Laws 2)

## Invitation:

1. God purchased his church through the blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28).
2. Through the "washing of regeneration" (baptism) we can come into contact with the saving blood of Jesus Christ (Titus 3:5; Revelation 1:5).
3. That saving blood is also available to Christians (1 John 1:7-10).

## Works Cited

- Adcox, Jimmy. "Teaching on Preaching." *Glory to God Through Christian Living and Through Christian Living*. Winford Claiborne, ed. CD-ROM. Henderson: Freed-Hardeman College, 1989. 1-9.
- Cates, Curtis A. "Was the Virgin Birth of Christ Necessary for Man's Salvation?" *The Bible None Like It*. Curtis A. Cates, ed. CD-ROM. Memphis: Memphis School of Preaching, 1989. 301-315.
- Clark, J. Winfred. "Members Must Be Prepared." *Expositions of the Expositor*. Vol. 1. Michael R. McDaniel, ed. CD-ROM. Memphis: Memphis School of Preaching, 2001. 259-263.
- Clark, Winfred. "The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ." *Major Lessons from the Major Prophets*. B.J. Clarke, ed. CD-ROM. Southaven: Southaven Church of Christ, 1995. 177-189.
- Clarke, Adam. *Adam Clarke's Commentary*. CD-ROM. Seattle: BibleSoft, 1996.
- Cook, Kenneth. "The Church and the Mystery of Godliness." *The Epistles of I and II Timothy and Titus*. Curtis A. Cates, ed. CD-ROM. Memphis: Memphis School of Preaching, 1986. 113-120.

# Godhead

- Edersheim, Alfred. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. CD-ROM. Escondido: Four Group, n.d.
- Gilmore, Ralph. "Is the Restoration Movement Complete?" *Family, Church and Society Restoration and Renewal*. David L. Lipe, ed. Henderson: Freed-Hardeman University, 1995. 201-210.
- Highers, Alan. "Why I Believe in the Virgin Birth of Jesus." *Spiritual Sword* 23.1 (1991): 20-22.
- Laws, Jim. "The Role and Purpose of Miracles." *Spiritual Sword* 25.1 (1993): 2-4. *McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia*. CD-ROM. Seattle: BibleSoft, 2000.
- McGarvey, J.W. and Philip Y. Pendleton. *The Four-Fold Gospel*. Cincinnati: Standard, 1914. CD-ROM. Austin: Wordsearch, 2004.
- Mosher, Keith A., Sr. "The Pre-existence of Christ." *Jesus Christ, The Gift of God's Grace and the Object of Man's Faith*. Curtis A. Cates, ed. CD-ROM. Memphis: Memphis School of Preaching, 1992. 310-317.
- Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROM. Nashville: Nelson, 1986.
- New Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROM. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1962.
- New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROM. Chicago: Moody P., 1988.
- Pink, Arthur W. *The Life of David*. CD-ROM. Escondido: Ephesians Four, n.d.
- Webster, Wade. "Isaac and Christ." *The Book of Genesis*. Curtis A. Cates, ed. CD-ROM. Memphis: Memphis School of Preaching, 2001.475-490.
- Woods, Guy N. *A Commentary on the Gospel According to John*. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1989. CD-ROM. Austin: Wordsearch, 2005.

# Godhead

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

### Luke 1:26-35

**Thesis:** To become better acquainted with our Lord and Savior.

**Introduction:**

1. Both the Bible and secular history provide information regarding the birth of Jesus.
2. We can appeal to some degree to secular history for information because Jesus Christ was an historical person.
  - a. He was a real human being (besides His divine side).
  - b. He lived in a real place.
  - c. He lived in a real, definite and identifiable time period.
  - d. Jesus Christ had and continues to have a real and a genuine influence on other people.
3. However, the Bible and secular history provide only a limited amount of information about the birth and life of Jesus Christ.
  - a. To the Christian, the Bible information about Jesus Christ is unimpeachable.
  - b. However, we must scrutinize carefully secular history to distinguish between fact and myth or unsubstantiated tradition (i.e., portraits of Jesus, reports of the boy Jesus miraculously repairing toys, etc. are not factual).

**Body:**

- I. The birth of Jesus Christ was out of the ordinary; He was born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14).**
  - A. The Gospel writers confirmed the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy about the Virgin Birth of the Christ.
    1. Matthew 1:18-25 records the announcement by an angel to Joseph that the Isaiah 7:14 prophecy about a virgin birth was about to be fulfilled through his betrothed, Mary.
    2. Luke 1:26-38 records the announcement by an angel to Mary of the impending fulfillment of the Isaiah 7:14 prophecy about a virgin birth was about to be fulfilled through her.
  - B. The birth of Jesus Christ was miraculous or supernatural, but more than simply miraculous.
    1. A miracle is a supernatural event effected by God that is discernible.
    2. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ was miraculous in a way that exceeded miracles connected with the birth of others (e.g., Isaac and John the Baptist, Genesis 12; 15; 17; 21:1-7; Luke 1:5-25, 36).
  - C. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is a cardinal doctrine of Christianity.
    1. The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ pertains to the Deity of Jesus.

# Godhead

2. The Virgin Birth was the vehicle or means by which God came to this earth to live among men (John 1:1-3, 14; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:16-17; Philippians 2:6-8).
- D. The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ is the basis for God's plan to redeem fallen mankind.
1. Redemption of humanity has long been the subject of prophecy and associated with a Messiah or Savior (Genesis 3:15; 49:10; Isaiah 7:14).
  2. The New Testament confirms that the mission of Jesus Christ was to save mankind from sin (Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10).
  3. Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, which if theme were removed from the Bible, the Bible would be reduced to a mass of unrelated and unimportant words.
  4. The Virgin Birth facilitated the delivery of a perfect sin sacrifice by which sins could actually be remitted (John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
  5. Jesus Christ is the only way by which anyone can be saved from his sins (Acts 4:12; Romans 10:13; Acts 2:38).

## II. Enemies of Christianity object to and discount the truthfulness of the virgin birth.

- A. Enemies of the Christianity include atheists and modernists, the former denying the existence of God and His system of religion while the latter is a religionist who devalues the supernatural intervention of God recorded in the Bible.
1. Consequently, enemies of Christianity attack as fictitious every Bible miracle.
  2. Enemies of Christianity especially attack the Virgin Birth and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, since these two miraculous events are crucial to the validity of Christianity.
  3. Enemies of Christianity would reduce the Bible to mythology and fairy tales.
  4. The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ did not come under attack until the 18th century through so-called *higher criticism*.
- B. Modernists and liberals pose a greater threat than atheists.
1. Atheists such as Francis Voltaire and Thomas Paine are announced opponents of Christianity and therefore are more easily discernible.
  2. Modernists and liberals, though, purport to be proponents of Christianity while they actually undermine it.
  3. Modernists and liberals, through their covert and masked attacks on the Bible, are more dangerous because they do not announce their opposition to the Bible and Christianity.
- C. Modernists object to the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ on the grounds that it is biologically impossible.



# Godhead

1. Parthenogenesis (reproduction without fertilization) is limited to lower plants and invertebrate animals, and it is impossible with higher life forms such as man.
  2. Therefore, since modernists disbelieve Bible miracles, they conclude the Virgin Birth could not have occurred.
  3. Christians, though, believe in the Bible miracles (including the Virgin Birth), for we know that nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37).
- D. Modernists argue that the Gospel of John, though speaking of the Deity of Jesus Christ, says nothing regarding the Virgin Birth of Jesus.
1. Actually, every reference to the incarnation of Jesus Christ is a reference to the Virgin Birth (John 1:1-3, 10, 14-15, 18).
  2. The apostle John combined references of the incarnation of Jesus Christ with references to the Deity of Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3, 10, 14-15, 18).
  3. Especially John 1:14 attests to the Virgin Birth, or harmonizes with other Gospel records (Matthew and Mark) respecting the incarnation of the second person of the Godhead.
- E. Modernists claim that neither Jesus Christ nor any apostle referred to the Virgin Birth of Christ.
1. Romans 1:3-4 refers to a member of the Godhead taking the form of a human (the incarnation) and implies a reference to the Virgin Birth.
  2. Likewise, Galatians 4:4 refers to the incarnation, and therefore by implication, it refers to the Virgin Birth.
- F. Modernists claim that Joseph was the father of Jesus.
1. Modernists cite Mary saying Joseph was the father of Jesus (Luke 2:48).
  2. Modernists further remind us that the Jews commonly viewed Jesus as the son of Joseph (Luke 2:41; Matthew 13:55; Luke 3:23; 4:22).
  3. True, Joseph was the foster or stepfather of Jesus, and the world was unaware of the divine nature of Jesus until He began His miraculously accompanied ministry.
- G. Modernists argue that the birth of Jesus, like birth stories of famous or illustrious men, have been embellished or augmented with fables and myths.
1. The virgin Coatlicue clutched a ball of feathers that had fallen from heaven to her bosom and conceived a son, Huitzilopchi, war god of the Aztecs.
  2. The virgin mother of Quetzalcoatl conceived by swallowing a rare stone.
  3. Modernists claim that the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ is comparable to these mythological birth stories.
  4. However, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ is substantiated by Old Tes-

# Godhead

tament prophecy, New Testament fulfillment, the expectation by Old Testament Jews and acceptance by Christians from the New Testament to the present.

5. The Christian relies on biblical evidence to substantiate the Virgin Birth.

## II. Modernists claim that the early church did not believe in the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ.

1. Nothing within the Bible or out of the Bible suggests that the early church did not believe in the Virgin Birth of Christ.
2. The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ only came under attack through higher criticism in the 18th century.

## III. The birth of Jesus Christ is historical.

- A. The Bible predicted the birth of Jesus Christ.
  1. The Virgin Birth of the Messiah or Savior was the subject of Old Testament prophecy (Genesis 3:15; 12:3; 49:10; Isaiah 7:14).
  2. The place of the Savior's birth was predicted through prophecy (Micah 5:2).
  3. The time when the Savior was to be born was predicted through prophecy (Daniel 2:31-45).
- B. Bible history confirms the fulfillment of Bible prophecies respecting the birth of the Messiah.
  1. Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:1-7).
  2. Jesus was born during the reign of Caesar Augustus, while Cyrenius was governor of Syria and Herod the Great ruled Palestine (Luke 2:1-2; Matthew 2:1).
- C. Secular history also confirms the birth of Jesus.
  1. Examples of history books that acknowledge the historicity of Jesus' birth include: *Italy* by John S.C. Abbott (301), *A History of Rome* by Arthur E.R. Boak (334) and *World Civilizations* by Edward Burns and Philip Ralph (360-363).
  2. Secular histories that are favorable toward Christianity as well as history books that are antagonistic toward Christianity both attest that Jesus of Nazareth was an historical person.

## Conclusion:

1. That a man known as Jesus of Nazareth was born in Palestine in the days of the Roman emperors is a **fact**.
  - a. Both the Bible and secular history substantiate this fact.
  - b. The birth of Jesus of Nazareth is absolutely true.
2. That Jesus Christ was born of a virgin is a **fact**.
  - a. The Bible, through Old Testament prophecies and New Testament fulfill-

# Godhead

- ment, substantiates the Virgin Birth of Jesus.
- b. Faithful Christians from the first century through the present have accepted the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ.
  - c. The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ is as factual as anything contained in the Bible and is absolutely true.
3. Incidentally, at least three English translations inaccurately and errantly represent the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ.
- a. *The Revised Standard Version*, *Good News for Modern Man* and the *New World Translation* each replace the word “virgin” respecting the birth of Christ with the words “young woman” or “young maiden.”
  - b. Young women have been bearing children for centuries, but only once did a virgin bear a child—Jesus Christ.

## Invitation:

1. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to earth through the means of the Virgin Birth for the purpose of saving souls; unless we obey the Gospel, we make the Virgin Birth and mission of Jesus Christ respecting us void.
2. Jesus Christ came to earth to save unbaptized believers (Mark 16:16).
3. Jesus Christ is also willing to save erring Christians (1 John 1:7-10).

## Works Cited

- Abbott, John S.C. *Italy*. New York: Peter Fenelon Collier, 1898.
- Boak, Arthur E.R. *A History of Rome to 565 A.D.* Revised Ed. New York: Macmillan, 1930.
- Burns, Edward McNall and Philip Lee Ralph. *World Civilizations: From Ancient to Contemporary*. Fourth Ed. Vol. 1. New York: Norton, 1968.

## The Childhood of Jesus Christ

### Luke 2:51-52

**Thesis:** To become better acquainted our Lord and Savior.

**Song:** *More About Jesus*

#### **Introduction:**

1. Given the little information available regarding the early life of Jesus Christ, today's lesson may more readily cause us to remember certain things about the early life of Jesus rather than provide new information.
  - a. Not much appears in the Bible about the first 30 years of the life of Jesus.
  - b. What little is known has been exploited through manmade holy days or holidays.
  - c. Often, biblical facts about the life of Jesus are overshadowed by baseless tradition, denominational doctrine and idle speculation.
2. The four Gospel records chronicle the life of Christ.
  - a. At least two of these historians were inspired *witnesses*.
  - b. The Holy Spirit, through divine inspiration, guided the sacred writers in the selection of the exact words to best depict the life of Christ.
  - c. Further, the Holy Spirit provided these holy historians with all the biographical material relating to Jesus Christ in addition to what they witnessed.
  - d. Matthew, a tax collector, was an apostle and an eyewitness of the life, death and resurrected Christ.
  - e. Mark, the evangelist, was a coworker with the apostle Paul.
  - f. Luke, a medical doctor, was a Gentile who labored with the apostle Paul.
  - g. John was an apostle and an eyewitness of the life, death and resurrected Christ.
3. Secular history, though sometimes belligerent toward Christianity, also records information about the life of Jesus Christ.
  - a. Flavius Josephus (37-93) was born in the generation after Christ and was contemporary with the apostles; he was a Jewish historian and not a follower of Jesus Christ, but he recorded part of the life of Jesus Christ.
  - b. Caius Cornelius Tacitus was a Roman historian who wrote about A.D. 100 and was contemporary with the generation following the death of the apostles; he was not a Christian, but mentioned part of the life of Christ.
  - c. More recent histories also acknowledge and record parts of the life of Jesus Christ.
4. The Gospel records together provide the sum of necessary information about the life of Christ.
  - a. Not much is recorded about the first 30 years of the life of Christ.

# Godhead

- b. However, all we need to know about the life of Christ has been provided to us in the Gospel records (John 20:30-31).
- 5. Secular history adds further confirmation to the sacred biography of Jesus Christ.
  - a. However, wherever secular history and the biblical biography of Christ may disagree, Christians have greater confidence in the biblical account.
  - b. Secular history is not for the Christian the ultimate source of information, and it is not always trustworthy.

## Body:

### I. Luke 2:1-7 records the birth of Jesus Christ.

- A. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ was prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38).
- B. The birth of Jesus occurred about 4 B.C.
- C. Joseph and Mary traveled from their residence in Nazareth to the ancestral home in Bethlehem by the decree of the emperor for a census.
  - 1. This incident over which Joseph and Mary had no control facilitated the fulfillment of prophecy respecting where the Messiah would be born (Micah 5:2).
  - 2. The Roman census was for the purpose of compiling a corrected list from which to assess taxes.
- D. Nowhere remained for the couple to lodge once they arrived in Bethlehem, and hence Jesus was born in a stable.
  - 1. The humility with which the Son of God entered the world is staggering when compared with the birth typical of the rich and famous.
  - 2. Tradition reveres a cave in Bethlehem as the birthplace of Jesus; a church building stands over the spot with a star on the floor marking the supposed location of the manger.

### II. Luke 2:8-20 pertains to angels and shepherds.

- A. Angels announced the birth of Jesus Christ to shepherds who were attending their flocks by night.
  - 1. The birth of Jesus Christ is celebrated by many as a holy day (holiday) on December 25.
  - 2. There has been much variation and dispute regarding the birthday of Jesus throughout history, and it has been observed at various times throughout the year.
  - 3. It is not likely that the birth of Jesus Christ occurred in the winter months since shepherds usually enclose their sheep at night from November through March.
  - 4. Bethlehem is on a parallel with Jackson, MS and has comparable weather in the winter (cold, rainy with some snow or ice).

# Godhead

- B. Subsequently, the shepherds went to see baby Jesus.
  - 1. The nativity scene usually pictured includes Joseph, Mary, baby Jesus, some animals, the shepherds, the wise men, angels over the stable and a star in the sky.
  - 2. In reality, the angels had gone before the shepherds left the fields seeking Jesus, and the wise men (following a special star) had not arrived yet.

### III. Luke 2:21-38 chronicles the circumcision and presentation of Jesus in the Temple.

- A. Eight days after His birth, Jesus was circumcised and named.
  - 1. Jesus Christ was a Jew of the tribe of Judah and of the family of David (Hebrews 7:14; Luke 2:4).
  - 2. Our Lord was born under the Jewish covenant or Old Testament, to which He and His family were amenable.
  - 3. Leviticus 12:1-3 required that Jewish males be circumcised on the eighth day after birth.
- B. Jesus Christ was presented before the God and redeemed (Luke 2:22-24).
  - 1. The presentation was made after 41 days of purification had past for the mother (Leviticus 12:4-8).
  - 2. A lamb was to be sacrificed unless the family were too poor to afford a lamb, then two turtledoves could be offered.
  - 3. God had decreed that the firstborn of man and beast was to be redeemed (excepting among sheep, goats and calves which not redeemed were sacrificed) (Exodus 13:2, 12-13; 34:19-20; Numbers 3:13; 8:17; 18:17).
  - 4. The sacrifice to redeem Jesus was a poor man's sacrifice.
- C. A prophet named Simeon and a prophetess named Anna both testified that Jesus Christ was the Messiah for which Israel had long waited (Luke 2:25-38).
  - 1. Both Simeon and Anna had been recipients of divine revelation.
  - 2. Simeon mentioned the mission of Jesus Christ to save the Gentiles (cf. Isaiah 62:2).
  - 3. Both attributed the redemption of Israel to Jesus Christ (cf. Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10).

### IV. Matthew 2:1-12 records the visit of the wise men.

- A. The wise men, at least two but an unknown number, came seeking Jesus Christ.
  - 1. These easterners were likely non-Jews amenable to Patriarchy and may have been recipients of divine revelation.
  - 2. They followed a star, probably some miraculous light resembling a star, that led them to Jesus Christ.

# Godhead

3. The wise men inquired of Herod the Great about the location of the baby, King Jesus.
4. Herod, fearing usurpation of his throne, planned to kill the baby Jesus.
5. After consulting the Old Testament Scriptures about the prophecy of the Messiah's birth, the wise men were sent to Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

**B. The wise men found Jesus Christ.**

1. Evidently, by the time of the arrival of the wise men, Jesus and His family were no longer lodging in the stable, but in a house.
2. Some time but less than two years had elapsed since the birth of Jesus.
3. Though the number of wise men is not revealed in the Bible, three kinds of gifts were bestowed: gold, frankincense and myrrh.
4. Frankincense and myrrh were both resins from trees, possessing acute fragrances for which they were highly treasured.

**V. Matthew 2:13-18 chronicles the flight to Egypt and the slaughter of babies.**

**A. The wise men departed without reporting back to Herod, being warned in a dream to return another way home.**

**B. Joseph was warned in a dream to flee to Egypt with Mary and Jesus.**

1. Herod the Great wanted to kill Jesus Christ because he feared this spiritual King of the Jews would threaten his earthly kingdom.
2. Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt for safety.
3. Herod had all children two years old and younger in the Bethlehem area murdered in his attempt to make sure he had killed Jesus.
4. Going into Egypt from which they returned was a secondary fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy in Hosea 11:1.

**VI. Luke 2:39-40 records the return to Nazareth.**

**A. Upon further direction from an angel in a dream, Joseph took Mary and Jesus back to Palestine.**

**B. Herod the Great had died, but because Archelaus, his son, was made King, the family of Jesus settled in Nazareth of Galilee (described as their own city).**

**C. Hence, Jesus resided in Nazareth, whereby he was called a Nazarene, a fulfillment of Scripture (Matthew 2:23).**

1. Note, there is a difference between a Nazarite and a Nazarene.
2. A Nazarite was set apart for special service to God and was bound by certain vows (Judges 13:5; 1 Samuel 1:11).
3. A Nazarene was an inhabitant of Nazareth.

**D. For about a decade following there is no record of the life of Jesus.**

1. Sacred history is silent regarding this period of our Lord's young life.
2. Secular history records nothing about this period in the life of Christ.
3. Mythology and tradition claim that Jesus performed miracles as a child, especially repairing by miracle toys of His playmates.

# Godhead

4. Evidently, nothing about the life of our Lord's childhood was out of the ordinary to the extent that anyone suspected that He was the Son of God (Matthew 13:54-56).
5. Luke 2:40 is the only record of this intervening period in the young life of Jesus.

## **VII. Luke 2:41-60 chronicles attending the Passover at the age of 12.**

- A. Jesus attended the Passover feast in Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary.
- B. Jesus lingered behind when Joseph and Mary began the journey home.
  1. Evidently, Joseph and Mary were traveling with a number of other individuals who were returning home to Galilee after the Jewish feast, and each thought Jesus was in the company of the other.
  2. Upon discovering that Jesus was not with their company, Joseph and Mary returned to Jerusalem to find Jesus, and they searched for Him for three days.
  3. Finally, they found Him in the Temple, discussing the Law with the doctors of the Law.
  4. The Jewish leaders were astonished at the skill of Jesus in the Scriptures.
  5. Joseph and Mary were surprised to find Jesus discussing Scripture with religious leaders.
  6. When chastened by His parents, Jesus spoke of His divine mission.
  7. Jesus returned to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary.

## **VIII. Luke 2:51-52 notes the maturing of Jesus to manhood.**

- A. These two verses contain the only information regarding the maturation of Jesus over the next 18 years.
- B. Jesus was an obedient child.
  1. Under the Old Testament, obedience of children was emphasized (Exodus 20:12; 21:15, 17; Proverbs 23:13-14).
  2. Under the New Testament likewise, obedience of children is emphasized (Ephesians 6:1).
- C. Jesus Christ increased in wisdom and stature.
  1. He gained knowledge along with common sense whereby He could exercise His knowledge properly.
  2. Respecting stature, He grew physically into manhood.
- D. Jesus increased in favor with God and man; we can safely surmise:
  1. Jesus was a good moral man.
  2. He was honest.
  3. He was a hard worker.
  4. He was not lazy, filthy mouthed, a thief, etc.
  5. Our Lord possessed all the admirable characteristics that permit one to receive the approval of God and God-fearing men.



# Godhead

## **Conclusion:**

1. After 400 years of no new revelation from God, both people amenable to Patriarchy and Judaism received new revelation about the birth of Jesus Christ.
2. Our Lord was reared in a family with a mother, a stepfather, stepbrothers and stepsisters (Matthew 13:54-46).
3. Apparently, Joseph died since he is not mentioned after a point in time, and Jesus while on the cross entrusted the care of His mother to the apostle John.
4. The 30 years before Jesus began His ministry served to prepare Jesus for His ministry of three years.
5. Though little is recorded in the Gospel records about the first 30 years of Jesus' life, most of the Gospel records address the three years of His ministry.
6. All of humanity has been influenced by the final three years of the life of Jesus Christ on earth.

## **Invitation:**

1. You have not been influenced enough by the life of Christ and His ministry if you are not at this moment in a saved relationship with God.
2. Erring Christians can take care of this lack by repenting and praying.
3. Unbaptized believers can remedy this tragedy by obeying the instructions of Jesus (Mark 16:16).

# Godhead

## The Earthly Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

### Isaiah 40:3-5

**Thesis:** To learn more about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**Introduction:**

1. Much of the first 30 years of Jesus' life is obscure, only highlights of which appear in the Gospel records.
2. However, the last three years of Jesus' life and ministry on earth fill the Gospel records.
3. Obviously one sermon cannot adequately chronicle the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ, or even begin to note our Lord's masterful teaching.
4. We must content ourselves today with an overview of all that appears in the sacred record about the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ.
5. That sacred record records sufficient information for one with an honest heart to correctly conclude that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, the Christ and the Savior of the world (John 20:30-31).

**Body:**

**I. Preparation preceded the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ.**

- A. The first 30 years of Jesus' life prepared Him for His three years of ministry.
  1. At age 12, Jesus acknowledged His divine mission as the Son of God (Luke 2:49).
  2. For the next 18 years, the Incarnate Son of God grew to manhood physically and interacted with humanity and God (Luke 2:52).
  3. Jesus waited 30 years before undertaking His ministry, signaling that among mankind maturity must precede fruitful labors (Luke 3:23).
- B. The preaching and ministry of John the Baptist prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus Christ.
  1. Old Testament prophecies predicted a prophet like Elijah would arise and prepare the way for the Messiah's ministry (Isaiah 40:3-5; Malachi 3:1; 4:5; Matthew 3:1-3; Luke 3:2-6).
  2. John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord by preaching that the kingdom was at hand (Matthew 3:2).
  3. John the Baptist preached repentance followed by baptism for the remission of sins (Luke 3:3).
  4. John the Baptist baptized penitent persons in prospect of salvation (Matthew 3:5-8; Acts 19:1-6).
  5. John the Baptist preached that the Messiah would come and baptize

# Godhead

some with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and others with the baptism of fiery punishment (Matthew 3:10-12).

6. John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ (to fulfill all righteousness) and identified Him as the long sought Messiah (Matthew 3:13-17).
7. John the Baptist condemned sin wherever he found it without regard to personal danger because of such preaching (Luke 3:18-20; Matthew 3:7-9; 14:3-12).

## **II. The events surrounding the beginning of Jesus' ministry prepared Him for and set the backdrop for His ministry of three years.**

- A. The baptism of Jesus Christ marked the beginning of His three years of earthly, public ministry.
  1. For everyone besides Jesus Christ, baptism with John's baptism was for the remission of sins (Matthew 3:5-6).
  2. Jesus, though, had no sins (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:2).
  3. Jesus Christ was baptized to fulfill all righteousness (i.e., every Jew during the ministry of John the Baptist was required to be baptized, Matthew 3:15).
  4. Though He had no sins, Jesus Christ was baptized as a part of the obedience He rendered to the Father (Hebrews 5:8-9).
  5. Of course, the baptism of Jesus serves as an example to the rest of humanity for all time.
  6. Shortly after the baptism of Jesus, He began preaching (Matthew 4:17).
- B. The temptation of Jesus Christ in the wilderness by Satan further prepared our Lord for His ministry.
  1. Immediately following His baptism, Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13).
  2. Jesus successfully resisted each temptation of the devil by quoting Scripture (Matthew 4:1-11).
  3. Jesus Christ has been tempted in all points as we are tempted, and yet He did not sin (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15).
  4. Jesus Christ gave us the example that if we resist the devil he will flee from us (James 4:7; Ephesians 4:27; 1 Peter 5:8-9).
  5. Sinlessly pure in the face of temptation, Jesus Christ thereby was prepared to commence His public ministry.
- C. The calling of some of His disciples was a significant preparatory event in the early ministry of Jesus Christ.
  1. First, Jesus called Andrew and Peter (John 1:35-42).
  2. Next, Jesus selected Philip and Nathaniel (John 1:43-51).
  3. So far, Jesus only named four disciples who later became His apostles.
- D. Our Lord's miracle of turning water to grape juice was His first miracle and the first public demonstration of Jesus' divine ministry (John 2:1-11).

# Godhead

1. This miracle was the only one performed by Jesus Christ on a joyful occasion.
2. After this miracle, Jesus abode in Capernaum on the western coast of the Sea of Galilee for a few days.

## III. The first segment of our Lord's ministry could be labeled "The Judean Ministry."

- A. Jesus Christ first went to Jerusalem.
  1. There He cleansed the Temple for the first time, casting out the moneychangers and their merchandise (John 2:13-22).
  2. Thereafter, Jesus performed miracles, leading many people to believe on Him (John 2:23).
  3. Jesus Christ had His first recorded discourse (this one privately) with a Pharisee named Nicodemus (John 3:1-21).
- B. Jesus and His disciples left Jerusalem and went to the countryside of Judea.
  1. There Jesus taught and baptized (John 3:22).
  2. This was the same area in which John the Baptist and His disciples had been teaching, and John the Baptist confirmed to His disciples that Jesus is the Christ (John 3:25-36).
- C. Jesus next left Judea and entered Samaria while en route back to Galilee (Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14; John 4:1-4).
  1. Jesus left Judea after John the Baptist was imprisoned and after the Pharisees had heard that Jesus had made more disciples than John had made.
  2. Jesus entered Sychar of Samaria, meeting the woman at the well (John 4:5-26).
  3. The conversation with the woman at the well was Jesus' second recorded discourse (also private) and during which He identified Himself as the Messiah.
  4. Many Samaritans believed Jesus was the Messiah (John 4:27-42).
  5. After staying two days in Samaria, Jesus and His disciples left for Galilee (John 4:43).

## IV. The next segment of our Lord's ministry could be called "The Galilean Ministry."

- A. The Galileans generally received Jesus as the Christ because they had already seen Him perform miracles in Jerusalem during the days of the Passover (John 4:45).
  1. Jesus taught in the synagogues throughout Galilee and was "glorified of all" (Luke 4:14-15).
  2. However, Jesus' hometown of Nazareth rejected Him and tried to kill Him (Luke 4:16-30).
  3. Jesus went to Cana and there was petitioned by a nobleman of Capernaum to heal his son (John 4:46-53).

# Godhead

4. Jesus Christ resided in Capernaum (Matthew 4:13; Luke 4:31-32).
- B. Jesus called the four fishermen: Peter, Andrew, James and John (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11).
  1. This was the second calling of Peter and Andrew.
  2. The occasion of the great catch of fish that threatened to break the nets and sink two ships preceded the willing departure of the fishermen to be disciples of Jesus.
- C. Jesus Christ continued to preach throughout Galilee, performing many miracles and healing the sick (Matthew 4:23-25; 8:2ff).
  1. People from Syria (north of Galilee), Decapolis (east of Galilee) and Judaea and Jerusalem came to Jesus Christ in Galilee with sick to be healed.
  2. Every sick person coming to Jesus Christ was healed.
- D. Several other events occurred during our Lord's Galilean ministry.
  1. Jesus gave His famous Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).
  2. Jesus healed a centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5-13).
  3. Jesus performed miracles at Capernaum, including healing Peter's mother-in-law and healing a man with an unclean spirit (Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:21-34; Luke 4:31-41).
  4. Jesus healed a leper (Matthew 8:2-4).
  5. Jesus stilled a storm on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 8:18, 23-27).
  6. Jesus cast out demons in the country of the Gadarenes (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-40).
  7. Jesus called Matthew to be His disciple (Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32).
  8. Jesus raised Jairus' daughter (Matthew 9:17-26; Mark 5:22-43; Luke 8:41-56).
  9. Jesus healed a woman, healed the blind, healed the mute and cast out demons (Matthew 9:27-33).
  10. Jesus raised the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11-17).
  11. Jesus was anointed with spices by a penitent woman (Luke 7:36-50).
  12. Jesus told the Parable of the Two Debtors (Luke 7:41-42).
  13. Jesus selected His apostles (Matthew 10:2-4).
  14. The disciples of John the Baptist inquired of Jesus Christ if He is the Messiah (Matthew 11:2-30).
  15. Jesus healed a man's withered hand (Matthew 12:9-14).
  16. Jesus taught multitudes at the shore of Galilee (Matthew 13:1-2).
  17. Jesus told the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13).
  18. Jesus told the parables of the Seed, Tares, Mustard Seed, Leaven, Hidden Treasure, Costly Pearl and Net (Mark 4; Matthew 13).
  19. The second rejection of Jesus Christ by the residents of Nazareth oc-

# Godhead

curred (Matthew 13:54-58).

20. John the Baptist was executed (Matthew 14:1-12).

21. Jesus miraculously fed 5,000 men plus women and children (Matthew 14:13-23).

22. Jesus walked on the water of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:24-36).

23. Jesus went to the area of the cities of Tyre and Sidon (north of Galilee) where He cast a demon from a Gentile girl (Matthew 15:21-28).

24. Jesus returned to the area surrounding the Sea of Galilee where He performed many miracles (Matthew 15:29-31).

25. Jesus miraculously fed 4,000 men plus women and children (Matthew 15:32-38).

26. Jesus healed a blind man near Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26).

27. The apostle Peter acknowledged Jesus as the Christ and Son of God—the Messiah (Matthew 16:13-20).

28. The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ occurred (Matthew 17:1-13).

29. Jesus Christ paid tribute money at Capernaum (Matthew 17:24-27).

E. Jesus closed His Galilean ministry when He attended the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem (John 7:1-52).

1. While in Jerusalem an adulterous woman was brought to Him by His enemies to try to catch Him in His words, whether He would condemn her to stoning or have her freed (John 7:53—8:11).

2. Jesus Christ taught that He is the light of the world (John 8:12-30).

**V. Another segment of our Lord's ministry could be named "The Perea Ministry."**

A. Jesus Christ left Galilee for the land on the far side of the Jordan (Matthew 19:1-2; Mark 10:1).

B. Our Lord sent out the 70 disciples (Luke 10:1-24).

C. Jesus Christ told the account of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

D. Jesus healed a blind man (John 9:1-41).

E. Jesus taught the lesson about the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-21).

F. Jesus attended the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem (John 10:22-42).

G. Jesus told the Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:1-59).

H. Jesus told the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13:1-9).

I. Jesus healed a cripple woman (Luke 13:11-13).

J. Jesus told the Parable of the Wedding Guest (Luke 14:1-24).

K. Jesus taught about counting the cost (Luke 14:25-35).

L. Jesus taught the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:1-7).

M. Jesus presented the Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16).

N. Jesus told about the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).

O. The Lord discussed the unprofitable servant (Luke 17:1-10).

P. Jesus raised His friend Lazarus from the grave (John 11:1-46).

Q. Jesus no longer walked freely in public because the high priests, other chief priests and the Pharisees plotted to kill Him (John 11:54).

# Godhead

- R. Jesus healed ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19).
- S. Jesus gave the Parable of the Unjust Judge (Luke 18:1-8).
- T. Jesus contrasted the penitent prayers of the tax collector with the arrogant prayers of a Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14).
- U. Jesus presented the Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19:11-27).
- V. Jesus was anointed with precious ointment in Bethany (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3; John 12:1-8).
- W. All that remained was for Jesus to lend Himself a sacrifice on the cross to provide redemption to the world!

## Conclusion:

1. Jesus was born about 4 B.C.; within a year or so He and His family fled to Egypt.
2. Upon returning from Egypt, His family settled in Nazareth where Jesus resided until He began His public ministry.
3. At age 12, Jesus attended the Passover in Jerusalem in about A.D. 8.
4. John the Baptist began His ministry in the spring of A.D. 26.
5. Our Lord's Judean ministry began about the time of the Passover in A.D. 27 (April 11-18) and continued until about A.D. 28
  - a. The Judean ministry lasted about nine months.
  - b. Jesus Christ talked with the Samaritan woman at the well about December of A.D. 27.
6. The Galilean ministry lasted about a year from the spring of A.D. 28 to the spring of A.D. 29.
7. The Perean ministry lasted from A.D. 29 to March of A.D. 30.
8. This brings the life and ministry of Jesus Christ up to the beginning of the last week of His ministry.
  - a. The Gospel records contain nearly as much information about the last week of Jesus' life as they do respecting the rest of his life and ministry.
  - b. The last week included His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the second cleansing of the Temple, several parables, prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Coming, the institution of the Lord's Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus' arrest, His trials, His torture, crucifixion, resurrection and Ascension.
  - c. Within two months following Jesus' final week leading up to His death, Jesus ascended to heaven, the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the church was established and about 3,000 converts were added to it.

## Invitation:

1. The earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ occurred so that He could be the sin-sacrifice for humanity on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21).
2. Jesus Christ's life, death, resurrection and Ascension are meaningless to every soul who fails to put Jesus Christ on in baptism for the remission of his sins (Galatians 3:27; Acts 2:38).
3. Everything Jesus did to seek and save the lost is meaningless to every erring child of God who fails to repent (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

## Come Meet Jesus as Master Teacher

### Matthew 7:28-29

**Thesis:** To demonstrate from Scripture that Jesus Christ is the Master Teacher, to whom we should go for instruction, which instruction should mold our lives.

#### **Introduction:**

1. Jesus Christ excelled beyond comparison in everything that He did; Jesus Christ is preeminent as the Creator, as God Incarnate, as Sacrifice on Calvary's Cross, as Savior, as King, as Judge—as well as Master Teacher.
2. There is no one else to whom we can turn who is a more able Teacher than Jesus Christ.

#### **Body:**

##### **I. What does it mean to be a teacher?**

- A. Primarily two Greek verbs express what it means to be a teacher.
  1. First, "*didasko*" means "to give instruction, e.g., Matt 4:23; 9:35; Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 2:12; 4:11" (*Vine's*).
  2. Second, "*matheteuo*" means "to teach...Matt. 28:19 [28:20 = "*didasko*"; Acts 14:21" (*Vine's*).
  3. In addition, synonyms as well as related nouns and adjectives in the New Testament express what it means to be a teacher.
- B. God is man's Teacher.
  1. God was man's teacher under the old covenant; "God himself is described as a teacher. He taught Moses (Exod. 4:15)" (Daugherty 131).
  2. God, likewise, promised to teach mankind under the new covenant (Isaiah 2:2-3).
  3. It should be no surprise, then, that when Jesus Christ came to earth in the flesh, He was the Master Teacher.

##### **II. Jesus Christ is the Master Teacher.**

- A. A primary feature of the short ministry of Jesus Christ was teaching (Matthew 4:23; 5:2; 7:29; 9:35; 11:1; 13:54; 21:23; 26:55).
  1. Jesus, the Master Teacher, frequently used figurative language in His teaching (i.e., the PowerPoint, etc. of His day).
  2. For instance, "Jesus, the Master Teacher, reveals the mysteries of the kingdom through the teaching of parables" (Ridgeway 38).
  3. With word pictures depicting their everyday lives, the Master Teacher used circumstances with which they were familiar to teach them spiritual truths about which they knew little or nothing.
  4. Bruce Daugherty emphasizes that Jesus Christ taught more than lessons, but He instructed people, often individuals besides great audi-



# Godhead

ences (Mark 4:1).

Jesus is the Master Teacher because he taught people, not just lessons. Notice how many individuals are listed in the Gospels: Nicodemus (John 2:1), Peter (Luke 5:1-11), the Samaritan woman (John 4), Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-10) and the woman of Syro-Phoenicia (Mark 7:24-30). This ability to see individuals, especially those emarginated by society, distinguished Jesus as the Teacher come from God. (Daugherty 133)

- B. Jesus Christ possesses the authority to be the Master Teacher (Matthew 28:18-20).
1. According to Jesus (Matthew 21:23-27), “there are only two sources of authority, heaven or men”(Craft 5-6).
  2. “Officers” or “Temple guards” (NIV) sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to seize Jesus came back empty-handed because they were awed by the Master Teacher (John 7:32, 45-46).
  3. As Denver Cooper put it: “The Master Teacher dared to be different. He spoke with authority” (59).
  4. That heavenly authority rested on the revealed Word of God.

Jesus is the Teacher without equal because of his trust in the Word of God. Jesus placed great emphasis on the Scriptures (Matt. 4:4; 22:29,31; John 5:39). In contrast, the teachers of Israel did not know the Scriptures (Matt. 22:29; John 3:10,12). Teachers today must emphasize the Scriptures in their lessons. In a day in which some Bible classes imitate television talk shows, we must return to the Scriptures. The Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). It is able to build up Christians (Acts 20:32). It alone tells us of Jesus (John 5:39; 8:31-32, 47). (Daugherty 133)

- C. Jesus Christ was the Master Teacher because He always taught what people needed (not wanted, 2 Timothy 4:2-4) to hear.
1. Unlike us, Jesus as Divine was the “incomparable Teacher because he knew what was in man (John 2:23-24)” (Daugherty 132).
  2. ***Like Jesus, we need to teach God’s Word so that it has an impact on people’s everyday lives.***

Jesus is the teacher without comparison because he taught people in their everyday situations. For many people, religion is separated from their daily life. Not so for Jesus. He taught in parables and stories drawn from daily life. Maybe this is why the common people heard him gladly (Mark 12:37). Jesus

## Godhead

demonstrated the impact of Scripture on every day life (Mark 7:1-13). Because of his connection to everyday living his teaching stood in stark contrast to the teaching of the Pharisees (Luke 11:46, 52; Matt. 23:3-4). (Daugherty 133)

D. Jesus Christ practiced what He taught (Acts 1:1).

1. Jesus Christ is the Master Teacher, in part, because, unlike the Pharisees (Matthew 23:3-5), He practiced what He preached (Matthew 16:24).
2. ***The most important model on the planet is the one who personifies the Word of God.***

Finally, Jesus is the Incomparable Teacher because he modeled what he taught. Jesus is our model for everything, including obedience (John 13:17; Heb. 5:8-9; 1 Pet. 2:21). The apostle Paul considered himself a role model for his converts (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil, 3:17). Paul praised his Thessalonian converts for having become imitators of their teachers and the Lord (1 Thess. 1:6-7). As teachers of God's word today, we must have the goal of obedience as we teach (Matt. 7:24-27; Rom. 2:17-21, 25). But to call for obedience means that we ourselves must first be obedient. We cannot lead where we will not go. We cannot give what we do not have first for ourselves. ... We are not simply imparting knowledge as we teach, but we are to be modeling behavior that can be imitated. (Daugherty 134)

E. The teaching of Jesus Christ demonstrated His Deity.

1. None of our Lord's enemies were able to triumph over Him in their verbal confrontations with Him—evidencing the Deity of Jesus Christ.

As various groups of Jewish leaders tried their best to discredit Jesus in the eyes of the people, the Master Teacher silenced them one by one" (Board 270)

***Confrontational Christ*** Brethren we are in a war with the devil and we must not forget it. The Lord is described as both a lamb and lion in the Scriptures. ... The basic lesson must be this: when the Lord is personally attacked He does not seek vengeance-He does not retaliate (1 Peter 2:22-23). ...But, when an attack was made upon His teaching-His doctrine-it was a different matter, He fought back, and He fought hard. He refuted, He condemned. (Matthew 23:15, 25, 27-28) (Craft 14-15)

# Godhead

2. *No other teacher in history has had a more profound and lasting affect on humanity than Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher.*

Jesus' teaching ministry only lasted three brief years. He wrote no books. He held no university chair. He did not travel extensively from his humble birthplace. Yet, through the men he trained, Jesus has impacted the world like no other teacher. This was because his teachings reflected his divinity. (Daugherty 135)

- F. Jesus Christ taught others to be teachers.
  1. Jesus, the Master Teacher, purposed to teach His disciples so they in turn could teach others; He told His disciples that He would make them "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:18-22).
  2. Likewise, the apostle Paul also instructed Timothy to teach those who could teach others, too (2 Timothy 2:2).

### III. God has placed teachers in the Lord's church.

- A. **Most of the offices of responsibility in the primitive church pertained to teaching and subsequent edification (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11).**
  1. First Corinthians 12:28 lists "apostles...prophets ...teachers."
  2. Ephesians 4:11 lists "apostles... prophets... evangelists...pastors [elders]...teachers."
  3. Preachers, elders and teachers must arm themselves with God's Word to be the most effective teachers they can possibly be.
- B. Two of what are commonly viewed as the three divinely given missions of the Lord's church involve teaching.
  1. Evangelizing the world involves teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost (Matthew 28:19-20).
  2. Edification or building up the church in the holy faith involves teaching (1 Corinthians 14:12, 26).
  3. Every Christian has a responsibility to learn God's Word thoroughly enough to be able to instruct others in it (Hebrews 5:11-14; 1 Peter 3:15).

### Conclusion:

1. Bruce Daugherty well summarizes Jesus Christ as the Master Teacher.

Teaching was a prominent feature in the ministry of Jesus (Matt. 4:23). The Gospels are composed of a great amount of teaching material. The Sermon on the Mount, the Parables and the discourse on the Mount of Olives are all indicators of the importance of teaching in Jesus' ministry. The reaction of the people to Jesus' teaching also indicates that Jesus was the Mas-

# Godhead

ter Teacher. The Bible says that the people were astonished at his teaching (Matt. 7:28-29; 13:54). They also marveled at his teaching (John 7:15, 32, 44-46). It was teaching that helped set Jesus apart from the other teachers of his day and it is the teaching that also helps demonstrate his Deity. (Daugherty 131)

2. T. Pierce Brown emphasizes that every Christian who teaches, and especially preachers, need to teach with the purpose of making a real difference in the lives of those who audit our words.

Most of us who spend our lives in this business of teaching believe that Jesus is the MASTER TEACHER, and it is our business to strive to teach in such a way that, as Paul puts it in Galatians 4:19, "Christ be formed in you." ("Closing")

Religion that makes a difference is a religion that is seen Monday through Saturday, not just on Sunday! (Daugherty 133)

3. We can best learn to be successful as teachers by imitating the teaching methods and subject material of Jesus Christ; "The method and message of the Master Teacher and his inspired followers should be ours" ( T. Pierce Brown "Sneak").

Jesus is the Master Teacher because he taught to change men according to the will of God. There are teachers who have great intellectual content to their lessons. There are also teachers who touch the emotional heartstrings of their audiences. But the will is also important in our teaching. Jesus taught to reach the will of man (Matt. 5:48; 7:21-23; 19:16-22; 22:37-40). The intellect deals with knowledge, information and facts. The will deals with direction, motivation and change for life. *As a Teacher, Jesus gave more than information. He gave teaching that resulted in reformation and repentance. Teachers, do our lessons give information that leads to a response? Does it call for a decision? There is a great need to have Bible studies and classes that are directed toward the decision making process. We must call for a submission of the will of man to the will of God!* (Daugherty 134 emphasis added)

4. "May we ever be disciples of Jesus, the Master Teacher" (Daugherty 135).

## Invitation:

1. Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher, has not left us to wonder about salvation.
2. Jesus taught that every believer must be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16).

# Godhead

3. The apostles John and Peter emphasized that the blood of Jesus Christ is available to Christians who sin, too, upon their penitence and prayer (1 John 1:7-10; Acts 8:22).

## Works Cited

- Board, John. "Opponents of the King." *The King and his Kingdom in Matthew*. Louis Rushmore, ed. Moundsville: West Virginia School of Preaching, 2003. 264-271.
- Brown, T. Pierce. "A Ph.D in Closing the Sale." *Old Paths*. 10 Mar 2015 < ftp://ftp.oldpaths.com/TPierceBrown/closing.txt >.
- - -. "Sneak Up on Them." *Old Paths*. 10 Mar 2015 < ftp://ftp.oldpaths.com/TPierceBrown/sneak.txt >.
- Cooper, Denver. "The Far Country." 55-61.
- Craft, Eddy. "The Master Teacher & His Authority." *What Jesus Taught About...* West Jefferson: West Jefferson Church of Christ, 2005. 5-18.
- Daugherty, Bruce. "Jesus—The Incomparable Teacher." *Christian Evidences*. Louis Rushmore, ed. Moundsville: West Virginia School of Preaching, 2005. 131-136.
- Ridgeway, Jason. "The Parable of the Soils." *The King and his Kingdom in Matthew*. Louis Rushmore, ed. Moundsville: West Virginia School of Preaching, 2003. 38-46.
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*. CD-ROM. Nashville: Nelson, 1985.

## Come Meet Jesus at the Cross

### Romans 6:3-6

**Thesis:** To demonstrate from Scripture the incident and significance of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the cross.

**Introduction:**

1. In this series of sermons with the theme of "Come Meet Jesus," we have already turned to Scripture about Jesus Christ as Creator, Jesus Christ the Incarnate God and Jesus Christ the Master Teacher.
2. Today's, lesson encourages us to "Come Meet Jesus at the Cross."

**Body:**

**I. Crucifixion was a horrific form of capital punishment.**

- A. Various forms of crucifixion were used by different nations throughout ancient history.
  1. Crucifixion at times and places ranged from a single post on which a person was impaled to an upright post with a crossbar to two rails forming an "X."
  2. Most ancient nations practiced some form of crucifixion (e.g. Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Egyptians, Scythians, Indians, Germans, Persians and Assyrians) (Varner 5).
- B. The Roman Empire also employed crucifixion as a form of capital punishment.
  1. The Roman cross was comprised of an upright post of up to 9' above the ground with a 7' crossbeam (Hastings qtd. in Varner 4).
  2. Protruding from the upright post was a "peg" (*New Unger's*) or "a small piece of wood forming a...seat ...designed to bear part of the weight of the body which would otherwise have been too great to be supported by the hands and feet alone. At the top of [the upright post] was a small tablet...which declared the crime and name of the victim" (Varner 4).
  3. The tablet above Jesus' head on the cross read, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews" (John 19:19; Matt. 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38).
- C. The horribleness of crucifixion was intended to intimidate populations so they would be sure to practice civil obedience.
  1. Crimes punishable by crucifixion included piracy, assassination, perjury, and treason (Varner 6).
  2. The Roman Empire ruled the conquered lands annexed to itself not through integration, but solely through abject, iron-fisted and brutish control,

## Godhead

3. Crucifixion was simply a part of that system of complete mastery.
- D. The first step in the process of crucifixion was scourging; "...scourging was the terrible introduction to crucifixion—*'the intermediate death'*" (*Edersheim* emphasis added).
1. The victim was stripped and tied by his wrists to a short post, exposing his arched back to his tormenter.
  2. A whip consisting of a handle to which were attached several leather cords with pieces of bone and nails affixed to their ends relentlessly flogged the criminal until his flesh was tattered, exposing muscles, bones and perhaps entrails.
  3. "[S]even out of ten men died, literally beaten to death" (Varner 9).
  4. Prophetic Scripture about the scourging of the Messiah indicates the severity of it tore the flesh of our Lord into deep furrows (Psalm 35:15; 129:3; Isaiah 50:6).
- E. After the scourging, the victim was forced to carry at least part of his cross to the crucifixion site.
1. Crucifixion sites were outside cities on a prominent hill and near a popular highway (Hebrews 13:12).
  2. The tablet identifying the criminal and his crime was carried by a herald ahead of the victim (Varner 9).
- F. The criminal was either tied to or nailed to a wooden cross.
1. "Arrived at the place of execution, the sufferer was stripped naked..." (*McClintock and Strong*).
  2. Nails were driven through the wrists into the crossbeam versus the hands to help prevent one's flesh from tearing away from the nails under the weight of the body.
  3. The feet were either nailed with two nails to the upright post or using one nail through both ankles atop each other (*Nelson's*).
  4. "The cross was then driven into the ground, so that the feet of the condemned were a foot or two above the earth (in pictures of the crucifixion the cross generally is much too large and high)... (*McClintock and Strong*).
  5. The combination of massive wounds from scourging and new wounds from the nails of crucifixion left one's whole body a severely wounded, putrefied sore (Isaiah 1:6 NKJV).
  6. Usually victims of Roman crucifixion lingered in slow, excruciating death over the next 36 hours, but some crucified persons barely held on to life for three days, and occasionally longer ("nine days," *New Unger's*)—depending upon physical conditioning and variables such as the extent of scourging.

## Godhead

The suffering of death by crucifixion was intense, especially in hot climates. Severe local inflammation, coupled with an insignificant bleeding of the jagged wounds, produced traumatic fever, which was aggravated [by] the exposure to the heat of the sun, the strain of the body and insufferable thirst. The swelled [flesh] about the rough nails and the torn lacerated tendons and nerves caused excruciating agony. The arteries of the head and stomach were surcharged with blood [i.e. due to improper circulation] and a terrific throbbing headache ensued. The mind was confused and filled with anxiety and dread foreboding. ***The victim of crucifixion literally died a thousand deaths.*** Tetanus not rarely supervened and the rigors of the attending convulsions would tear at the wounds and add to the burden of pain, till at last the bodily forces were exhausted and the victim sank to unconsciousness and death. The sufferings were so frightful that “even among the raging passions of war pity was sometimes excited” (BJ, V, xi, 1). (*ISBE* emphasis added)

The one to be crucified was stripped naked of all his clothes, and then followed the most awful moment of all. He was laid down upon the implement of torture. His arms were stretched along the cross-beams, and at the centre of the open palms the point of a huge iron nail was placed, which, by the blow of a mallet, was driven home into the wood. Then through either foot separately, or possibly through both together, as they were placed one over the other, another huge nail tore its way through the quivering flesh. . . .to prevent the hands and feet being torn away by the weight of the body, which could not “rest upon nothing but four great wounds,” there was, about the centre of the cross, a wooden projection strong enough to support, at least in part, a human body, which soon became a weight of agony. Then the “accursed tree” with its living human burden was slowly heaved up and the end fixed firmly in a hole in the ground. The feet were but a little raised above the earth. The victim was in full reach of every hand that might choose to strike. A death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of the horrible and ghastly,—dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, traumatic fever, tetanus, publicity of shame, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of untended wounds, all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point



# Godhead

which would give to the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. The unnatural position made every movement painful; the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbed with incessant anguish; the wounds, inflamed by exposure, gradually gangrened; the arteries, especially of the head and stomach, became swollen and oppressed with surcharged blood; and, while each variety of misery went on gradually increasing, there was added to them the intolerable pang of a burning and raging thirst. Such was the death to which Christ was doomed. (qtd. in *Smith's*)

- G. Customarily, four soldiers and a centurion stood guard at a crucifixion to prevent rescue of the victim (John 19:23; Matthew 27:54).
- H. The Romans allowed in Israel some variance to the usual procedure for crucifixion.
  - 1. Outside of Israel, victims of crucifixion were left to rot on their crosses, and their bodies were ravaged by scavenger birds and dogs.
  - 2. The Law of Moses forbade the hanging of a body on a tree overnight, which rule was applied likewise to crucifixions on crosses (Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Acts 5:30; 10:39; Galatians 3:13).
  - 3. The Romans permitted the breaking of the leg bones of persons being crucified to hasten their deaths so their bodies could be removed from the crosses before end of day (John 19:31-34).
- I. Jesus did not just die for you and me, but He voluntarily submitted to the most horrible of physical deaths so that we could live spiritually.

## II. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ upon the cross of Calvary has fundamental significance to Christianity.

- A. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the cross was not a surprise.
  - 1. Old Testament prophecy foretold that the Messiah would humble Himself to such a death (scourging and crucifixion) (Psalm 22:16-18; 69:21; Isaiah 53:1-12).
  - 2. Jesus, Himself, foretold that He would suffer crucifixion on the Roman cross (Matthew 10:38; Luke 14:27).
- B. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the culmination of his earthly ministry to save the world from its sins (John 3:16-17; 1 John 3:16).
  - ...[T]he time of our Saviour's crucifixion is recorded by Mark to be "the third hour;" that is, the whole space from nine o'clock to twelve was not quite gone, though it was near at an end; and by the evangelist here it is said, that it was "about the sixth hour," that is, near our twelve o'clock. (John 19:14) (Poole)
  - 1. The Christian's imitation of the crucifixion, death, burial and resurrec-

# Godhead

tion of Christ leads to salvation (Galatians 2:20; 6:14; Romans 6:3-13).

2. By means of the cross, Jesus Christ made reconciliation of humanity (Jew and Gentile) to an infinitely holy God possible (Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:20).
- C. Other factors directly relating to Christianity have to do with the cross of Christ.
1. Through the cross of Christ, the Old Testament was replaced with the New Testament (Colossians 2:14).
  2. Through the crucifixion, Jesus Christ became the anti-type of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:46; John 19:33, 36).
- D. In addition, imagine for a moment the shame or curse of being hanged on a tree that Jesus Christ suffered in our stead.
1. Under Judaism, hanging a dead body on a tree was a signboard of disgrace and shame (Deuteronomy 21:22-23).
  2. Jesus Christ, the Holy Son of God, suffered disgrace and shame that rightly belongs to you and me (Galatians 3:13).
  3. The ignoble or humiliating death of Jesus Christ on the cross for many in the first century was a stumbling block to belief, but Christians turned the awful death of Jesus Christ into a glorious memorial to salvation through Christ (1 Corinthians 1:18, 23).
  4. The shame of the cross suffered for us by Jesus resulted in His coronation as King Jesus, King of our lives (Hebrews 12:2).
- E. However, many have made themselves enemies of the cross, including both non-Christians and erring Christians (Philippians 3:18).
1. Especially Christians need to be careful that they do not make the “cross of Christ” of “none effect” by substituting human wisdom in place of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 1:17).
  2. There many today also who are offended by the cross of Christ (Galatians 5:11).
- F. Jesus Christ humbled Himself by laying aside for awhile the glory due Deity in heaven to die as a sacrifice for sinful mankind—you and me (Philippians 2:7-8; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

### **III. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross is meaningless to you and me, unless it has a positive affect on our lives.**

- A. Jesus Christ left the glorious domain of heaven to be a suffering Savior for humanity (John 3:17).
1. Unless we take advantage of the Gospel of Christ, our Lord’s leaving heaven and His vicarious sacrifice on the cross of Calvary were pointless (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 5:9).
  2. Jesus Christ came to seek and save the lost, but we must cooperate with God (Luke 19:10; Philippians 2:12).

# Godhead

- B. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is severely discounted whenever anyone, and especially Christians, fail to practice Christianity every waking moment.
1. Jesus is not the Lord of those who neglect or refuse to do His bidding (Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21).
  2. Mankind and especially Christians are obligated to think good things and do good things (Philippians 4:8; Titus 2:12).
  3. Christians are obligated to worship God at least weekly in His own appointed way (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
  4. Christians must evangelize the world with the Gospel, edify themselves with the Word of God and extend benevolence to Christians and non-Christians when they can (Mark 16:15-16; 1 Peter 2:2; Galatians 6:10).
  5. Christians must be zealous of good works (Titus 2:14; James 2:18).
- C. Think about how our Lord was affixed to the cross of Calvary.
1. Literally, of course, iron nails driven through His flesh into a rough wooden beam fastened Jesus to the cross.
  2. However, Jesus had the power Himself to come down from the cross, or to call legions of angels to free Him and destroy this world (Matthew 27:40, 42; 26:53).
  3. Essentially, though, not the nails, but *your sins and mine held our Lord tightly to the old rugged cross of Calvary.*
  4. Every sin you and I commit is one more nail attempting to crucify Jesus Christ again (Hebrews 6:6).
  5. A form of the Greek word for “cross” or “crucifixion,” a compound word meaning “again” and “crucify,” appears in Hebrews 6:6 to describe apostate Christians who were “virtually guilty of crucifying Christ again” (Vine).

## Conclusion:

1. “To the Romans, the cross never had any symbolical meaning being regarded as a means of punishment and execution. With the spread of Christianity, the cross subsequently acquired momentous historical, theological and legal symbolism...” (Varner 12).
2. In a sense in its rudimentary form, crucifixion on a cross was comparable to execution by guillotine, the gallows, drawing and quartering, firing squad, the electric chair or lethal injection.
3. Everything about being crucified was calculated to cause enormous shame for the victim as well as his family and associates, besides the horror of that death.
4. However, *for the child of God, the cross is the emblem of victory through Jesus Christ, our Savior.*

# Godhead

## Invitation:

1. Is Jesus Christ your Savior today?
2. Jesus is not your Savior today if you are a Christian whose sins are nailing Jesus Christ to the cross again (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).
3. Jesus Christ is not your Savior today if you have never obeyed the Gospel by crucifying the old man of sin and by being buried by baptism into the death of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-6).

## Works Cited

- Edersheim, Alfred. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. CD-ROM. Escondido: Ephesians Four Group, n.d.
- International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (ISBE)*. CD-ROM. Seattle: BibleSoft, 1996.
- McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia*. CD-ROM. Seattle: BibleSoft, 2000.
- Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROM. Nashville: Nelson, 1986.
- New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROM. Chicago: Moody P., 1988.
- Poole, Matthew. "John 19:14." *Matthew Poole's Commentary on the New Testament*. CD-ROM. Escondido: Ephesians Four Group, 1997.
- Smith, William. *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROM. Austin: Wordsearch, 2003.
- Varner, W. Terry. *Origin and Use of the Cross*. Marietta: Therefore Stand Publications, 1999.
- Vine, W. E. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. CD-ROM. Grand Rapids: Revell, 1981.

## The Three Crosses

### Luke 23:39-43

**Thesis:** To paint a biblical picture of two types of souls and point honest hearts to the middle cross of the Savior.

**Song:** Near the Cross

**Introduction:**

1. Jesus of Nazareth was crucified just outside the city of Jerusalem on Golgotha or Calvary (Matthew 27:33-35; Luke 23:33).
2. Two other men were led to that place of execution along with Jesus (Luke 23:32).
3. All three were crucified, one thief on each side of Jesus; Jesus was on the middle cross (Luke 23:33).

**Body:**

**I. The one thief and his cross represented rebellion and arrogance; that scene depicted impenitent, lost humanity.**

- A. One thief scoffed at Jesus Christ.
  1. He blasphemed (“*blasphemo*”) our Lord, saying, “...If thou be Christ, save thyself and us” (Luke 23:39).
  2. His scorn for the Messiah was greater than his excruciating physical pain.
  3. Further, Jesus had done nothing to arouse malicious sarcasm.
  4. The statement of this thief indicated that he was rebellious, arrogant and impenitent, and that he cared little about his soul, even though he was about to cross the threshold of death into eternity.
- B. This malefactor represents a host of lost souls.
  1. Millions of souls have crossed the threshold of eternity with no or little concern for their souls either; they, too, are forever lost.
  2. Many souls around us live outside even the human standards of righteousness, which often are less stringent than God’s standard of righteousness.
  3. They rebel against civil authority and are often openly without either remorse or penitence when caught and punished.
  4. Some sinners even profess that they do not want to go to heaven, and they do not desire the companionship of godly people in this life.
- C. The same thief also represents a great number of souls who do not truly believe in Christ, have not obeyed him and are lost.
  1. This thief was an unbeliever.
  2. He was only interested in salvation on his own terms; similarly, even

# Godhead

sincere lost souls today want to be saved on their own or denominational terms.

3. Further, this thief was highly skeptical and would have tested the Lord, desiring signs of Him. People are no different today, despite the fact that the Lord already validated Himself as the Savior through the miracles He performed (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4; John 20:30-31).

## II. The second thief and his cross represented penitence and depicted the only attitude through which souls can be saved.

- A. The speech of the second thief acknowledged Jesus as the Christ (Luke 23:40-43).
  1. Evidently, the earthly ministry of Jesus was publicly known.
  2. This thief also recognized Jesus as God ("*theos*") or Deity (Luke 23:40).
  3. He also admitted that he and the other thief were guilty of their crimes whereas Jesus was innocent (Luke 23:41).
  4. This thief believed Jesus to be the Messiah or Savior who was to establish the long prophesied kingdom.
  5. The one thief believed enough to trust his eternity to the man on the middle cross, which was more faith than the apostles exhibited at this critical moment.
- B. This thief not only believed, but he repented.
  1. He appealed for salvation to the only Savior this world has ever known.
  2. As Jesus saved that thief by then applicable terms (the New Testament was not in effect yet, Heb. 9:16-17), so must souls now living turn to Jesus for salvation according to the presently applicable terms—the Gospel (Romans 1:16).
  3. The forgiveness of sin did not and does not necessarily negate the consequence of sin; the thief was still punished for his crimes, and rightfully so (Romans 13:1-7).
- C. The penitent thief rebuked his sinful cohort and defended Christ.
  1. Followers of our Lord oppose unrighteousness (1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7).
  2. Followers of the Lord further defend righteousness (Philippians 1:17; Jude 3).
  3. Penitent souls turn in heart and in conduct from their former sins and evil associations (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

## III. Our Savior occupied the middle cross.

- A. The middle cross was viewed from contrasting perspectives.
  1. The impenitent thief saw a man, evil like himself, and an imposter Savior.

# Godhead

2. The penitent thief saw on the middle cross the Son of God and man's only Savior.
- B. Jesus Christ suffered vicariously or in our stead for us.
1. The thieves died for themselves, whereas Jesus died for the sins of others (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-24; 3:18).
  2. Jesus Christ's death on the middle cross was also a fulfillment of prophecy (Isaiah 53:4-12).
  3. The sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ saves our souls (1 Peter 1:18-20; Ephesians 1:7).
- C. Jesus Christ is the Savior to whom all who would be saved must turn.
1. His mission was to save the lost (Luke 19:10; Matthew 1:21-23).
  2. Jesus saves the faithful (John 8:24; Mark 16:16).
  3. Jesus further requires repentance and public acknowledgement that He is the Christ (Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32-33).
  4. Souls who desire salvation must obey Jesus (Luke 6:46; Hebrews 5:8-9).
  5. Jesus Christ adds the saved to His church (Acts 2:47).

## Conclusion:

1. Impenitent sinners are lost and will remain lost until they repent.
2. Penitent sinners need to obey the Gospel plan of salvation.
3. The road to salvation begins with the statement, "I have sinned" (Nehemiah 1:6).
4. Jesus Christ's shed blood is the propitiation for sins that allows God's grace to save mankind (Romans 3:23-25).

## Invitation:

1. Does your speech and conduct more nearly identify with the impenitent thief or the penitent thief?
2. How you react to the middle cross will affect you in this life and determine where you spend your eternity!
3. If an unbaptized believer, you need to put Jesus on in baptism and thereby have your sins washed away (Galatians 3:27; Acts 22:16).
4. If an erring child of God, you need to come back to the Savior today (1 John 1:9).

## The Vicarious Suffering of Christ

### 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24

**Thesis:** To better appreciate the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ for a lost world and what our response ought to be.

**Song:** When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

#### **Introduction:**

1. There are four cardinal doctrines of Christianity.
  - a. The Virgin Birth.
  - b. The Atonement (Redemption) of Sins.
  - c. The Vicarious Suffering of Christ.
  - d. The Resurrection from the Dead.
2. The cardinal doctrines of Christianity are attacked by modernists or liberals, atheists and others today.
  - a. A “modernist” is one who feels compelled to redefine the doctrines of Christianity to make them agree with what he believes to be indisputable, scientific fact (e.g., evolution instead of creation or other explanations for the miracles of the Bible).
  - b. An “atheist” is one who disbelieves the existence of God and spirit beings including the spiritual side of man.
3. Their attacks broadside all of the fundamental principles on which Christianity stands; each of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity is under attack.
  - a. The virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14) is attacked by modernists in mistranslated versions of the Bible; and unfortunately, some misguided brethren cherish and defend these mistranslations (e.g., RSV).
  - b. Atheists and modernists further deny that God exists, that there can be absolute right or wrong (sin), atonement for sin, a Messiah, a spiritual side of man and a resurrection from the dead.
  - c. Atheists and modernists discount Jesus Christ and His vicarious suffering as the fanatical behavior of a deluded man and His naive followers.
4. Truly, as the Son of God, Jesus not only suffered for mankind, but His was a vicarious suffering.
  - a. By “vicarious” we mean Jesus willingly suffered, not for his own offenses, but for the sins of others (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22, 24).
  - b. Further, Jesus willingly suffered (bearing our sins unto death) in our place (John 4:34; 6:38).



# Godhead

## Body:

### I. A Closer Look at the Vicarious Suffering of Jesus Christ.

- A. The willingness of Christ to suffer in man's stead is essential to the integrity of God; the Father could not have sent an unwilling Christ to Calvary's cross without becoming cruel and unjust.
- B. The necessity of the vicarious suffering of Christ is also crucial to the integrity of God; otherwise, this also would make the Father cruel and unjust.
- C. The vicarious suffering of Christ is in harmony with the nature of God.
  1. Natural law in the plant kingdom employs cycles in which the death of one generation of plant life (e.g., forests, crops) permits the rise of new plant life.
  2. God, the Author of natural law, devised a plan whereby out of the death of Christ sinful man can be renewed (Romans 6:3-5).
  3. Natural law in the animal kingdom includes instincts by which animals care for their offspring, even in the face of extreme peril or death (Matthew 23:37).
  4. God cares for His offspring, man, to the extent He was willing to experience the death of His Son.
- D. Vicarious suffering is in harmony with the grace of God.
  1. The principle that the innocent must suffer for the guilty is built into God's grace (e.g. animal sacrifices).
  2. Jesus Christ is the anti-type of those former sacrifices (Hebrews 9:7-14; 1 Peter 3:18).
  3. Since God is infinitely good and finite man practices evil, God appealed to grace to save man; man could not possibly be saved by justice in the hands of an infinitely just God—all would be hopelessly lost (Romans 3:24; 5:17, 20-21).

### II. God by His sinless nature can have no fellowship with sin.

- A. Therefore, left to himself, sinful man can have no fellowship with God.
  1. God did not create evil and has no relationship with it (James 1:13-16).
  2. God, though, did not prevent the possibility of evil forasmuch as He endowed angels and mankind with the power of choice (Joshua 24:15; Revelation 22:17).
  3. Without the power of choice, men would be mere robots.
- B. Hence, in order to restore the fellowship between God and man, the Father sent an infinitely righteous Vicarious Sacrifice to compensate for man's sinfulness (John 3:16).
  1. Yet, God still cannot save impenitent souls without violating His just and righteous nature (Deuteronomy 19:21).
  2. Therefore, God authored a scheme of redemption with which men must comply (Ephesians 3:1-12; Titus 1:1-3).

# Godhead

3. God combined mercy and grace with righteousness and justice by the vicarious suffering of Christ to save souls (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8).
4. Although redemption is a free gift, it must be appropriated by each soul to himself according to God's terms (Romans 5:15-21; 6:3-5).

## Conclusion:

1. There are four cardinal doctrines of Christianity: the Virgin Birth, Atonement (Redemption) for sins, the vicarious suffering of Christ and the resurrection from the dead.
2. These fundamental principles of Christianity are under attack today.
3. The vicarious suffering of Jesus Christ is essential to man's redemption.
4. Jesus willingly offered Himself in our place to save us.
5. The vicarious suffering of Jesus Christ allows a just but loving God to save fallen men through His grace and mercy.

## Invitation:

1. However, man must comply with God's terms in order to benefit from the vicarious suffering of Christ.
2. Namely, one must *hear* and *believe* (Romans 10:17), *repent* (Acts 17:30), *confess* Christ as Lord (Romans 10:9-10) and *be baptized* (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
3. Also, once saved, one must continue to obey God's plan—the Gospel (Hebrews 5:8-9), and on those occasions in which the child of God sins, through penitence and prayer he may again take advantage of the vicarious suffering of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7; Acts 8:22).

## The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ

### Acts 20:28

**Thesis:** To emphasize sacrificial Christian living by referring to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the sacrifice of some contemporary Christians.

**Introduction:**

1. Not everywhere on planet earth may persons freely choose to obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ and become Christians.
  - a. In one of the largest nations in the world, it is illegal to be baptized without first requesting and being granted government permission, but people request baptism and are baptized immediately anyway (Acts 16:33).
  - b. In one Asian country, it is illegal to convert from Buddhism or to convert someone from Buddhism, but people still request baptism and are baptized immediately anyway (Acts 5:29).
2. There are serious consequences in some parts of the world for becoming a Christian.
  - a. A professor at a university obeyed the Gospel, for which he was fired from his teaching position, imprisoned for two years and his family members were scattered about the country.
  - b. A Muslim woman obeyed the Gospel and was murdered by her husband for no other reason than because she became a Christian. Yet, another Muslim woman and friend of the deceased Christian lady decided to become a Christian, knowing full well that she might be murdered, too.

**Body:**

- I. **Of course, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ lies behind the sacrifices of these Christians just mentioned.**
  - A. Without the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, sacrifices to become Christians would be meaningless (John 3:16; Romans 8:32).
    1. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the subject of the Bible, beginning in the first book of the Bible (Genesis 3:15).
    2. Around 300 passages throughout the Bible foretold the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ (Psalms 22; 34; Isaiah 53; Daniel 9).
  - B. The apostle Paul focused on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
    1. Nothing is more important than or as important as the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 2:2). "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."
    2. Without the sacrifice of Christ, there would be no purchase price or ransom for our sins (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:5-6).

# Godhead

## II. Christ's sacrifice involves far more than His crucifixion.

- A. Our Lord laid off the trappings of being God to be made in the form of mortal man (Philippians 2:6-8).

Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

- B. Jesus Christ left the glory and splendor of heaven to live a poor existence on earth (Hebrews 2:9).

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

- C. Our Lord was willing for a time to be separated from God (because of man's sin that He bore for us).

1. "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).
2. One of the eternal punishments for unrighteous souls will be separation from God (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

## III. The benefit of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ pertains to His resurrection and Ascension.

- A. The Old Testament prophets focused on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 26:22-23).

- B. The apostle Paul defined the heart of the Gospel as the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Matthew 26:28).

- C. We are reconciled through the death of Jesus Christ (Romans 5:12; 6:3-5).

1. Jesus Christ took away the sins of those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:8-9; 9:28).
2. Those sins were nailed to the cross in the very Person of our Savior, Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:24), "who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed."

## Conclusion:

1. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ means to you and me that we ought to take our Christianity seriously and not lightly.
2. The Christian martyrs following the establishment of the Lord's church mean that we ought to take our Christianity seriously and not lightly (Acts 12:1-2; apostles of Christ; extra-biblical historical references to Christian martyrs).
3. The sacrifices of contemporary Christians mean that you and I ought to take

# Godhead

our Christianity seriously and not lightly.

## **Invitation:**

1. Do you practice sacrificial Christian living, sacrificial Christian service and sacrificial Christian worship? I have to ask myself those same questions.
2. If you have never put Jesus Christ on in baptism (Galatians 3:27), the baptism that is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16), the baptism that saves (1 Peter 3:21), then you have not really begun the Christian walk just yet.
3. If you are not taking Christianity seriously in your life (putting it first above all else, Matthew 6:33; 10:37-39), or if you are guilty of sin though you are a Christian, there is a remedy (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

# Godhead

## Bruised for Our Sins

### Isaiah 53:5

**Thesis:** To emphasize the horribleness of our Lord's crucifixion whereby non-Christians and erring Christians may be persuaded to obey the Gospel, and the rest of the children of God may be encouraged to practice Christianity more enthusiastically.

**Song:** *From the Garden to the Cross*

#### **Introduction:**

1. Scriptures prophesied that the Messiah would be bruised for humanity's sins.
  - a. Genesis 3:15 is the Bible's first prophecy, and it refers to the bruising that Jesus Christ would receive.
  - b. Isaiah 53:5 predicted the Savior's crucifixion and stated that He would be "bruised for our iniquities."
2. The contemporary definition of the word "bruise" hardly conveys the severity of the treatment Jesus received for us when He was crucified.
  - a. The word "bruised" in Isaiah 53:5 can mean to beat into pieces.
  - b. Examination of what was involved in the crucifixion of Christ will reveal the horribleness of all that He endured in our place.

#### **Body:**

##### **I. The arrest and trials of Jesus.**

- A. Jesus experienced a bloody sweat while in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30, 36; Luke 22:44).
  1. This is a real, though rare, medical condition where minimal amounts of blood color sweat.
  2. Numerous documented cases of this condition trace it to extreme stress.
  3. The anguish through which Jesus was going as He anticipated shouldering the sins of the whole human family as well as His impending crucifixion was more than sufficient to result in a bloody sweat.
- B. Jesus did not sleep the night preceding His arrest, trials, scourging and crucifixion.
  1. However, His disciples did fall asleep (Matthew 26:40-45; Mark 14:37-41).
  2. Fatigue due to a lack of sleep along with the physical abuse, scourging and crucifixion, doubtless, contributed to Christ's death on the cross by the time soldiers came to break the legs of the crucified.
- C. Jesus was beaten, mocked and condemned during His various trials.
  1. Our Lord was blindfolded, and struck in the face by the ones who took hold of him (Luke 22:63-64).
  2. Jesus was struck again in the presence of the high priest (John 18:22).

# Godhead

3. Shortly after daybreak, Jesus was taken before the Sanhedrin, which condemned him to death for supposed blasphemy (Matthew 27:1; Luke 22:66-71; John 18:31).
4. Next, Jesus was taken to the Roman Governor, Pilate, whereupon the Jews accused our Lord of treason (Luke 23:1-2).
5. Pilate sent Jesus to Herod for trial, at which time our Lord was mocked (Luke 23:7-11).
6. Returning to Pilate, Jesus was scourged, mocked, beaten and a crown or hat of long thorns was pressed into his head (Mark 15:15-20).

## II. The cruelty of scourging.

- A. Scourging preceded every Roman execution.
  1. The victim was stripped to his loincloth or naked and tied to a post with his back outward.
  2. The scourge or whip itself was a handle to which was attached several leather cords, each cord of which had pieces of bone and metal woven into it.
  3. Scourging was so severe that seven out of ten victims died from the scourging alone.
  4. The scourging may have been attended by possibly two Roman soldiers, and there was no limit to the number of blows the victim might receive.
- B. The affect of scourging.
  1. The ordeal weakened the victim through shock and blood loss.
  2. Subsequent blows with the scourge struck back, buttocks, legs and wrapped around to the chest and stomach, etc.
  3. Initial blows tore open the flesh.
  4. Repeated blows tore muscles, damaged veins and arteries, tattered flesh and caused blood to spurt out in time with one's beating heart.
  5. Especially the back appeared as a single, massive wound of shredded meat.
  6. The scourging alone caused irreversible tissue and organ damage.
  7. The scourging victim almost didn't look human any more.
- C. After the scourging, Pilate's soldiers abused our Lord more before the crucifixion.
  1. They put a robe on Jesus, mocked Him, placed a crown of thorns on His head, spit on Him and hit Him (John 19:1-3).
  2. The thorns were about an inch long and would have caused great pain and bleeding when forced on His head and each time Jesus was struck on the head.
  3. When the robe was removed from Jesus, the wounds that had begun to scab would be violently reopened, bringing increased pain and renewed bleeding.

# Godhead

## III. The horribleness of crucifixion.

- A. Crucifixion was well known as the most horrific form of execution ever developed by mankind.
  - 1. The Romans borrowed crucifixion from earlier peoples and perfected it in horribleness, pain and fear factor.
  - 2. They applied crucifixion especially to slaves and other non-citizens.
  - 3. Crucifixion was used to punish the crimes of sedition, piracy, assassination, perjury and treason; the Jews accused Jesus of treason before Pilate.
  - 4. The Romans used crucifixion to keep conquered nations under control through deterrence.
  - 5. Crucifixions occurred outside cities along a public road and were calculated to inflict great pain and intense shame.
- B. The Roman cross.
  - 1. It consisted of an upright beam 9' above the ground with a 7' crossbeam.
  - 2. The victim carried the crossbeam, weighing between 75 and 125 pounds, to the place of crucifixion.
  - 3. A tablet identifying the victim's crimes was carried ahead of the procession and attached at the top of the upright beam.
  - 4. The distance to the site of crucifixion was about a third of a mile; the total distance Jesus traveled during His trials was about 2½ miles.
  - 5. The upright beam of the cross might also have a slight seat to help support the weight of the body.
- C. The affect of crucifixion.
  - 1. Nails from 4½" to 7" long and almost ½" thick were used to nail the wrists (that's what the Greek means and hands would not hold one's body to a cross) and feet to the cross.
  - 2. Nailing the wrists would strike nerves, which would produce excruciating pain in the arms, spinal cord and the brain.
  - 3. Nailing the feet would produce comparable agony.
  - 4. One's posture on the cross with hands and feet nailed was in the shape of a "Y"; raising up to form the shape of a "T" was required to take a breath; this could only be accomplished through great pain, struggling against the nailed hands and feet.
  - 5. The victim's bones would be 'out of joint' (Psalm 22:14).
  - 6. When the victim became totally exhausted and could not lift up to take a breath, he would die of asphyxia—suffocate.
  - 7. Our Lord's final moments on the cross included being surrounded by dogs, garments parted, dehydration, mocking (Psalm 22) and being spit upon (Isaiah 50:6).
- D. Death was inevitable.
  - 1. Crucifixion victims lingered for up to 36 hours before dying, unless



# Godhead

their deaths were hastened by breaking their legs while one the cross.

2. Soldiers guarded crucified persons as long as they remained alive to prevent their removal from the cross and subsequent revival.
3. Finally, a soldier pierced the side of Jesus to confirm His death (John 19:34).

## IV. Jesus Christ didn't belong on that Roman cross, we did!

- A. Jesus, the Creator, left all the glories of heaven to take on the form of the creature (1 Corinthians 15:47; John 1:14).
  1. God was manifested in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16).
  2. Hebrews 2:14-17; 10:5.
- B. *He came on a mission to save mankind from eternal loss in a devil's hell—but we murdered him!*
  1. Love made Jesus come to earth and willing die for us (Romans 5:8; John 15:13).
  2. The first century Jews literally murdered the Christ through the hands of the Romans (Matthew 27:23-25; Acts 2:36).
  3. Sinners and even Christians who sin crucify afresh Jesus Christ (Hebrews 6:4-6).

## Conclusion:

1. Jesus had no sin (1 Peter 2:22).
2. Our sins, though, caused Jesus to leave heaven and become flesh.
3. Our sins lashed Him to a post naked or nearly naked where He was mercilessly battered and torn with the scourge.
4. Our sins drove nails the size of railroad spikes through His hands and feet on the cruel cross of Calvary.
5. Our sins pierced our Lord's side.
6. Our sins humiliated God in the flesh, our Savior, along a public road on the cross.

## Invitation:

1. Jesus died a horrible death for our sins, but He suffered in vain unless we allow His sacrifice to save us from our sins.
2. Obey the Gospel right now and receive the remission of your sins (Acts 22:16).
3. Prodigals come back to the Lord (Luke 15:11-32; Acts 8:22).

## Works Consulted

- Thompson, Bert. "An Examination of the Medical Evidence for the Physical Death of Christ." *Apologetics Press*. 10 Mar 2015. < <http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=13&article=145>>.
- Varner, W. Terry, *The Origin and Use of the Cross*. Marietta: Therefore Stand Publications, 1999.

## Is Jesus Christ an Historical Person?

### 1 Corinthians 1:18-26

**Thesis:** In view that enemies of God, the Bible and the church deny that Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) was a real person but rather merely a myth, herein we demonstrate from various sources of evidence that Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) actually lived and died in first century Palestine.

**Song:** *Wonderful Man of Galilee*

#### **Introduction:**

1. Some pretty otherwise smart people sometimes say some pretty dumb and baseless things.
2. To deny the historicity of Jesus Christ or that Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) was a real, historical person is about the dumbest and most baseless assertion that anyone could make.
3. It matters not that a person who may be saying such a thing is highly educated, perhaps even an expert in some particular field of study (1 Corinthians 1:18-26).
4. Prejudicial, unsubstantiated criticisms of the Bible's primary character are easily countered by ample **evidence**.
5. Jesus Christ is an historical person!

#### **Body:**

- I. Many persons, highly educated or not, have an ungodly agenda to expunge belief in as many persons as possible that Jesus of Nazareth ever lived.**
  - A. Often, especially young people are completely unprepared to counter even the most general and unsubstantiated assertions that Jesus Christ never lived.
    1. Parents, elders, preachers and teachers must arm young people with the facts and the truth about the historicity of Jesus Christ before these young ones encounter these challenges to their Christian faith.
    2. For instance, stated or implied ridicule by college professors and the peer pressure of one's fellows threaten the convictions of Christian young people.
    3. After all, no one wants to appear ignorant and uneducated or antique in his belief system.
    4. Further, if we do not prepare our young people for such encounters, they cannot meet these baseless accusations with any evidence.
    5. Consequently, we will loose these Christian young people!
  - B. Don't doubt it; Bible critics loudly challenge that Jesus of Nazareth ever lived, thereby seeking to undercut the mainstay of the Christian religion.
    1. These two quotations illustrate the critical claims against the histo-

# Godhead

ricity of Jesus Christ.

The world-famous medical doctor and lifelong critic of Christianity, Albert Schweitzer...wrote: The Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah, who preached the ethic of the Kingdom of God, who founded the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and died to give His work its final consecration, never had any existence. He is a figure designed by rationalism, endowed with life by liberalism, and clothed by modern theology in an historical garb (1964, p. 398). (Butt)

...one court case in Viterbo, Italy is drawing worldwide attention. Atheist Luigi Cascioli is suing Catholic priest Enrico Righi for teaching that Jesus lived on Earth 2,000 years ago. Cascioli contends that Righi and the Catholic church have deceived many people by teaching that Jesus was a real historical person who actually lived in Palestine during the first century. (Lyons)

2. Of course, if one can undercut the Christian religion, he can remove Christianity's restrictive moral code from interfering with one's religious and moral recklessness.

## **II. In truth, ample evidence proves that Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) really lived in the first century.**

- A. The Bible, an ancient document, proves that Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) actually lived and died in the first century.

...there are 5,366 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament in existence today, in whole or in part, that serve to corroborate the accuracy of the New Testament. ... In fact, the New Testament enjoys far more historical documentation than any other volume ever known. There are only 643 copies of Homer's *Iliad*, which is undeniably the most famous book of ancient Greece. No one doubts the text of Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, but we have only 10 copies of it, the earliest of which was made 1,000 years after it was written. To have such abundance of copies for the New Testament from within 70 years of their writing is nothing short of amazing... Livy wrote 142 books of Roman history, of which a mere 35 survive. The 35 known books are made manifest due to some 20 manuscripts, only one of which is as old as the fourth century. We have only two manuscripts of Tacitus' *Histories and Annals*, one from the ninth century and one from the eleventh. The *History of Thucydides*, another well-known ancient work, is dependent upon only eight manuscripts,

## Godhead

the oldest of these being dated about A.D. 900 (along with a few papyrus scraps dated at the beginning of the Christian era). The *History of Herodotus* finds itself in a similar situation. (Butt)

1. The New Testament is more substantiated or validated as an historical record than numerous other histories for which much less evidence remains, yet which are accepted as valid without doubt.
  2. The New Testament is an ancient document that testifies to the existence of Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) in the first century.
- B. Historians verify that Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) was a real person who lived and died in first century Palestine.
1. Jewish history refers to the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, known to many as the Christ, as actually living in the first century.

The earliest non-Christian testimony to the Lord's existence is that of the Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37-100). In *Antiquities of the Jews*, the historian twice referred to Jesus. In one passage he called Jesus "the Christ," referred to His "marvelous deeds," and alluded to His death and resurrection (18.3.3). (Jackson)

2. In addition, though not acknowledging belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ of Old Testament prophecy and belittling Him, the Jewish Babylonian *Talmud* acknowledges that Jesus of Nazareth lived in first century Palestine (Jackson).
3. Documents belonging to the era of the first century Roman Empire affirm that Jesus of Nazareth, called the Christ, was an historical person.

Pliny, governor of Bithynia, wrote the Roman emperor Trajan (c. A.D. 112), asking for advice about how he should deal with Christians who made it a practice to meet on an appointed day to sing a hymn "to Christ as if to God" (Epist. X.96). The Roman historian Tacitus, in his *Annals* (c. A.D. 115), referred to "Christus," who "was executed at the hands of the procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius" (XV.44). Writing about A.D. 120, Suetonius, a popular Roman writer, declared that Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome because they "were continually making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus" (*Vita Claudii* XXV.4). "Chrestus" is a corrupted form of Christos (Christ). Luke alluded to this situation in Acts 18:2. (Jackson)

- C. The ancient enemies of Christianity did not deny the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, the one called the Christ.

## Godhead

Celsus, a pagan philosopher of the second century A.D., produced the oldest extant literary attack against Christianity. His *True Discourse* (c. A.D. 178) was a bitter assault upon Christ. Celsus argued that Jesus was born in low circumstances, being the illegitimate son of a soldier named Panthera.... As he grew, He announced Himself to be God, deceiving many. Celsus charged that Christ's own people killed Him, and that His resurrection was a deception. But Celsus never questioned the historicity of Jesus. Lucian of Samosata (c. A.D. 115-200) was called "the Voltaire of Grecian literature." ...He said Christians worshipped the well-known "sophist" Who was crucified in Palestine because He introduced new mysteries. He never denied the existence of Jesus. Porphyry of Tyre was born about A.D. 233, studied philosophy in Greece, and lived in Sicily where he wrote fifteen books against the Christian faith. In one of his books, *Life of Pythagoras*, he contended that magicians of the pagan world exhibited greater powers than Christ. His argument was an inadvertent concession of Jesus' existence, and power. (Jackson)

- D. Hence, biblical and non-biblical evidence actually agree respecting the historicity of Jesus Christ.
1. The Bible, especially the historical or biographical sections of the New Testament, affirm that Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) was a real, first century person.
  2. Ancient, non-biblical literature, though openly antagonistic respecting the divine nature of Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ), nevertheless likewise affirms that Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) was a real, first century person.
  3. Anyone, with or without degrees of higher learning, who claims that Jesus Christ was not an historical, first century person is either ignorant of the facts or is purposely deceptive.
  4. ***The historicity of Jesus Christ is an undeniable fact!***

### Conclusion:

1. There may appear to be only a small amount of evidence to establish the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) in non-biblical, ancient literature.
  - a. However, there is, for instance, as much or more evidence establishing the historicity of Jesus Christ as there is for the historicity of Governor Pilate who condemned our Lord to crucifixion.
  - b. Considering both non-biblical and biblical evidence respecting the historicity of Jesus Christ, there is more evidence that Jesus of Nazareth

# Godhead

(the Christ) was a real, first century person than there is evidence for any other ancient event or person.

- c. "...the historicity of Jesus exceeds that of any other subject of history" (Spangler 282).
  - d. Rather than lacking evidence for the historicity of Jesus Christ, there is overwhelming evidence for the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ), especially contrasted with the amount of evidence for any other ancient person, place or event.
2. The best witnesses to the historicity of Jesus Christ are the reluctant, hostile witnesses who have absolutely nothing to gain (and everything to lose) by acknowledging that Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) lived in first century Palestine.
    - a. Rod Rutherford wrote: "The fact that this testimony comes from hostile witnesses gives even greater credibility to it, for these enemies of Christianity would have denied the historicity of Christ if they could have" (296).
    - b. Often, modern enemies of our Lord lack the integrity to inspect the historical record before making the baseless claim that history is silent about the existence of Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ).
    - c. Still other critics we suspect, knowing better, dishonestly affirm what they know to be a lie when they claim the historical record is silent about the existence of Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ).

## Invitation:

1. Both non-biblical and biblical evidence confirm that Jesus Christ lived in first century Palestine, performed miracles and began the Christian religion.
2. Today, one becomes a follower of Christ and is inducted into the Christian religion the same way people became Christians and were added to Christ's church 2,000 years ago (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:47).
3. Likewise, the sins of erring Christians today are forgiven in the same manner as the sins of Christians were forgiven 2,000 years ago (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

## Works Cited

- Butt, Kyle. "The Historical Christ—Fact or Fiction?" *Reason & Revelation* 20.1 (2000). 22 Dec. 2006 <<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/157>>.
- Jackson, Wayne. "The Historicity of Jesus Christ." *Reason & Revelation* 18.1 (1998). 22 Dec. 2006 <<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/87>>.
- Lyons, Eric. "Lawsuit Over Jesus." *Reason & Revelation* (2006). 22 Dec. 2006 <<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/2836>>.
- Rutherford, Rod. "Credibility of the Scriptures." *The Bible: None Like It*. Curtis A. Cates, ed. CD-ROMANS Memphis: Memphis School of Preaching, 1989: 292-300.
- Spangler, Joe. "Authenticity of the Scriptures." *The Bible: None Like It*. Curtis A. Cates, ed. CD-ROMANS Memphis: Memphis School of Preaching, 1989: 281-286.

# Godhead

## Come Meet Jesus as the Savior

### Luke 2:11

**Thesis:** To disclose that the reason and function of Jesus Christ coming from heaven into the world was to be mankind's spiritual Savior.

**Song:** *All the Way My Savior Leads Me*

#### **Introduction:**

1. Unable to save himself from his sins, mankind desperately needs a divine Savior.
2. Fortunately, Jesus Christ accepted God the Father's mission for Him as our Savior.
3. We need to arm ourselves with biblical information regarding Jesus Christ as Savior before we can obtain redemption for ourselves.

#### **Body:**

##### **I. Both testaments teach about a divine Savior of humanity.**

A. The definition of the word "savior" has a basic meaning, but the true significance depends upon the context in which it appears.

1. The 15 judges between the time of Joshua and King Saul were *physical, human saviors* (Judges 2:16; 3:9, 15).
2. However, regarding salvation or redemption, Jesus Christ is mankind's *spiritual, divine Savior*.

SAVIOR. A term applied in Scripture, in its highest sense, to Jesus Christ, but in a subordinate manner to human deliverers.  
(*New Unger's*)

1: one that saves from danger or destruction; 2 : one who brings salvation; *specifically capitalized* : JESUS. (*Merriam*)

B. Hebrew and Greek have their respective words that are translated into English as "Savior."

1. The English word "Savior" appears 37 times in the KJV; 13 in OT; 24 NT.
2. The Hebrew word translated "Savior" is "*yasha*," though altogether the Hebrew word appears 207 times and is translated also as "save," "rescue," "deliverer," "avenging" and "help."
3. The Greek word translated "Savior" is "*soter*" and means "deliverer" (*Biblesoft's*).

C. Both testaments also use synonyms for the word "Savior."

1. "Redeemer" and "Savior" appear as synonyms in Isaiah 49:26 and 60:16.
2. The word "redeemer" signifies what is meant respecting Jesus Christ

# Godhead

as mankind's Savior (Isaiah 59:20; Titus 2:13-14).

**REDEEMER** In the New Testament, Christ is viewed as the ultimate Redeemer, although the Greek word for redeemer is not used. Jesus gave His life as "a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Thus, the apostle Paul speaks of believers as having "redemption through His blood" (Eph 1:7). (*Nelson's*)

3. The apostle Peter also wrote that redemption is available to humanity through the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19).
4. See also Romans 3:24-25

## **II. Biblical information gathered from both testaments disclose the reason and function of Jesus Christ coming from heaven into the world to be mankind's spiritual Savior.**

- A. A divine Savior in the person of Jesus Christ who came from heaven to earth is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.
  1. The spiritual promise made to Abraham was realized when Jesus Christ came to this poor world of sin as its Savior (Genesis 12:3; Luke 1:68-77).
  2. As our Savior, Jesus Christ fulfilled prophecies about removing mankind's sins (Isaiah 53:10-11; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Zechariah 9:9).
- B. Jesus Christ came into this world for the express purpose to function as the Savior of mankind.
  1. Our Heavenly Father expressly sent Jesus Christ into the world to be our Savior (John 3:17; 1 John 4:14).
  2. At the birth of Jesus, an angel announced to shepherds that their "Savior, which is Christ the Lord" was born (Luke 2:11); compare what an angel told Joseph in Matthew 1:21.
  3. Jesus Christ came to be "the Saviour of all men" (though some will not receive him as Savior) (1 Timothy 4:10).
  4. John the Baptist declared that Jesus Christ would function as Savior by taking "away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).
  5. Samaritans acknowledged that Jesus "is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world" (John 4:42).
  6. Jesus affirmed that He came to be the world's Savior (Matthew 18:11; Luke 19:10; John 12:47-48).
  7. Jesus Christ became Savior upon His resurrection and subsequent ascension back to heaven (Acts 5:31).
  8. Strictly speaking, though, Jesus Christ is the Savior of the body of Christ (Ephesians 5:23).
- C. By consulting the Word of God (Bible) about the mission of our Savior, we can obtain salvation for ourselves.



# Godhead

1. Studying Scripture will enable one to find salvation from the Savior (2 Timothy 3:15; 2 Peter 3:18).
2. Christians can look confidently toward the end of time for the return of the Savior (Philippians 3:20).

## Conclusion:

1. Jesus Christ is our Savior, who “was manifested to take away our sins” (Titus 1:4; 1 John 3:5).
2. Because Jesus Christ is Savior, the apostle Peter acknowledged that Jesus possessed “the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).
3. Because Jesus Christ is Savior, the apostle Paul repeatedly affirmed that salvation is obtainable exclusively through Jesus Christ (Acts 13:23, 38-39; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:9).
4. With Job’s statement in Job 19:25 we concur confidently: “I know that my redeemer liveth” (i.e., Jesus Christ our Savior).

## Invitation:

1. Armed with biblical information regarding Jesus Christ as Savior, we can obtain redemption for ourselves.
2. Jesus is Savior to those who obey the Gospel (Romans 6:17; Hebrews 5:9).
3. Non-Christians obey the Gospel by turning to the Word of God and deriving faith from biblical evidence (Romans 10:17), repenting of sins, acknowledging Jesus Christ as the Son of God and being baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 8:37).
4. Erring Christians obey the Gospel by repenting of sin and praying for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

## Works Cited

- Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary.* CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, 1994.
- Free, Joseph P. and Howard F. Vos. *Archaeology and Bible History.* revised and expanded. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (ISBE).* CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft, 1996.
- Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.* CD-ROMANS Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 1993.
- Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary.* CD-ROMANS Nashville: Nelson, 1986.
- New Unger's Bible Dictionary.* CD-ROMANS Chicago: Moody P., 1988.

# Godhead

## Come Meet Jesus as Messiah and King

### John 1:41; 4:25-26

**Thesis:** To define from Scripture the significance of our Lord's role as Messiah and King.

#### **Introduction:**

1. The terms Messiah and King relative to Jesus Christ are interrelated.
2. Together, they bring to fruition all the Old Testament prophecies about the redemption of fallen humanity.
3. "Come Meet Jesus as Messiah and King."

#### **Body:**

##### **I. What does it mean that Jesus Christ is the Messiah?**

- A. The Word "*Messiah*" (OT) or "*Messias*" (NT) appears in both testaments.
  1. The Hebrew word for "*Messiah*" is "*mashiyach*," which means "anointed; usually a consecrated person (as a king, priest, or saint); specifically, the Messiah" (*Biblesoft's*).
  2. This Hebrew word appears 39 times in Old Testament: 37 times as "anointed" and twice as "Messiah" (Daniel 9:25-26).
  3. The "Heb. mashiyach in all the thirty-nine instances of its occurring in the Old Testament, is rendered by the LXX [Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT] 'Christos'" (Easton).
  4. "*Messiah*" ("*Messias*") only appears twice in the New Testament (John 1:41; 4:25).
- B. The New Testament more often uses another word as a synonym for Messiah.
  1. The Greek word "*christos*" translated "Christ" means "anointed (i.e., the Messiah, an epithet of Jesus" (*Biblesoft's*).
  2. "Christos means 'smeared on,' 'anointed,' and as a noun (to' christon) 'ointment.' It never relates to persons in the nonbiblical sphere" (Kittel and Friedrich).

The Hebrew word *mashiach*, transliterated "Messiah," is an adjective made from a verb, and could be translated roughly "anointed one." The New Testament *christos*, made from the verb meaning "anoint," has an equivalent meaning. Thus Messiah and Christ represent the same concept. (*It should be remembered that Christ is not a last name, with Jesus as the first name, as many seem to think.*) (Karleen emphasis added)

To us "Christ" has become a proper name, and is therefore writ-

# Godhead

ten without the definite article; but, in the body of the gospel narratives, since the identity of Jesus with the promised Messiah is still in question with the people, the article is habitually used, and the name should therefore be translated "*the Christ.*" (*Vincent's* emphasis added)

**Messi'ah** (*anointed*). This word (*Mashiach*) answers to the word *Christ* (*Christos*) in the New Testament, and is applicable in its first sense to any one anointed with the holy oil. The kings of Israel were called anointed, from the mode of their consecration. 1 Sam 2:10, 35; 12:3, 5 etc. This word also refers to the expected Prince of the chosen people who was to complete God's purposes for them and to redeem them, and of whose coming the prophets of the old covenant in all time spoke. He was the Messiah, the Anointed, i.e. consecrated as the king and prophet by God's appointment. (Smith)

3. *Christos* appears 572 times in the New Testament and is translated as "Christ" in all instances except Acts 10:48 where it is translated as "Lord."
4. "The word Christ is...almost invariably used instead of Messiah in the NT as the official designation of our Lord" (*New Unger's*).

## II. What does it mean to otherwise lost humanity that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and King?

- A. Literally hundreds of Messianic prophecies populate the Old Testament.
  1. "The Messianic prophecies are too numerous to be quoted" (Easton).
  2. Free and Vos quote another has to having determined "that there are 332 distinct prophecies in the Old Testament that have been literally fulfilled in Christ" (241).

Over 300 prophecies in the Bible speak of Jesus Christ. Specific details given by these prophecies include His tribe (Gen 49:10), His birthplace (Mic 5:2), dates of His birth and death (Dan 9:25-26), His forerunner John the Baptist (Mal 3:1; 4:5; Matt 11:10), His career and ministry (Isa 52:13-53:12), His crucifixion (Ps 22:1-18), His resurrection (Ps 16:8-11; Acts 2:25-28), His ascension (Ps 2; Acts 13:33), and His exaltation as a priest-king (Ps 110; Acts 2:34). (*Nelson's*)

The number of passages in the OT regarded by the Jews in pre-Christian times as prophetic of the Messiah is much larger than that of the special predictions to which Christians have commonly appealed. It is stated by Edersheim to be more than

# Godhead

456... (New Unger's)

- B. The Christ child was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies (Luke 2:25-32).
  1. Many of the Psalms are Messianic (2; 16:7-11; 67; 68:28-35; 69; 72:1-19; 93; 96; 97; 98; 99; 110; 118:19-29).
  2. Philip acknowledged that the Old Testament prophecies declared a Messiah (John 1:45).
  3. Jesus Christ chided his apostles for not knowing that the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah foretold His suffering (Luke 24:25-27).
- C. Inspired first century apostles and preachers constantly referred to Old Testament prophecies about the Christ (Acts 3:14-18, 22-26).
  1. The apostle Paul "reasoned...out of the Scriptures" through his teaching and preaching that the Old Testament foretold of the suffering, but victorious, Messiah (Acts 9:22; 17:2-3; 26:22-23; Romans 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
  2. The apostle Peter, likewise, preached about the prophesied suffering Christ (Messiah) (1 Peter 1:10-11).
- D. There was an air of expectancy in the first century for the coming of the long promised Messiah.

To the prevalence of the Messianic hope among the Jews in the time of Christ the Gospel records bear ample testimony. We see from the question of the Baptist that "the coming one" was expected (Matt 11:3 and parallel), while the people wondered whether John himself were the Christ (Luke 3:15). (*ISBE*)

1. Andrew found his brother Peter to inform him that the long awaited Messiah had come (John 1:40-41).
  2. The woman at the well who conversed with Jesus admitted that the world waited for the coming Messiah (John 4:25-26, 29).
  3. The Samaritans acknowledged that Jesus "is the Christ [Messiah] and Savior of the world" (John 4:42).
  4. Peter strongly affirmed that Jesus was the Christ (Messiah) (Matthew 16:15-16; Acts 4:26-27).
- E. Jesus unmistakably declared Himself to be the Messiah.
    1. Jesus told the woman at the well that He is the Messiah (John 4:25-26).
    2. Jesus affirmed to the high priest and other religious leaders that He was the Christ (Messiah) (Matthew 26:63-64).
  - F. God the Father anointed Jesus at the Christ (Messiah) (Acts 4:26-27).
    1. The word translated "Messiah" means "anointed" and "is used in the Old Testament of kings and priests, who were consecrated to office

# Godhead

- by the ceremony of anointing" (*ISBE*).
2. "...[P]riests (Ex. 28:41; 40:15; Num. 3:3), prophets (1 Kings 19:16), and kings (1 Sam. 9:16; 16:3; 2 Sam. 12:7) were anointed with oil, and so consecrated to their respective offices" (Easton).
  3. Jesus of Nazareth is Prophet, Priest and King, anointed of God for each of these roles, which rolled into one Jesus is the Christ, our Messiah.
- G. However, the Jews popularly held a skewed or incorrect view of what that Messiah would be like.

In *Jewish thought*, the Messiah would be the king of the Jews, a political leader who would defeat their enemies and bring in a golden era of peace and prosperity. In *Christian thought*, the term Messiah refers to Jesus' role as a spiritual deliverer, setting His people free from sin and death. The word Messiah comes from a Hebrew term that means "anointed one." Its Greek counterpart is Christos, from which the word Christ comes. Messiah was one of the titles used by early Christians to describe who Jesus was. ...Most expected the Messiah to be a political leader, a king who would defeat the Romans and provide for the physical needs of the Israelites. (*Nelson's emphasis added*)

1. To think "Messiah" in the first century was to think "king," and properly so.
  2. *Merriam Webster* defines "Messiah" as "1a: the expected king and deliverer of the Jews."
  3. The typical first century Jewish mistake was to expect the Messiah-King to establish a physical kingdom rather than a spiritual kingdom (John 18:36).
- H. Jesus of Nazareth (God incarnate through the virgin birth) is the Messiah-King.
1. The Great King was prophesied to make His triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding the lowly donkey (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:5).
  2. Jesus was "born King of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2).
  3. Jesus acknowledged that He was "the King of the Jews" (Matthew 27:11, 29, 37).
  4. Jesus "the King" is "eternal, immortal, invisible" (1 Timothy 1:17).
  5. Jesus Christ is the "only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:16).
  6. Jesus Christ is "King of saints" (Revelation 15:3).

## Conclusion:

1. The need for a Messiah first grew out of the tragedy of sin introduced in the Garden of Eden, because of the maliciousness of the devil, through duping humanity represented in the first pair.
2. Immediately, God began preparing mankind for redemption through a Messiah-

# Godhead

King (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4; Ephesians 3:10-11; 1 Peter 1:18-21).

The prophecies concerning Christ were a part of the plan that Deity made before the creation. When God accomplished his eternal plan through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ it demonstrated the wisdom of God, (1 Corinthians 1:20) the power, the majesty and the glory of God. . . Paul concluded the letter to the Romans pretty much as he began it. With a beautiful doxology that is as follows: (25) "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began (26) but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith (27) to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen." (Romans 16:25-27) (West 10).

3. God the Father provided fallen humanity a Messiah-King, but it is up to humanity to avail itself of the salvation from sin our Messiah makes possible.

## Invitation:

1. Indeed, Jesus Christ is "King of [spiritual] Israel" (Luke 27:42); is King Jesus the King of your life today?
2. Jesus is not the Messiah-King of your life if you have neglected or refused to be baptized for the remission of your sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).
3. Jesus is not the Messiah-King of your life if you are a Christian whose life is tarnished with sin (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).
4. If Jesus is not the Messiah-King of your life right now, please obey the Gospel this very moment (Hebrews 5:9).

## Works Cited

- Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary.* CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, 1994.
- Easton, M.G. *Easton's Bible Dictionary.* Oak Harbor: Logos, 1996.
- Karleen, Paul S. *The Handbook to Bible Study.* CD-ROMANS New York: Oxford UP, 1987.
- Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Abridged in One Volume. CD-ROMANS Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.* CD-ROMANS Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 1993.
- Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary.* CD-ROMANS Nashville: Nelson, 1986.
- New Unger's Bible Dictionary.* CD-ROMANS Chicago: Moody P., 1988.
- Smith, William. *Smith's Bible Dictionary.* CD-ROMANS Austin: Wordsearch, 2003.
- Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament.* CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft, 1997.
- West. D. Gene. *Messianic Prophecies Outlined.* Cameron: Rushmore, 2000.

## Come Meet Jesus as High Priest

### Hebrews 9:7-12

**Thesis:** To examine Scripture pertaining to Jesus Christ as our High Priest.

**Introduction:**

1. As High Priest, Jesus Christ does for us before the Heavenly Father what we cannot do for ourselves, namely making intercession with God.

Here on earth our Lord was a priest in a preeminent sense, both in His sacrifice of Himself for the sins of the world and in His intercession. He is also our present High Priest, interceding for us in heaven. (*New Unger's*)

2. As High Priest, Jesus Christ leads Christians as the New Testament priesthood.

**Body:**

**I. Jesus Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek.**

- A. The priesthood of Melchizedec differed from the Aaronic priesthood under the Law of Moses.
  1. Melchizedec's priesthood did not pertain to a certain tribe or family within a tribe like the Aaronic priesthood (Hebrews 7:1-3; Genesis 14:18-20).
  2. The priesthood after the order of Melchizedec is "unchangeable" and is 'forever' or 'continues' (Hebrews 6:20; 7:23-24, 28).
- B. The writer of Hebrews presents evidence that the priesthood of Melchizedec was superior to the priesthood under the Law of Moses (Hebrews 7:4-10).
  1. Consequently, since the priesthood of Jesus Christ is after the order of Melchizedec, then our Lord's priesthood also is superior to the Aaronic priesthood (Hebrews 7:11).
  2. The priesthood under Christianity is different from and superior to the priesthood under Judaism (Hebrews 7:12-17).
- C. God the Father made Jesus Christ our High Priest after the order of Melchizedec (Hebrews 5:10).
  1. God called Jesus Christ to be His priest after the order of Melchizedec in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Hebrews 5:4-6; Psalm 2:7; 110:4).
  2. Jesus Christ was made High Priest with a Divinely made oath (Hebrews 7:20-21).

**II. Jesus Christ is our High Priest.**

- A. Jesus Christ is called "the Apostle and High Priest" (Hebrews 3:1).
  1. God the Father appointed Jesus Christ to be our High Priest (Hebrews

# Godhead

- 5:5.
2. As High Priest, Jesus Christ is “over the house of God” (Hebrews 10:21).
  3. As our High Priest, Jesus Christ is “merciful and faithful” (Hebrews 2:17).
- B. Jesus Christ as our High Priest has “passed into the heavens” (Hebrews 4:14).
1. Our High Priest, Jesus Christ, “is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Hebrews 8:1).
  2. Jesus Christ would not qualify to be a priest if His priesthood pertained to Judaism (Hebrews 7:13-14; 8:4).
- C. Jesus Christ, our High Priest, is superior to the high priests under Judaism.
1. Jesus Christ is a superior High Priest because though “tempted like as we are,” He is “without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).
  2. Since Jesus Christ came in the flesh and was tempted in the same ways we are tempted, our High Priest has compassion on us.
  3. As High Priest, Jesus Christ ministers in a greater tabernacle than in which Aaronic priests ministered (Hebrews 9:11).
  4. The superiority of Jesus Christ as High Priest includes making a single offering rather than daily and annual offerings (Hebrews 9:25; 10:11-12).
  5. Unlike other high priests that served under the Law of Moses, Jesus Christ as our High Priest “is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26-28).
- D. The purpose of a high priest is to “offer gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Hebrews 5:1).
1. Hence, Jesus Christ as our High Priest was “ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices” (Hebrews 8:3).
  2. Whereas the high priest under Judaism went into the Holy of Holies once annually to atone for sins, Jesus Christ as our High Priest entered once into the true Holy of Holies, not with animal blood, but with His own blood (Hebrews 9:7-12, 25).
- E. Christians are subordinate priests to Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

Prayer, praise, the contribution, indeed, all the items and acts of worship are thus figuratively included in the sacrifices which Christians, as priests officiating under Christ, the High Priest (Heb. 9:11-28), are to offer in the spiritual temple, the church... (Woods)



# Godhead

## Conclusion:

1. Jesus Christ is everything that the high priest under Judaism was and more also.

The priests of Israel were but dim shadows, obscure sketches and drafts of the one Great Priest of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Without drawing out at length the parallelism between the type and the archetype, we may sum up in a few brief sentences the perfection found in the priestly character of Christ: (1) Christ as Priest is appointed of God (Heb 5:5). (2) He is consecrated with an oath (Heb 7:20-22). (3) He is sinless (Heb 7:26). (4) His priesthood is unchangeable (Heb 7:23-24). (5) His offering is perfect and final (Heb 9:25-28; 10:12). (6) His intercession is all-prevailing (Heb 7:25). (7) As God and man in one Person He is a perfect Mediator (Heb 1-2). (*ISBE*)

But the atonement made by the High Priest, under the Law, was but a shadow of the atonement which Christ made by the offering of his own blood for the sins of the people. (Milligan)

2. In addition, the priesthood of Jesus Christ is unique like the priesthood of Melchisedec.
3. Finally, Christians are subordinate priests to Jesus Christ our High Priest.

## Invitation:

1. As our sinless, High Priest in heaven with God, Jesus Christ is our perfect Mediator or Intercessor (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:25; 8:6).
2. However, Jesus Christ our High Priest can only intercede and mediate for faithful children of God (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:22; Revelation 2:10).

## Works Cited

- International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (ISBE)*. CD-ROMANS Seattle: BibleSoft, 1996.
- Milligan, Robert. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Gospel Advocate Commentaries. Nashville: 1989. CD-ROMANS Austin: Wordsearch, 2005.
- New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROMANS Chicago: Moody P., 1988.
- Woods, Guy N. *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles: Peter, John and Jude*. Gospel Advocate Commentaries. Nashville: 1991. CD-ROMANS Austin: Wordsearch, 2005.

# Godhead

## Come Meet Jesus as Mediator, Intercessor & Advocate

### 1 Timothy 2:5

**Thesis:** To demonstrate from Scripture the roles of Jesus Christ as Mediator, Intercessor and Advocate.

#### **Introduction:**

1. Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between humanity and God.
2. Jesus Christ is Intercessor between mankind and God.
3. In addition, Jesus Christ is mankind's Advocate with God.
4. Jesus Christ is mankind's sole access to a Holy God (John 14:6).

#### **Body:**

#### **I. Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between humanity and God.**

##### **A. Just what is a "mediator"?**

One who goes between two groups or persons to help them work out their differences and come to agreement. A mediator usually is a neutral party, a go-between, intermediary, or arbitrator who brings about reconciliation in a hostile situation when divided persons are not able to work out their differences themselves. A mediator can also be the negotiator of an agreement. After the agreement is made, he can then witness to its content and serve as the administrator or guarantor to make sure its provisions are followed. A mediator needs legal authority and recognized power to function effectively. (*Nelson's*)

1. No one else in heaven or on earth better knows both the divine and the human circumstances, therefore, making Jesus Christ the only qualified Mediator between man and God.
2. Further, Jesus Christ has "all authority...in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18 NKJV) necessary to mediate effectively.

Mediator, a person who intervenes between two parties at variance, in order to reconcile them. (*McClintock and Strong*)

3. The *ISBE* notes that a mediator is a "middleman," and further the English Word "mediator" appears in the Old Testament only in the Septuagint for Job 9:33 plus six times in the New Testament.
4. The hostility between mankind and God is sin that man has committed (or omitted JamES 4:17), and through addressing the problem of sin, Jesus Christ mediates between man and God.

# Godhead

5. Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* says that a mediator is an "umpire."
- B. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament have their respective mediators.
1. Moses functioned as the mediator between Israel and God under Judaism (Exodus 20:19-22; Deuteronomy 5:5).
  2. The apostle Paul acknowledged that Moses was the mediator of the Old Testament (Galatians 3:19-20).
  3. However, Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the New Testament (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 9:15; 12:24).
  4. Speaking of the New Testament, our Lord "is the mediator of a better covenant" (Hebrews 8:6).
  5. Again, the mediation of Jesus Christ revolves around removing the hostility of man's sin between mankind and God (1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 9:12-15).

## II. Jesus Christ is Intercessor between mankind and God.

- A. What is an intercessor?

Intercession of Christ. This belongs to the office of Christ as Priest (see Jesus Christ, Offices of) and refers generally to the aid that He extends as mediator between God and mankind (see Mediation). In a particular sense Christ is represented as drawing near to God and pleading in behalf of men (Rom 8:27; Heb 7:25), and thus, in harmony with the idea of intercession, He is called our Advocate (1 John 2:1). (*New Unger's*)

1. Literally, the word "intercession" means "to come between" (*ISBE*).
  2. Simply put, in the Bible, intercession is: "The act of petitioning God or praying on behalf of another person or group" (*Nelson's*).
  3. *Nelson's* notes that some of the earliest occasions of someone acting as an intercessor were in the persons of Abraham for the City of Sodom and Moses for Israel.
  4. However, successful intercession also depends upon those for whom intercession is made obeying the Word of God (John 17:9).
  5. There was no need of an intercessor between man and God until sin separated between the first pair and God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8).
- B. The apostle Paul characterized the ministry of our Lord as "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).
1. Formerly, the prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah or Christ would make "intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12).
  2. Being "at the right hand of God" since His Ascension, Jesus Christ

# Godhead

is precisely positioned to make “intercession for us” (Romans 8:34).

3. The intercession made for by us by Jesus Christ is ongoing, “seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for” us (Hebrews 7:25) or as Easton expresses it: “This intercession is an essential part of his mediatorial work.”
  4. “The ministry of reconciliation” pertains to making “reconciliation for the sins of the people”—you and me (Hebrews 2:17).
- C. Scripture also notes two additional intercessors besides Jesus Christ.
1. First, the Holy Spirit participates in intercession between mankind and God (Romans 8:26-27).
  2. In a much inferior consideration, Christians through their prayers make intercession for their fellow mankind (1 Timothy 2:1).

### III. Jesus Christ is mankind’s Advocate with God.

#### A. What is an advocate?

ADVOCATE (Grk. *parakletos*, “paraclete”). One who pleads the cause of another. The term is applied by Jesus to the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7), where it is rendered Helper [NKJV] [“Comforter” KJV]; and by John to Christ Himself (1 John 2:1). The word advocate (Lat. *advocatus*) might designate a consulting lawyer or one who presents his client’s case in open court; or one who, in times of trial or hardship, sympathizes with the afflicted and administers suitable direction and support. (*New Unger’s*)

1. *Nelson’s* says of “advocate”: “One who pleads another’s cause before a tribunal or judicial court.”
  2. *McClintock and Strong* notes that the Jews were unfamiliar with the role of an advocate until they came under Roman rule and had to use advocates or lawyers to more effectively represent their cases in court proceedings.
- B. Our Lord is our “advocate” or defense attorney before the bar of God the Father in heaven (1 John 2:1).

Christians need an Advocate because of the ADVERSARY, the devil or Satan, who accuses us before God (1 Peter 5:8; Rev 12:10). If Satan is the “prosecuting attorney,” Christ and the Holy Spirit are the legal advocates, the “defense attorneys,” who help, defend, counsel, and comfort us; they plead the Christian’s case before God day and night, providing a continuing remedy for sin. (*Nelson’s*).

1. Jesus and the apostle John used a term known in the first century

# Godhead

Palestine to refer to someone who represented another in a court of law (cf. Acts 24:1).

2. There is no one better suited than Jesus Christ to represent humanity as Defense Lawyer before God Almighty in the divine court of heaven

## Conclusion:

1. Regarding 1 Timothy 2:5, Albert Barnes observes that Jesus Christ is willing to be the one Mediator for **all humanity** (kings, their subjects, rich, poor, master, slave), whereas Matthew Poole expresses it: "all men have the same Mediator."
2. Adam Clarke observed that as Mediator, Jesus Christ is the "peace-maker" between man and God to take care of man's sin problem.
3. *Vine's* adds that Jesus Christ is more than Mediator, but as the sacrificial Lamb He Himself is the means by which the hostility of sin is removed between man and God (Isaiah 59:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

Christ is the one and only mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). He makes reconciliation between God and man by his all-perfect atoning sacrifice. (Easton)

## Invitation:

1. Though willing to be Mediator, Intercessor and Advocate for all humanity, Jesus Christ can only serve in those capacities for obedient souls (Romans 6:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 5:9; Revelation 2:10).
2. Jesus Christ **is not** your Mediator, Intercessor and Advocate if you do not believe that He is the Son of God, have not repented of your sins and have not been immersed in water (baptized) for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16).
3. Jesus Christ **is not** your Mediator, Intercessor and Advocate if you are an unfaithful Christian (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

## Works Cited

- Adam Clarke's Commentary*. CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft, 1996.
- Barnes' Notes*. CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft, 1997.
- Easton, M.G. *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. Oak Harbor: Logos, 1996.
- International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (ISBE)*. CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft, 1996.
- Kittel, Gerhard and Gerhard Friedrich, Editors. *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Abridged in One Volume. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia*. CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft, 2000.
- Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROMANS Nashville: Nelson, 1986.
- New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROMANS Chicago: Moody, 1988.
- Poole, Matthew. *Matthew Poole's Commentary on the New Testament*. CD-ROMANS Escondido: Ephesians Four Group, 1997.
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*. CD-ROMANS Nashville: Nelson, 1985.

# Godhead

## Come Meet Jesus as Lawgiver and Prophet Deuteronomy 18:15

**Thesis:** To demonstrate from Scripture that Jesus Christ is the great Lawgiver and Prophet of the New Testament.

### Introduction:

1. Jesus Christ is the **Lawgiver** of the New Testament, whereas Moses was the lawgiver of the Old Testament (John 1:17; 7:19).
2. Jesus Christ is the Great **Prophet** of the New Testament, whereas Moses was the great prophet of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; John 1:45; Acts 3:22; 7:37).
3. The various biblical names, titles and functions ascribed to Jesus Christ commingle into one grand, divine character, including Lawgiver and Prophet.

As in Judaism, messianic titles and functions merge into one another. Thus Jesus is the kingly as well as the prophetic Messiah in Jn. 6:14-15; Mt. 21:9ff. He is Christ as well as prophet in Acts 3: 18ff. (Kittel and Friedrich)

Moses was ruler, lawgiver, deliverer, and prophet; Christ was all this to the people, but they rejected him. (Boles)

4. On this occasion, we want to invite you to “Come Meet Jesus as Lawgiver and Prophet.”

### Body:

#### I. Whereas Moses was the lawgiver of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ is the Lawgiver of the New Testament.

- A. What does the Bible mean by the use of the word “lawgiver”?
  1. The English word “lawgiver” appears only six times in both testaments combined: five in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament.
  2. However, the Hebrew word sometimes translated “lawgiver” appears 19 times.
  3. It pertains to making laws.
  4. Ultimately, Jehovah is the Lawgiver, the One from whom all divine law comes (Isaiah 33:22; James 4:12).
  5. However, God appointed Moses as lawgiver of the Old Testament and Jesus Christ as Lawgiver of the New Testament.
- B. Moses occupied a special position as lawgiver of the Old Testament.
  1. Moses was more than a prophet, a lawgiver with whom God com-

# Godhead

- municated directly instead of through visions and dreams (Numbers 12:6-7; cf. Deuteronomy 34:10).
2. The apostle John wrote that Moses gave the Law (Old Testament), whereas Jesus Christ personally brought the Gospel (New Testament) (John 1:17; 7:19).
  3. Moses did not author the Law or Old Testament, but he was the one who inaugurated it for God among men.
  4. Likewise, Jesus Christ inaugurated the Old Testament's replacement, the New Testament, for God among men.
- C. Jesus Christ as antitype to Moses, is the Lawgiver of the New Testament.
1. The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ definitively transfers the responsibility as God's lawgiver from Moses to Jesus Christ (Matthew 17:5; cf. Matthew 3:17; John 12:28; 2 Peter 1:17-18).
  2. Commenting on Matthew 17:5, one commentator wrote:

In the presence of Moses the lawgiver and Elijah the head of the prophets, God pointed out Jesus and declared that he was his Son and that he now should be heard. The withdrawal of Moses and Elijah was suggestive; a greater than both of these remained. ...Moses and Elijah had disappeared as suddenly as they had appeared; they had withdrawn from the scene and left only Jesus to occupy the field as a lawgiver and prophet. (Boles)

## II. Whereas Moses was the great prophet of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ is the Great Prophet of the New Testament.

- A. What does the Bible mean by the use of the word "prophet" respecting either Moses or Jesus Christ?
1. Prophets of God sometimes were both *foretellers* and *forthtellers*, more often the latter.

The ordinary Hebrew word for prophet is *nabi*, derived from a verb signifying "to bubble forth" like a fountain; hence the word means one who *announces* or *pours forth* the declarations of God. The English word comes from the Greek *prophētēs* which signifies in classical Greek *one who speaks for another*, especially *one who speaks for a god*, and so interprets his will to man; hence its essential meaning is "an interpreter." The use of the word in its modern sense as "one who predicts" is post-classical. (Smith)

2. There were many Old Testament prophets and New Testament prophets as well besides the special references to Moses and Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:11).

## Godhead

The first person whom the Bible calls a prophet...was Abraham (Gn. 20:7; cf. Ps. 105:15), but OT prophecy received its normative form in the life and person of Moses, who constituted a standard of comparison for all future prophets (Dt. 18:15-19; 34:10; Messiah). Every feature which characterized the true prophet of Yahweh in the classical tradition of OT prophecy was first found in Moses. (*New Bible Dictionary*)

- B. Moses occupied a special position as the great prophet of the Old Testament.
  - 1. The relationship that Moses sustained with God as his special prophet exceeded that of any other prophets, until Jesus Christ came into the world (Deuteronomy 34:10; cf. Numbers 12:6-7).
  - 2. Moses was the great Old Testament prophet who foreshadowed the great New Testament prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37).
  - 3. There was no prophet of the same caliber and function of Moses until Jesus Christ.
- C. Jesus Christ as antitype to Moses, is the Great Prophet of the New Testament.
  - 1. Jesus was recognized as a prophet of God by the common people in first century Israel (Matthew 21:11; Luke 7:16).
  - 2. Because of His miracles and teaching (validated by His miracles), Jesus was viewed by people of His generation as the Prophet of whom Moses prophesied (John 6:14; 7:40).
  - 3. Philip declared to his brother Nathaniel that Jesus is the Prophet of whom Moses prophesied (John 1:45).
  - 4. The Samaritans believed that Jesus Christ was the Messiah or Prophet of whom Moses wrote (they only revered the first five books of the Old Testament) (John 4:25-26, 42).
  - 5. "But to be a Prophet meant to a Samaritan that He was the Messiah, since they acknowledged none other after Moses" (Edersheim).
  - 6. Jesus Christ Himself applied Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 to Himself, and He declared that had the Jews believed the prophecies of Moses, they would have recognized Him as the Prophet of whom Moses wrote (John 5:46).
  - 7. Jesus claimed to be the Prophet of which the Old Testament prophesied (Luke 4:16-21; 13:33; John 4:26, Messiah or Prophet to the Samaritans).
  - 8. God the Father declared that Jesus was the one, superseding Moses, to whom mankind should hearken (Matthew 17:5).
  - 9. Commenting on Matthew 17:5, one commentator wrote, "Jesus is the prophet and the lawgiver now. He is the one who speaks from heaven, and the mediator of the new covenant (Hebrews 12:22-25)" (Dorris).



# Godhead

- D. Prophet Jesus is superior to the prophet Moses, and the New Testament institution is superior to the Old Testament institution (Hebrews 3:2-6).
1. Moses as prophet and lawgiver administered God's law while on earth.
  2. Jesus Christ as the Great Prophet and Lawgiver administers God's law (Gospel or New Testament) from heaven.

## Conclusion:

1. That Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 has specific reference to Jesus Christ as the great New Testament Prophet cannot be discounted since inspired writers apply it to our Lord (John 1:45; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37).

Deut 18:15 It is, however, to be observed, that while Moses introduced the Old dispensation, Christ brought in the New, of which the former was a type as it is written. (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*)

2. Several of the names, titles and functions ascribed in Scripture to Jesus merge, including Lawgiver and Prophet.

The Mediator is not only the arch Prophet and High Priest, but He is also the King of kings... (Pink)

The Messiah is the same person as "the seed of the woman" (Genesis 3:15), "the seed of Abraham" (Genesis 22:18), the "Prophet like unto Moses" (Deuteronomy 18:15), "the priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4), "the rod out of the stem of Jesse" (Isaiah 11:1, 10), the "Immanuel," the virgin's son (Isaiah 7:14), "the branch of Jehovah" (Isaiah 4:2), and "the messenger of the covenant" (Malachi 3:1). This is he "of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." The Old Testament Scripture is full of prophetic declarations regarding the Great Deliverer and the work he was to accomplish. Jesus the Christ is Jesus the Great Deliverer, the Anointed One, the Saviour of men. (Easton)

3. Jesus Christ as the Great Prophet and Lawgiver was authorized to replace the Old Testament with the New Testament, Matthew 28:18 NKJV; Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 8:6).

Moses, in God's name, told them that, in the fulness of time, they should have a prophet raised up among them, one of their own nation, that should be like unto him (Deuteronomy xviii. 15, 18), — a ruler and a deliverer, a judge and a lawgiver, like him,—who should therefore have authority to change the customs that he had delivered, and to bring in a better hope, as *the*

# Godhead

*Mediator of a better testament.* (Henry)

## Invitation:

1. As the Great Lawgiver and Prophet, we today must hearken to Jesus Christ (Matthew 17:5; John 5:24; 12:48).
2. Jesus said to believe and be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16).
3. After baptism, Jesus expects Christians to remain faithful, but there is a remedy for the sins of Christians, too (Revelation 2:10; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

## Works Cited

- Boles, H. Leo. *A Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*. Gospel Advocate Commentaries. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1989. CD-ROMANS Austin: Wordsearch, 2005.
- . *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*. Gospel Advocate Commentaries. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1989. CD-ROMANS Austin: Wordsearch, 2005.
- Dorris, C.E.W. *A Commentary on the Gospel According to Mark*. Gospel Advocate Commentaries. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1992. CD-ROMANS Austin: Wordsearch, 2005.
- Easton, M.G. *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROMANS n.p.: n.p., n.d.
- Edersheim, Alfred. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. CD-ROMANS Escondido: Ephesians Four Group, n.d.
- Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Complete Commentary in Six Volumes*. CD-ROMANS Escondido: Ephesians Four Group, n.d.
- Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary. CD-ROMANS Seattle: BibleSoft, 1997.
- Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Abridged in One Volume. CD-ROMANS Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- New Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROMANS Wheaton: Tyndale, 1962.
- Pink, Arthur W. *The Life of David*. CD-ROMANS Escondido: Ephesians Four Group, n.d.
- Smith, William. *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROMANS Austin: Wordsearch, 2003.

# Godhead

## Come Meet Jesus as Head of His Church, Head of His Body and Head of His House

### Ephesians 1:22-23

**Thesis:** To emphasize the roles of Jesus Christ as Head of his church, Head of his body and Head of his house or family.

#### **Introduction:**

1. The concept of one being the “head” of something is a familiar one (e.g., heads of corporations, animals and people have heads that direct their bodies, heads of families, etc.).
2. *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* lists 21 definitions for the noun “head,” four definitions for “head” as an adjective and 10 definitions for the word “head” used as a verb, for a total of 35 primary definitions.
3. Meanings for the word “head” include: the part of the animal or human body having the brain and the mouth, one side of a coin, an individual as in counting heads, the upper of something such as a stream or the opposite of the foot of something, director or leader, the leading element of something, the top of something, the toilet on a ship, place of honor, headlines pertaining to the printed page, something rising to the top, a machinery attachment, to behead or decapitate, a course set for travel, to originate and to go in a certain direction.
4. Scripture represents Jesus Christ as being Head of His church, Head of His spiritual body and Head of His spiritual house or family.
  - a. Several of the definitions for the word “head” apply to Jesus Christ in His relationship to the church, His spiritual body and His spiritual family.
  - b. Let’s compare the appropriate definitions of the word “head” with biblically described roles of Jesus Christ.

#### **Body:**

##### **I. Jesus Christ is the Head of His church.**

- A. The apostle Paul distinctly and repeatedly wrote by divine inspiration that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church.
  1. Paul affirmed in two chapters of the Ephesian epistle that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23).
  2. In Ephesians 1:22-23 and 5:23, the apostle Paul used the words “church” and “body” interchangeably.
  3. Paul also emphasized to the church at Colosse that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church while He is also Head of the body (Colossians 1:18).

##### **B. *Only Jesus Christ is the Head of His church.***

# Godhead

1. This means that Jesus Christ alone is the brains and mouth for the church.
2. Our Lord alone is the Director or Leader of His church.
3. Jesus alone occupies the place of chief honor in the church.
4. Jesus Christ alone has arisen to the top respecting His church.
5. ***Jesus Christ alone as Head of His church determines the direction or course of the church.***

C. No one else, and especially no one on earth, is Head of the church that Jesus established (contrary to what religious leaders may claim for themselves).

## **II. Jesus Christ is the Head of His spiritual body.**

A. The apostle Paul distinctly and repeatedly wrote by divine inspiration that Jesus Christ is the Head of His spiritual body.

1. We already observed that the apostle Paul used the words “church” and “body” interchangeably (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23; Colossians 1:18).
2. In Ephesians 4:15-16, as well as Colossians 2:19, the apostle Paul described the church as a body with its many members over which Jesus Christ is the Head (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Romans 12:4-5).

***B. Only Jesus Christ is the Head of His spiritual body.***

1. This means that Jesus Christ alone is the brains and mouth for His spiritual body.
2. Our Lord alone is the Director or Leader of His spiritual body.
3. Jesus alone occupies the place of chief honor in His spiritual body.
4. Jesus Christ alone has arisen to the top respecting His spiritual body.
5. ***Jesus Christ alone as Head of His spiritual body determines the direction or course of His spiritual body.***

C. No one else, and especially no one on earth, is Head of our Lord’s spiritual body (contrary to what religious leaders may claim for themselves).

## **III. Jesus Christ is the Head of His spiritual house or family.**

A. The apostle Paul distinctly and repeatedly wrote by divine inspiration that Jesus Christ is the Head of His spiritual house or family.

1. The apostle used the words “church” and “house of God” as interchangeable terms (1 Timothy 3:15).
2. *Robertson’s* records of 1 Timothy 3:15 about the words “house of God”: “Probably here ‘household of God,’ that is ‘the family of God.’”
3. Likewise, the writer of Hebrews acknowledged that Jesus Christ is “over his own house” (Hebrews 3:2-6).
4. The apostle Peter added that Christians are the spiritual stones with which Christ’s spiritual house is built (1 Peter 2:5).

***B. Only Jesus Christ is the Head of His spiritual house or family.***

1. This means that Jesus Christ alone is the brains and mouth for His spiritual house or family.

# Godhead

2. Our Lord alone is the Director or Leader of His spiritual family.
  3. Jesus alone occupies the place of chief honor in His spiritual house.
  4. Jesus Christ alone has arisen to the top respecting His spiritual family.
  5. Jesus Christ alone as Head of His spiritual house determines the direction or course of His spiritual house.
- C. No one else, and especially no one on earth, is Head of our Lord's spiritual house or family (contrary to what religious leaders may claim for themselves).

## IV. The designation "Head" appears in Scripture respecting Jesus Christ in other references as well.

- A. Jesus Christ is "the head stone of the corner" (Psalm 118:22; Matthew 21:42-43; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6-7).

CORNERSTONE The stone at the corner of two walls that unites them; specifically, the stone built into one corner of the foundation of an edifice as the actual or nominal starting point of a building. (*New Unger's*)

CORNERSTONE A stone placed at the corner, or the intersecting angle, where two walls of a building come together. In biblical times, buildings were often made of cut, squared stone. By uniting two intersecting walls, a cornerstone helped align the whole building and tie it together. (*Nelson's*)

1. This stone of prophecy that the Jewish leaders rejected but God chose is Jesus Christ (Genesis 49:24; Isaiah 28:16; Romans 9:33).
  2. Jesus Christ is the living cornerstone to the same spiritual building that is comprised of Christians as living stones (1 Peter 2:5-7).
- B. Jesus Christ is "the head of every man" (1 Corinthians 11:3).
- C. Jesus Christ "is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:10).

### Conclusion:

1. It is apparent that the church, body and house or family, each of which Jesus Christ heads, are different references to the same divine institution.
2. Since Jesus Christ is Head of the church, and the church and the body are the same thing, then our Lord is likewise Head of His spiritual body (Ephesians 1:22-23).
3. Colossians 1:18 records this information in reverse; since Jesus Christ is Head of the body, and the body and the church are the same thing, then our Lord is likewise Head of His church.
4. Jesus Christ is the Head of His spiritual house or family.
5. *Jesus Christ is unquestionably Head of His church, His spiritual body, His*

# Godhead

*house or family and everything that matters.*

## **Invitation:**

1. If Jesus Christ is not the Head of your life, then you need to obey the Gospel (Romans 6:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
2. Jesus saves the obedient and adds them to His church, which is His spiritual body and His spiritual family (Hebrews 5:9; Acts 2:47).
3. Those who are already the spiritual stones that comprise our Lord's spiritual house or family need to remain faithful and repent when stumbling in sin (Revelation 2:10; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

## **Works Cited**

- Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament*. CD-ROMANS Seattle: BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, 1997.
- Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. CD-ROMANS Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 1993.
- Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROMANS Nashville: Nelson, 1986.
- New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROMANS Chicago: Moody P., 1988.

## Come Meet Jesus as the Judge

### Revelation 20:11-15

**Thesis:** To examine Scripture respecting Jesus Christ as the Judge of humanity in the Last Day.

**Introduction:**

1. This lesson encourages us to “Come Meet Jesus as the Judge.”
2. We will do this by proposing some questions for which we will look for biblical answers.

**Body:**

**I. What does the Bible teach about the certainty of a Final Judgment?**

- A. The Bible teaches that Final Judgment is an appointment for which a soul can neither be late nor avoid (Hebrews 9:27).
- B. Final Judgment and Jesus Christ being the Judge are matters of fundamental, Christian doctrine (Hebrews 6:1-2).
- C. Final Judgment will be so thorough that even “the secrets of men” and “the counsels... [“purposes” *Biblesoft’s*] of hearts” will be examined (Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 4:5).

As the Scriptures represent the final judgment “as certain [Ecc. 11:9], universal [2 Corinthians 5:10], righteous [Romans 2:5], decisive [1 Corinthians 15:52], and eternal as to its consequences [Hebrews 6:2], let us be concerned for the welfare of our immortal interests, flee to the refuge set before us, improve our precious time, depend on the merits of the Redeemer, and adhere to the dictates of the divine word, that we may be found of him in peace.” (Easton)

JUDGMENT, LAST In Christian theology the Last Judgment is an act in which God interposes directly into human history, brings the course of this world to a final close, determines the eternal fate of human beings, and places them in surroundings spiritually adapted to their final condition. (*ISBE*)

**II. Who will be judged in the Final Judgment?**

- A. The living and the dead will be judged in Final Judgment.
  1. The apostle Peter preached (and Luke the inspired historian recorded) that Jesus Christ will judge the living and the dead (Acts 10:42; cf. 1 Peter 4:5).
  2. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy that Jesus Christ will judge the living and the dead (2 Timothy 4:1).

# Godhead

- B. The “small and great” will be judged (Revelation 20:12).
- C. “Ungodly men” will be judged (2 Peter 3:7; Jude 14-15).
- D. “The persons to be judged are, (1) the whole race of Adam without a single exception (Matthew 25:31-46; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; Revelation 20:11-15); and (2) the fallen angels (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6)” (Easton).

## III. By what standard will Final Judgment proceed?

- A. Souls will be judged according to how they conducted themselves on earth toward their fellow man.
  - 1. Jesus Christ portrayed Final Judgment as pertaining to how people treated each other, especially how the less fortunate were treated (Matthew 25:31-46).
  - 2. Souls will be judged according to what they have “done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).
  - 3. Solomon cautioned youth, for instance, to be careful respecting how they lived their lives because God would remember to bring their conduct into Final Judgment (Ecclesiastes 11:9).
- B. Souls will be judged according to righteousness.
  - 1. The apostle Paul preached in Athens that Jesus “will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:31).
  - 2. There is a difference between the righteousness of man and the righteousness of God (Romans 10:3).
  - 3. Man must appeal to Jesus Christ on His terms to be deemed righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- C. Every soul will be judged according to the divine revelation by which he was bound (Revelation 20:12).
- D. Every soul will be judged ‘according to his works’ (Revelation 20:12; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

## IV. Who will be the Judge in the Final Judgment?

- A. Jesus Christ will be the Judge in Final Judgment.
  - 1. The Heavenly Father assigned the role of Judge to Jesus and gave Him the authority to execute Final Judgment (John 5:22, 27-29).
  - 2. Everyone must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
- B. No human being has the prerogative or right to pass Final Judgment on anyone (James 4:12).

## V. What will be the result of the Final Judgment?

- A. Only two possibilities exist for outcomes of the Final Judgment.
  - 1. Jesus Christ identified the two possibilities as “the resurrection of life” and “the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29).
  - 2. Otherwise, Scripture refers to eternal heaven and eternal hell (Matthew 23:23; 25:46; John 14:3).



# Godhead

3. Scripture nowhere portrays more than two possible eternal destinations, though some religious people imagine that there are four or more possible eternal destinations.
- B. Admission to eternal heaven with God is variously illustrated in Scripture.
1. The apostle Paul referred to the “righteous judge” giving “a crown of righteousness” to each soul who is commended at the Final Judgment (2 Timothy 4:8).
  2. The apostle John recorded Jesus referring to “a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).
  3. The apostle Peter called it “a crown of glory” (1 Peter 5:4).

## Conclusion:

1. Jesus Christ alone has the authority and the responsibility as Judge of humanity in the Final Judgment.
2. There are only two possible eternal destinations following Final Judgment.
3. Mankind will be judged in Final Judgment according to what he has done or failed to do while on earth (Matthew 25:31-46; James 4:17).
4. Mankind will be judged in Final Judgment according to the revelation of God under which men lived respectively (Revelation 20:11-15).

## Invitation:

1. What can we do to prepare ourselves for the Final Judgment and the certain prospect of meeting Jesus Christ as the great Judge?
2. First, we can obey the Gospel of Christ whereby our sins are removed and we become Christians (Acts 2:38, 41, 47; 11:26).
3. Second, we can remain faithful to Christ and repent when we stumble in sin (Revelation 2:10; 1 John 1:9).

## Works Cited

- Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary.* CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, 1994.
- Easton, M.G. *Easton's Bible Dictionary.* Oak Harbor: Logos, 1996.
- International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (ISBE).* CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft, 1996.

## Come Meet Jesus as the Preeminent One

### Colossians 1:18

**Thesis:** To emphasize the unique and incomparable role of Jesus Christ.

#### **Introduction:**

1. *Nave's Topical Bible* lists about 250 names or designations for Jesus Christ.
2. Over several lessons, we have only noted a few of those appellations: Creator, Pre-Incarnate God, the Incarnate God, Master Teacher, at the Cross, Savior, Messiah, King, High Priest, Mediator, Intercessor, Advocate, Law-giver, Prophet, Head of His church, Head of His Body, Head of His house and Judge.
3. All of the designations for Jesus Christ that we have noticed, plus the over 200 others we have not reviewed recently, point to Jesus Christ as the Preeminent One.
4. Herein you are invited to "Come Meet Jesus as the Preeminent One."

#### **Body:**

##### **I. What do we mean by "preeminence"?**

- A. *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines "preeminence" as "having paramount rank, dignity, or importance."
- B. A Hebrew dictionary defines the word for "preeminence" ("*mowthar*," appearing only in Ecclesiastes 3:19; Proverbs 14:23; 21:5) as including the ideas of "literally, gain; figuratively, superiority" (*Biblesoft's*).
- C. A Greek dictionary defines the word for "preeminence" as "to be in the first position, with the implication of high rank and prominence - 'to be the first, to have superior status'" (*Louw and Nida*).
- D. Another Greek dictionary concurs and adds a facet to the definition of "preeminence" ("*proteuo*," appearing only in Colossians 1:18): "to be first (in rank or influence)" (*Biblesoft's*).

##### **II. No one enjoys preeminence that rightfully belongs exclusively to Jesus Christ.**

- A. Satan desired preeminence over Jesus Christ.
  1. One temptation that Satan hurled at Jesus Christ was the offer to surrender the kingdoms of this world to our Lord in exchange for Jesus worshipping him (Matthew 4:8-9).
  2. As King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ triumphed over all the kingdoms of this world anyway (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 11:15).
- B. Even Christians sometimes seek preeminence that belongs exclusively to Jesus Christ.

# Godhead

1. Unfortunately, even some Christians seek preeminence within the Lord's church, as Diotrophes did (3 John 9-10).
  2. The Greek word for "preeminence" in 3 John 9 is a related but differing word from the "preeminence" ascribed to Jesus Christ in Colossians 1:18.
  3. The word for "preeminence" in 3 John 9 is the compound word "*philoproteuo*," meaning "to be fond of being first, i.e. ambitious of distinction" (*Biblesoft's*).
  4. This wrong use of "preeminence" ascribed to Diotrophes appears only in 3 John 9.
- C. Other religious people also seek preeminence that rightfully belongs only to Jesus Christ.
1. One of the titles of the Catholic pope is "Vicar of Christ," which is defined: "A title of the pope implying his supreme and universal primacy, both of honour and of jurisdiction, over the Church of Christ" ("Vicar of Christ").
  2. The Mormon Church has its "Prophet and President": "The current prophet and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is Gordon B. Hinckley" ("Living Prophets and Apostles").
  3. Various religious groups have exalted leaders that purport to have the prerogative to change divine law and implement new religious doctrine.
  4. However, only Jesus Christ is the Head of His church and the Preeminent One (Colossians 1:18).
- D. In some senses, mankind has no preeminence even over the brutish beasts of the animal kingdom.
1. Of course, though the world in which we live that has been steeped in evolutionary origins does not realize it, mankind is superior to the animal kingdom because God placed within mankind "a living soul" (Genesis 2:7; 1 Corinthians 15:45).
  2. The "living soul" is unique to humans and involves the spiritual nature of humanity since God did not act in the same way respecting the rest of creation, including the animal kingdom.
  3. However, owing to death and our mortal existence, mankind cannot claim for itself preeminence over other spirit beings (Psalm 8:4-5; Hebrews 2:6-7).
  4. Respecting death, mankind is more nearly like the animal world when it comes to the consideration of preeminence (Ecclesiastes 3:19).

### III. Only Jesus Christ can rightfully be identified as the Preeminent One.

- A. The preeminence of Jesus Christ is evident in passages exalting Him.
1. Speaking prophetically, Zacharias (father of John the Baptist) referred to Jesus Christ as "the Highest" (Luke 1:76).

## Godhead

2. "The preeminence of Jesus is here designated by the 'Most High'" [ASV] (Boles).
  3. The "only begotten" passages applying to Jesus Christ speak to His preeminence (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9).
- B. In a sense, the preeminence of Jesus Christ exceeds the eminence of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, too.
1. Jesus Christ has experienced both the majesty of Deity and the contrasting poverty of human creation.
  2. Consequently, Jesus Christ enjoys a preeminence that exceeds the consideration of all others including the other members of the Godhead.
  3. In Jesus Christ, all things in heaven and on earth speak to His preeminence (Ephesians 1:10).
  4. "Ephesians and Colossians are twin epistles, similar in thought and style, extolling the preeminence of Christ..." (*ISBE*) as evidenced by comparing Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 1:10.
- C. Colossians 1:18 defines Jesus Christ as the Preeminent One.
1. Being Head of the body and the church (along with all the other appellations applied to Jesus Christ, many that we have noted in our series, "Come Meet Jesus") speaks to the preeminence of Jesus Christ.
  2. Having a fleshly body whereby He experienced existence as creation in addition to being Creator, resurrected to die no more, Jesus Christ alone is the Preeminent One.

The terms head, beginning, firstborn, express the pre-eminence of Christ in the new creation, which has its birth in his resurrection (1 Cor 15:22; Rev 1:5; 3:14). (*Wycliffe*)

3. "As firstborn of all creation, head of the church, and firstborn from the dead, Christ is proteuon ('preeminent') in everything" (Kittel and Friedrich).
- ...Christ, being Owner, Lord, and Prince of every creature, as he is God-man, or ordained to human nature, he hath the pre-eminence of the whole creation, and is the chief, Ps 2:7, 8 Heb 1:2, 6. (Poole)
4. "...that he might come to have first place in everything" (Bauer, Gingrich and Danker).
- D. Several commentators address the preeminence afforded Jesus Christ in the last portion of Colossians 1:18.

The last phrase of 1:18 may also be translated, "That he might have the preeminence among all," referring to Christ's preeminence among the dead as well as the living. Christ has preem-

# Godhead

inence both among all things and among all people, living and dead alike. (Fields 152)

Here begins the second phase of this grand statement of the preeminence of Christ, the first pertaining to all creation, and this pertaining to the new spiritual creation, that is, the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Coffman)

‘He HIMSELF (and none other) may become the One holding the first place.’ Both ideas are included—priority in time and priority in dignity; now in the regenerated world, as before in the world of creation (Col 1:15; Ps 89:27; John 3:13). (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*)

## Conclusion:

1. No one on earth or in heaven and not Satan compares to the matchless Jesus Christ as the Preeminent One.

Pre-eminence of Christianity i.e. the higher power and honor due to Jesus the Christ. This doctrine is laid down in Col 1:18. In all things in nature, in person, in office, work, power, and honor, Christ has the pre-eminence above angels and men, or any other creature. (*McClintock and Strong*)

2. The Greek word “*proteuo*,” meaning “to be first (in rank or influence) and translated “preeminence” only appears in the New Testament at Colossians 1:18 and applies exclusively to Jesus Christ—the Preeminent One (*Biblesoft’s*).

## Invitation:

1. However, Jesus Christ is *not* the Preeminent One in your life if you are not a true Christian, and not a hyphenated-denominational Christian (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16).
2. Jesus and His spokesman, the apostle Peter, told how one becomes a Christian, whereupon Jesus adds one to His church (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 41, 47).
3. The apostles Peter and John also addressed how sins committed by Christians can be removed (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).
4. May Jesus Christ truly be the Preeminent One in your life.

## Works Cited

- Bauer, Walter, F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. CD-ROMANS Chicago: U. of Chicago P., 1979.
- Biblesoft’s New Exhaustive Strong’s Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary*. CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, 1994.
- Boles, H. Leo. *A Commentary on the Gospel According to Luke*. Nashville: Gospel Advo-

# Godhead

- cate, 1991. CD-ROMANS Austin: Wordsearch, 2005.
- Coffman, James Burton. *James Burton Coffman Study Library*. CD-ROMANS Abilene: ACU P., 1989.
- Fields, Wilbur. *Philippians, Colossians and Philemon*. CD-ROMANS Joplin: College P., 1969.
- International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (ISBE)*. CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft, 1996.
- Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary*. CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft, 1997.
- Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Abridged in One Volume. CD-ROMANS Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- "Living Prophets and Apostles." *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*. 8 Jun. 2006 <<http://www.mormon.org/learn/0,8672,940-1,00.html>>.
- Louw, Johannes P. and Eugene A. Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*. CD-ROMANS New York: United Bible Societies, 1989.
- Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. CD-ROMANS Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 1993.
- McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia*. CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft, 2000.
- Nave's Topical Bible*. CD-ROMANS Seattle: Biblesoft and TriStar Publishing, 1990.
- Poole, Matthew. *Matthew Poole's Commentary on the New Testament*. CD-ROMANS Escondido: Ephesians Four Group, 1997.
- "Vicar of Christ." *New Advent*. 8 Jun. 2006 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15403b.htm>>.
- Wycliffe Bible Commentary*. CD-ROMANS Chicago: Moody, 1962.

# Godhead

## The Preeminent Christ

### Colossians 1:9-23

**Thesis:** Exposition of Colossians 1:15-17.

**Introduction:**

1. Who is Jesus Christ?
2. Did He, as God (Deity), participate equally in creation, or was He the first created being?
3. How does the created universe continue to exist?

**Body:**

**I. Colossians 1:15, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:"**

- A. Compare John 1:1-3, 10, 14, 17-18; Pilippians 2:6-11 and Hebrews 1:1-14.
- B. The context identifies the "Who" as Jesus Christ (vss. 12-14).
- C. Jesus Christ is the "image of the invisible God."
  1. An "image" is a copy of something. We have imaging machines (or copiers) that copy originals.
  2. Jesus is the copy of God (Colossians 1:15); Christians are to be copies of Jesus (Romans 8:29).
  3. Paul was refuting the Gnostics who perceived of Jesus Christ as a created being.
  4. Jesus came to personally reveal the Father; *Jesus was the visible manifestation of an invisible God* (John 14:9).
- D. "invisible"
  1. 1 Timothy 1:17, "invisible," also in Hebrews 11:27
  2. 1 Timothy 6:16, 'cannot see'
- E. "firstborn"
  1. The Father prophesied that He would make Christ His firstborn (Psalm 89:27).
  2. Christ, as God (Deity), assisted in the creation and later took a body of flesh (John 1:1-3, 14).
  3. "Firstborn" is equivalent to "only begotten" (John 3:16) and "firstbegotten" (Hebrews 1:6).

**II. Colossians 1:16, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."**

- A. Compare 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9 and Hebrews 1:2.
- B. "Created" pertains to proprietorship of the manufacturer.

# Godhead

- C. "Heavens" pertains to the idea of elevation, thus the sky or starry heavens.
- D. "Earth" can mean, as it does here, the whole earth in opposition to the heavens.
- E. "Visible" means open to view.
- F. "Invisible" is the unseen; the same word for "visible" with the negating prefix "a."
- G. "Throne" refers to a chair or state having a footstool.
- H. "Dominion" pertains to lordship, or one who possesses a dominion.
- I. "Principalities" means the first to do something, ruler, chief, leader (Colossians 2:10, 15; Romans 8:38; Ephesians 6:12).
- J. "Powers" pertains to authority over others who are obligated to obey (1 Peter 3:22).
- K. "All things" means all inclusive (Ephesians 1:10).
- L. "By" means with through or by means of (Romans 11:36; Hebrews 2:10).

### III. Colossians 1:17, "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

- A. "Consist" means approved, unite parts into a whole; stand created, remain created.

#### Conclusion:

1. Jesus Christ is our Creator.
2. Jesus Christ is superior to all of creation, including angels.
3. As superior (preeminent), Jesus will be victorious over the created universe (Colossians 1:20; Philippians 2:10; Revelation 5:13).
4. Jesus Christ maintains the created universe with the same power by which He created it.
5. Jesus is the Head of the church (Colossians 1:18).
6. Jesus will be our Judge (John 12:48; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
7. Jesus is our Savior (Luke 19:10; John 4:42).

#### Invitation:

1. Obey the Gospel, by which Jesus can be your Savior, too (Romans 1:5; 16:26; 2 Thessalonians 1:8).
2. Non-Christians are commanded to be baptized (Acts 10:48; Romans 6:1-17).
3. Erring Christians must be recovered (James 5:19-20).



# Godhead

## The Authority of Jesus Christ

### John 12:48

**Thesis:** To show by the Bible the extent of the authority of Jesus Christ.

#### **Introduction:**

1. Presumably, each person present today recognizes that the Bible is the final, absolute, complete, divinely inspired and inerrant Word of God.
  - a. As such, the Bible is the standard for the Christian by which he ascertains the truth about spiritual or religious matters.
  - b. In this case, the Bible's testimony is sufficient to prove to every honest student of the Bible the authority of Jesus Christ.
2. Probably all or at least most present today already acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He possesses authority in religion.
  - a. Therefore, the study today will reinforce the confidence of those who already understand that Jesus has all authority regarding the church over which He is the Head (Colossians 1:18).
  - b. In addition, any present who may be unsure or have reservations as to who rules the church of the Bible, the lesson will embolden one's confidence respecting the authority of Jesus Christ.
  - c. We are aware that since many religions effectively deny Jesus Christ the authority to rule His church, it is possible for some present today to be confused about the matter (e.g., human creeds, earthly headquarters, denominational government).
3. Since all authority must be either absolute or delegated (or both), we will ascertain the type and degree of authority possessed by Jesus Christ as Head of His church.

#### **Body:**

##### **I. Jesus Christ possesses absolute authority.**

- A. As the second person of Godhead, Jesus Christ is coequal with the Father and the Spirit.
  1. The mention of the Godhead indicates a plurality of divine persons (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9).
  2. A plurality of persons in the Godhead appears in Genesis 1:26.
  3. Three divine persons of the Godhead appear in Matthew 28:19.
- B. As coequal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ possesses the same absolute authority as the Father and the Holy Spirit.
  1. Jesus Christ possessed glory, authority and all that is attributable to Deity from before the creation of the world (John 17:5).
  2. Jesus Christ possesses the form or essence of God (Philippians 2:6).

# Godhead

3. Jesus Christ is the very image of Deity or God (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3).

## II. Jesus Christ possesses delegated authority.

- A. The Heavenly Father's approval of Jesus Christ amounts to delegated authority (Matthew 3:16-17; 17:1-5).
- B. This delegated authority is the basis of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

## III. Jesus Christ claimed authority for Himself, and the apostle Paul also attributed authority to Jesus.

- A. The early preaching of Jesus Christ evidenced His claim for at least much authority as a prophet of God (Matthew 4:17; cf. 3:1-2).
- B. Jesus Christ evidenced a claim of authority by expanding the Old Testament commandments of God (Matthew 5:20-48, "But I say unto you").
- C. Jesus Christ claimed authority for Himself to pass eternal judgment on humanity (John 12:48; Matthew 7:21-23; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
- D. The apostle Paul wrote that Jesus Christ has the authority to retrieve His followers and punish the wicked at time's end (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

## IV. The miracles of Jesus Christ confirmed His authority and validated His teaching.

- A. The purpose of miracles was to confirm the Word of God.
  - 1. After listing miracles in Mark 16:17-18, Jesus stated that miracles were to confirm the Word of God (Mark 16:20).
  - 2. The writer of Hebrews noted that miracles had already begun confirming the Word (Hebrews 2:3-4).
- B. Jesus Christ performed miracles whereby He demonstrated authority over nature.
  - 1. Our Lord stilled a storm at sea (Matthew 8:23-27).
  - 2. Jesus Christ fed thousands by miracle (Matthew 14:13-23; 15:32-38).
  - 3. Jesus walked on water (Matthew 14:24-36).
  - 4. Our Lord miraculously healed sick people (John 4:46-54; Matthew 8:2-4; 9:2-8; John 5:1-16).
  - 5. Jesus turned water into grape juice (John 2:1-11).
- C. Jesus Christ performed miracles whereby He demonstrated His authority over the spirit world (Mark 1:23-26; Matthew 8:28-34; 9:27-34; 17:14-20).
- D. Jesus Christ performed miracles whereby He demonstrated His authority over death (Luke 7:11-17; Matthew 9:18-26; John 11:1-46).

## Conclusion:

- 1. Jesus Christ has both absolute authority in religion as a member of the Godhead and delegated authority from the Father.

## Godhead

2. Jesus Christ has all authority in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18).
3. The authority of Jesus Christ will continue as long as the world stands (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

### **Invitation:**

1. Faced with the authority of Jesus Christ, we can either conform to the teachings of Jesus Christ or be condemned by them (John 12:48).
2. Conforming to the authority of Jesus Christ, non-Christians will heed our Lord's words (Mark 16:16).
3. Conforming to the authority of Jesus Christ, erring Christians will return to the fellowship of Jesus (1 John 1:7-10).

## The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

### 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

**Thesis:** To learn more about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**Introduction:**

1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, never to return thereto, is a critical aspect of Christianity.
2. Had Jesus Christ not resurrected from the grave, there would have been absolutely no hope for sin-laden, lost humanity!
  - a. Though Jesus Christ was the Son of God, without His resurrection human hopes would have been forever dashed.
  - b. Though Jesus Christ was the long prophesied Savior or Messiah, without His resurrection He could have saved no one.
  - c. Though Jesus Christ shed His precious blood on Calvary's cross, without the resurrection its purchase price would have been ineffective.
  - d. Though Jesus Christ had fulfilled all other prophesies, without the resurrection all of that would have been meaningless.
  - e. Though multitudes of souls under Patriarchy and Judaism faithfully obeyed God, without the resurrection of Jesus Christ none of that would have gotten anyone closer to an eternity in heaven with God.
  - f. *All would be vanity without the resurrection of Jesus Christ!*
3. The church could not have been established without the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
4. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the ultimate climax of His mission to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).
  - a. Unlike others who had been resurrected from death, Jesus Christ did not die again.
  - b. Other men's works cease at death, but not so with Jesus Christ whose work included His own resurrection from the grave.
  - c. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the mortal or deathblow to Satan, and it is the assurance that we will be resurrected from the grave someday.
5. Failure to resurrect from the grave would have disproved Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah and the Son of God.
6. Simply put, *without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there would be no Christianity!*

**Body:**

1. **Jesus Christ resurrected from the grave on Sunday, April 9, A.D. 30 (or A.D. 33 depending whether allowances are taken into consideration for an error in our calendar).**
  - A. Jesus Christ was crucified Friday, April 7.

# Godhead

1. Many awesome events transpired that day: an earthquake, the veil of the Temple was torn in half, darkness engulfed the earth and dead saints walked throughout Jerusalem.
2. Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus hurriedly buried Jesus Christ before the Sabbath began that evening at 6:00 p.m.
- B. Saturday, April 8, the Sanhedrin persuaded Pilate to seal and guard the tomb of Jesus Christ.
  1. The Jewish leaders did not expect Jesus Christ to resurrect, but they feared the disciples would steal the body of Jesus and claim that He resurrected.
  2. Pilate provided soldiers for the tomb to be guarded until after the third day.
- C. Sunday, April 9, Jesus Christ arose!
  1. The world calls this day "Easter Sunday," but the Bible contains no religious instruction commemorating it as a holy day.
  2. An angel rolled back the stone sealing the tomb.
  3. The guards were frightened by the resurrection of the Lord but were bribed by the Jews to say that Jesus' disciples stole His body while they slept.
  4. Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and other women went to the tomb while it was yet dark, but they found the tomb empty.
  5. They reported the empty tomb to Peter and John who ran to the tomb to see for themselves.

## **II. The resurrected Christ made several appearances on the day of His resurrection.**

- A. Mary Magdalene was the first to see the resurrected Christ (Mark 16:9).
  1. Jesus had cast seven demons out of her.
  2. She told the apostles but they did not believe her (Mark 16:10-11).
- B. A group of faithful women also saw the resurrected Lord (Matthew 28:9-10).
- C. Jesus Christ appeared to two disciples as they walked in the country, but they were not believed when they told other disciples (Mark 16:12-13).
- D. Jesus Christ appeared to Peter (Luke 24:34).
- E. Jesus appeared to ten of the apostles (John 20:13-23).
  1. Judas who betrayed Jesus Christ was already dead.
  2. Thomas was not present with the rest of the apostles (John 20:24).

## **III. The resurrected Christ showed Himself alive for 40 days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3).**

- A. On April 16, Jesus Christ appeared to the remaining eleven apostles, including Thomas (John 20:26-28).
- B. Later, Jesus appeared to seven apostles at the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-23).

# Godhead

1. Another occasion of a great catch of fish occurred.
2. Jesus impressed Peter with the need to be loyal and humble by repeatedly asking Peter if he loved Christ.
- C. Jesus Christ appeared to the eleven apostles at the Ascension (Luke 24; Acts 1).
- D. Obviously, the candidates for apostle to replace Judas had seen the resurrected Lord as that was one of the requirements to be an apostle (Acts 1:21-23).
- E. Over 500 brethren at one time saw the resurrected Christ (1 Corinthians 15:6).

#### **IV. The resurrected Christ appeared to some after His Ascension.**

- A. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, saw the resurrected Christ just before he died from stoning (Acts 7:55-56).
- B. Saul of Tarsus (the apostle Paul) saw the resurrected Lord on the road to Damascus (Acts 9; 22; 26; 1 Corinthians 15:8).

#### **Conclusion:**

1. The death and subsequent resurrection of Jesus Christ was prophesied.
2. Jesus Christ took the form of flesh, lived on the earth, died and was resurrected.
3. The enemies of the Jesus Christ tried in vain to keep Him in the tomb, and they could offer no evidence that He had not resurrected.
4. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was proved by appearances in which:
  - a. He appeared at different hours of the day.
  - b. He appeared on several different days.
  - c. He walked, talked and ate food with His disciples.
5. The disciples who had mourned His death and were skeptical concerning His resurrection were convinced that He resurrected, and they were willing to die torturous deaths if necessary while defending the resurrection.
6. Over 500 brethren had seen the resurrected Christ at one time, a sufficient body of witnesses to satisfy any judge and jury.
7. The resurrection of Jesus Christ became the basis for the promotion of Christianity.
8. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christianity would be empty and useless (1 Corinthians 15:19).
9. The heart of Christianity is contained in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4!

#### **Invitation:**

1. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for you and resurrected so that your sins could be remitted.
2. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is meaningless to you if you have either become an erring child of God or never have been baptized for the remission of your sins (Romans 6:23; 1 John 1:9; Acts 2:38).

## Focus on Jesus

### 1 Corinthians 11:1

**Thesis:** To emphasize looking to Jesus for every aspect of one's life and conduct on earth.

**Introduction:**

1. The letters **WWJD** (standing for "What Would Jesus Do?") on jewelry were popular not long ago to help keep one's "Focus on Jesus."
2. Really, a little crutch like that isn't such a bad idea; we need every incentive to keep one's focus on Jesus throughout one's life and conduct on earth.
3. *Where is your focus? Is it always at all times and in all places on Jesus?*

**Body:**

1. **Focus on Jesus respecting the spiritual horizon toward which we as pilgrims make our earthly march.**
  - A. We should never take our eyes off of Jesus.
    1. The New Testament portrays Jesus Christ as mankind's prime example (1 Peter 2:21).
    2. We can see Jesus in others who are following Jesus, by which we can more easily follow Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17).
    3. In other words, we can more easily follow Jesus when the people with whom we associate the most are also following Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:33; Hebrews 6:12).
    4. Jesus Christ is our elder Brother who looks out for us (Matthew 12:49-50; 25:40; Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:11).
  - B. When we keep our focus on Jesus, we will adopt for ourselves as many of the character traits of Jesus that we can.
    1. We will learn humility and meekness (Matthew 11:29; Philippians 2:8; 2 Corinthians 10:1).
    2. We need to develop the same degree of love that Jesus has for us (Ephesians 5:2).
  - C. Our lives run amok whenever we fail to keep our eyes focused on Jesus.
    1. If we fail to keep our eyes focused on Jesus, our homes become polluted with drugs and alcohol, immoralities, foul language, etc. (Galatians 5:19-21).
    2. If we fail to keep our eyes focused on Jesus, our marriages fall apart (Matthew 19:4-6, 9; Ephesians 5:25, 28, 31).
    3. If we fail to keep our eyes focused on Jesus, we are not nearly as good of employees and providers as we could be (Colossians 3:22-24).
    4. Our lives can never be all they could be when we take our focus off

# Godhead

of Jesus!

## II. Focus on Jesus respecting our interpersonal interactions with our fellow man.

- A. Our interaction with our fellow humans will largely improve if we keep our focus on Jesus.
  - 1. We must love God, then our fellow man before we can satisfy any other commandments of God (Matthew 22:37-40).
  - 2. Christians must be peacemakers as much as they can be in an often uncooperative world (Romans 12:18; 14:19; 1 Corinthians 14:33; Ephesians 4:3; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Hebrews 12:14).
- B. There are some inhabitants of planet earth with whom we cannot have ideal relationships while keeping our focus on Jesus.
  - 1. Christians are forbidden to fellowship “the unfruitful works of darkness” (Ephesians 5:11).
  - 2. Christians are forbidden to have an unequal yoke with unrighteousness (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).
  - 3. Christians are forbidden to encourage unfaithful Christians in their error by extending fellowship to them (1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 10, 14-15; Romans 16:17-18).

## III. Focus on Jesus respecting our worship and service before Almighty God.

- A. Focusing on Jesus in our worship means that we will worship God in His own appointed way.
  - 1. Anything other than biblically authorized worship of God is condemned in Scripture as “will worship” (Colossians 2:23; Matthew 15:9).
  - 2. New Testament worship includes praying, the Lord’s Supper, preaching or teaching, the contribution and singing (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).
- B. Focusing on Jesus in Christian service means that we will always be aware that we are serving Jesus first in all that we do in this life.
  - 1. Nothing and no one in this life deserves more attention than our service to Jesus (Matthew 6:33; 10:37).
  - 2. Good works should be discernible in the lives of Christians (Titus 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14).
  - 3. Good works demonstrates faith in God and His Word (James 2:14-16).
  - 4. Good works glorifies God in heaven (John 15:8).

### Conclusion:

- 1. Keeping one’s focus on Jesus will make life better on earth and help make preparation for an eternal habitation in heaven.
- 2. We must focus on Jesus respecting our spiritual horizon.



## Godhead

3. We must focus on Jesus respecting our interpersonal interactions with fellow human beings.
4. We must focus on Jesus respecting our Christian worship and Christian service.

### **Invitation:**

1. Anyone who is not a faithful child of God at this moment has not focused sufficiently on Jesus Christ.
2. Focus on Jesus by believing that He is the Son of God and by being baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).
3. As Christians, focus on Jesus by remaining faithful and repenting when one sins (Revelation 2:10; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

## The Humility of Christ

### Philippians 2:5-8

**Thesis:** To examine the humility of Jesus Christ, whereby the humility of our Savior can serve both as an example for us to follow as well as motivate us to practice humility in our daily lives.

#### Introduction:

1. Biblical “humility” is “the quality of unpretentious behavior, suggesting a total lack of arrogance or pride” (Louw and Nida).
2. Through humility, then, Jesus Christ allowed Himself to become the means by which sin-laden and lost souls could be redeemed.
3. Perhaps no single passage of Scripture better characterizes the humility of Jesus Christ than Philippians 2:5-8.
4. The humility of our Lord is a perfect example for us to practice humility in our own lives.
5. A close examination of the humility of Jesus Christ is also a powerful motivator for followers of Christ to demonstrate humility.
6. Practicing humility in one’s Christian life renders benefits on earth and eternal blessings in heaven, too.

#### Body:

- I. **“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:5-8).**
  - A. “Let this **mind** be in you.”
    1. “mind” “It implies moral interest or reflection, not mere unreasoning opinion” (Vine).
    2. The subject of this passage, humility, attributed to Jesus Christ is exhorted to be a constant characteristic of the child of God.
    3. Humility should be a habitual trait of every Christian!
  - B. “Who, being in the *form* of God.”
    1. The word “form” is from the Greek “*morphe*” and is equivalent to “essence.”
    2. This phrase represents the Deity of Christ; He possessed the essence or nature of what makes God to be God.
    3. There was (and is) absolutely no difference in the quality of being God between the Father and Jesus Christ.

# Godhead

## C. "Who, *being* in the form of God"

1. The word "being" here "...denotes to be, to be in existence, involving an existence or condition both previous to the circumstances mentioned and continuing after it. This is important in Pilippians 2:6, concerning the Deity of Christ. The phrase 'being (existing) in the form (the essential and specific form and character) of God,' carries with it the two facts of the antecedent Godhood of Christ, previous to His Incarnation, and the continuance of His Godhood at and after the event of His Birth..." (Vine).

## 2. Wuest continues to expound along the same line.

The time at which the apostle says our Lord gave expression to His essential nature, that of Deity, was previous to His coming to earth to become incarnate as the Man Christ Jesus. But Paul, by the use of the Greek word translated "being," informs his Greek readers that our Lord's possession of the divine essence did not cease to be a fact when He came to earth to assume human form. The Greek word is not the simple verb of being, but a word that speaks of an antecedent condition protracted into the present. That is, our Lord gave expression to the essence of Deity which He possesses, not only before He became Man, but also after becoming Man, for He was doing so at the time this Philipian epistle was being written. To give expression to the essence of Deity implies the possession of Deity, for this expression, according to the definition of our word "form," comes from one's inmost nature. *This word alone is enough to refute the claim of Modernism that our Lord emptied Himself of His Deity when He became Man.*

## D. "Thought it not *robbery* to be equal with God."

1. This phrase lends itself to two, compatible meanings.
2. To be equal with God was not a prize to be usurped to Himself, since the second person of the Godhead always possessed the essence or nature of being God, also true of the Father.
3. That is, equality with God was not something subject to seizure or "to be grasped" (R. V., marginal reading).
4. Second, though Jesus always possessed the essence or nature of being God, He did not jealously guard it so that He would not divest Himself of the adoration as Deity to become Incarnate and a vicarious sacrifice for humanity.

## E. "*Equal* with God."

1. The Greek is really "equalities" with God.

# Godhead

2. Again, the Deity of Christ is emphasized in this verse.
- F. "But made himself of no reputation."
  1. The R. V. says here that Christ "emptied himself," which might erroneously be thought to suggest that Jesus somehow became less than the eternal essence or nature of being God that He always possessed.
  2. The KJV rendering correctly conveys the idea that in spite of His eternal essence or nature (that is, His Deity), Jesus accepted a designation and role far below His status as God.
  3. "... When we come to consider the fact that our Lord laid aside something, we will see that it was **not the possession** but **the expression** of the divine essence" (Wuest).
- G. "Took upon him the *form of a servant*, and was made in the likeness of men."
  1. Instead of divesting Himself of the qualities of being God (though He did lay aside the adoration due Him as God), Jesus took upon Himself the **additional** essence and role of a created being, namely humanity.
  2. Assuming the "likeness of men" means that Jesus took upon Himself the "resemblance" of a humanity ("*anthropos*").
  3. This further intimates that Jesus Christ maintained the essence or nature of being God, though He assumed the further role of becoming Incarnate.
  4. "His humanity was as real as his deity" (Robertson).
- H. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself."
  1. Through Incarnation, Jesus was observed by humans to possess a body and sundry other human qualities.
  2. This admission, namely of the Incarnation, does not address what or who Jesus really was or is beyond the physical form in which He appeared.
  3. Despite being God, and as such due adoration reserved for Deity, yet assuming the form of humanity—the noblest part of Divine creation, though creation versus the Creator, Jesus humbled Himself.
- I. "Became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."
  1. The humbling of Christ climaxed in His willingness to become a substitutionary sacrifice for wayward creation—mankind.
  2. The pinnacle of this obedient humility was His ignoble, excruciating execution on the Roman cross by mankind for whom he left heaven to save.
  3. "The bottom rung in the ladder from the Throne of God. Jesus came all the way down to the most despised death of all, a condemned criminal on the accursed cross" (Robertson).

## II. Jesus Christ is our perfect example in so many ways.

- A. Jesus is described in Scripture as the ideal example for His followers to imitate.

# Godhead

1. Jesus Christ is our example (1 Peter 2:21).
  2. The apostle Paul declared that Christians can follow the example of Christ also indirectly by following the example of other Christians who are faithfully following Christ (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1).
- B. In Philippians 2:5-8, "Paul presents Jesus as the supreme example of humility" (Wuest).
1. Our Lord also exemplified humility during His personal ministry when He washed the disciples' feet (John 13:1-17).
  2. The humility exhibited by the Christ, especially regarding His vicarious death, was also the subject of prophecy (Isaiah 53:7-9).

### III. In view of what Jesus did for us, discerning souls simply must respond in kind.

- A. The humility exhibited by Jesus Christ as depicted in Philippians 2:5-8 has as its basis the spiritual welfare of humanity.
- B. The humility that the apostle Paul urged upon the Philippian church had as its basis the spiritual welfare of Christians in Philippi.
- C. *The thought was that if Jesus Christ could show such humility toward mankind for our welfare, surely Christians can demonstrate humility toward each other for their common, spiritual good.*
- D. Lack of humility is divisive and disruptive of the spiritual life of any congregation of God's people.

### IV. Each child of God must examine his life periodically to ensure that he is imitating the humility of Christ.

- A. Not only regarding "humility," but for all Christian traits, the apostle Paul wrote that Christians should examine themselves (2 Corinthians 13:5).
  1. Periodic comparison of one's conduct with the New Testament standard can assist the child of God in practicing Christian living and making course corrections so that he does not fail to attain heaven.
  2. *Self-examination* followed by subsequent course correction as needed is much preferable to *final examination* after which there is no further opportunity for amendment.
- B. Several telltale signs reveal when individual Christians, congregations and the brotherhood need to try harder to practice biblical humility.
  1. Just as assuredly that we can substitute the human will in religion in place of the will of God revealed in His divine Word, we can also demonstrate a *false humility* (Colossians 2:23).
  2. Haughty pride, arrogance, self-importance and serving oneself displace biblical humility and are counterproductive to successful Christianity (James 4:6).
- C. The New Testament is replete with exhortations, therefore, for the chil-

# Godhead

dren of God to practice biblical humility.

1. "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:5-6).
2. "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).
3. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" (Colossians 3:12).
4. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:10).
5. "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3-4).

## Conclusion:

1. Through humility, Jesus Christ allowed Himself to become the means by which sin-laden and lost souls could be redeemed.
2. Jesus Christ is our supreme example of humility.
3. The humble, substitutionary sacrifice of Christ should motivate each of us also to incorporate biblical humility into our lives.

## Invitation:

1. Biblical humility is a prerequisite for redemption, for without humility, one will not obey the Gospel.
2. Hebrews 5:8-9 teaches that Jesus will save the obedient, whereas 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 teaches that Jesus will punish the disobedient.
3. Each of us needs to 'obey the truth' (Romans 6:17).
  - a. The non-Christian must... (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38).
  - b. The erring child of God must... (Acts 8:22; James 5:20-21).

## Works Cited

- Louw, Johannes P. and Nida, Eugene A. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1989.
- Robertson, Archibald Thomas. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1998.
- Vine, W. E. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1981.
- Wuest, Kenneth S. *Wuest's Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans P., 1997.

## Jesus Christ: Our Example of Humility

### Philippians 2:5-8

**Thesis:** To study the subject of humility through its demonstration in the life of Jesus Christ, and to apply what we learn about humility to our lives.

**Song:** *O to be Like Thee*

#### Introduction:

1. L.R. Wilson attributed to our Lord, "Jesus never proclaimed a single principle that he did not exemplify in his own life."
2. Unlike the Pharisees, Jesus practiced what He preached (Matthew 23:3-5; 16:24).
3. Faithful Gospel preachers follow the example of Jesus Christ and encourage people to follow Jesus also (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1).
4. Among other virtues, Jesus Christ beautifully exhibited humility (Philippians 2:5-8).

#### Body:

1. **Jesus Christ strikingly demonstrated and taught humility when He washed His disciples' feet (John 13:4-17).**
  - A. Consider for a moment the history behind *feet washing*—**not** *foot washing*!
    1. About 4,000 years ago, Abraham hospitably offered water so that his angelic guests might wash their feet (Genesis 18:1-5).
    2. Two centuries later, while Joseph ruled Egypt, he provided water for the washing of his brothers' feet (Genesis 43:24).
    3. About 3,000 years ago, Abigail washed the feet of guests (1 Samuel 25:41).
    4. About 2,000 years ago, a woman washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and her hair, whereupon our Lord rebuked his host for not extending the customary and hospitable provisions for washing one's feet upon entrance to a person's home (Luke 7:44-46).
    5. A few years later, the apostle Paul listed washing the feet of saints (Christians) among the virtues of a widow (1 Timothy 5:9-10).
  - B. The Bible reveals the ordinary reason for washing feet.
    1. Feet were washed then as now because they are dirty and need to be cleaned.
    2. Footwear being sandals anciently, plus unpaved roads in an arid part of the world, led to the custom of removing one's sandals and washing one's feet upon the entrance to someone's home.
    3. Gracious hosts provided water and a towel; a greater degree of hospitality was extended when servants washed guests' feet; and hospi-

# Godhead

- tality and humility was demonstrated when the host himself washed the feet of his guests.
- C. The backdrop preceding Jesus washing His disciples' feet is important to understanding that event.
1. After Christ's Transfiguration, the disciples disputed which of them was the greatest in the kingdom, and they finally asked Jesus to decide (Matthew 18:1-4).
  2. Then, the mother of James and John requested that Jesus appoint her sons to prominent positions in the kingdom; this request caused the other disciples to resent James and John (Matthew 20:20-28).
  3. The evening when Jesus and His disciples observed the last Passover and the institution of the Lord's Supper, our Lord's disciples were still arguing who was the greatest in the kingdom (Luke 22:24-30).
- D. It was while the disciples were feuding among themselves who was the greatest in the Lord's kingdom that Jesus humbly assumed the posture of the least esteemed in the gathering (or a servant—A slave) and washed the disciples' feet.
1. A requirement for observance of the Passover was to have one's sandals on his feet (Exodus 12:11).
  2. After the Passover meal, Jesus and His disciples could remove their sandals and wash their feet, but the disciples were too busy arguing about who was the greatest to either wash their own feet or humble themselves to wash the feet of fellow disciples.
  3. Hence, Jesus was proactive and by humbling Himself to wash the disciples' feet, He halted the bickering among the disciples.
- E. There are several valid conclusions one can draw from Scripture about feet washing.
1. Feet washing pertained to cleanliness and hospitality.
  2. The Lord did not institute feet washing, but it had been practiced for thousands of years before Christ.
  3. Feet washing was a menial task performed by servants.
  4. Jesus Christ washed the feet of His disciples to give them an example of humility, which example they desperately needed since they were feuding among themselves about greatness in the kingdom (John 13:15).
- F. Neither *foot washing* nor *feet washing* are ordinances in the church of the Bible.
1. The Lord did not institute feet washing in the church, for the church was not established yet for another two months.
  2. Jesus commanded that His followers observe the Lord's Supper later in the church by saying "this do in remembrance of me," but He did not say that regarding feet washing (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25).
  3. The church of the Bible can be viewed in Scripture observing the Lord's Supper, but Scripture does not show the church observing washing feet as a religious ordinance.



# Godhead

4. Washing feet appears in the epistles as an act of hospitality (1 Timothy 5:9-10).

## II. Jesus Christ variously taught and served as an example of humility.

- A. Jesus Christ taught child-like humility (Matthew 18:1-4; Mark 9:33-37).
  1. The disciples were disputing who was the greatest among them.
  2. Jesus Christ taught them that child-like humility was the key to greatness in the kingdom.
  3. Furthermore, Jesus told His disciples that they could not even enter the kingdom of heaven without humility (Matthew 18:3).
- B. Jesus Christ humbled Himself in His death upon the cross.
  1. The Lord made a humble entrance into Jerusalem (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:5).
  2. Jesus humbly allowed Himself to be crucified on the cross (Acts 8:32-33; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 2:7-8).

## III. Jesus Christ especially taught religious leaders to exhibit humility.

- A. Jesus Christ condemned religious **titles** and encouraged humility between brethren (Matthew 23:1-12).
  1. The religious principle “all ye are brethren” was meant to characterize the disciples of Christ (Matthew 23:8).
  2. Religious titles such as Reverend, Doctor, Brother, Evangelist and Minister are no more acceptable to God today *when used for religious distinctions* between brethren than were “Rabbi” and “Master” in Jesus’ day (though brother, evangelist and minister may be used as *descriptive* words).
- B. The apostasy that overran the early church arose from a desire for greatness in the church’s leadership.
  1. Diotrephes loved the preeminence and attempted to rule the church (3 John 9-10).
  2. The apostle Paul prophesied that apostasy would begin among elders’ desire for greatness (Acts 20:30).

### Conclusion:

1. Jesus Christ is the supreme example of humility.
2. In order to be truly Christ-like, Christians need to practice Christ-like humility in their lives.
3. Meekness is not a sign of weakness, but meekness or humility is a virtue (Matthew 11:28-30).

### Invitation:

1. To be saved, sinners must humble themselves enough to repent and obey the Gospel (Acts 2:38; Hebrews 5:8-9).
2. To be saved, sinning Christians must humble themselves enough to repent (Acts 8:22).
3. To remain saved, every Christian must humbly worship, serve and continue to obey God.

# Godhead

## Jesus Christ: Our Example

### 1 Peter 2:21-25; John 13:1-17

**Thesis:** To urge souls to follow the example of Jesus, knowing that there can be no better course to pursue.

**Song:** *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah; He Leadeth Me*

#### **Introduction:**

1. One's example is a more potent instructor than his words alone.
  - a. For instance, parents give faulty instruction to their children when they mouth, "Do as I say, not as I do!"
  - b. Jesus Christ is the Master Teacher, in part, because, unlike the Pharisees (Matthew 23:3-5), He practiced what He preached (e.g., "...If any man will...", Matthew 16:24).
  - c. The apostle Paul could urge souls to imitate Christ by following him because Paul also lived what he preached (1 Corinthians 11:1; 4:16).
2. Christians need to use Jesus Christ as their example because the world carefully scrutinizes the lives of those who profess to be the children of God.
  - a. Hence, the world reads Christians' lives as though they were epistles (2 Corinthians 3:1-3).
  - b. Christians are warned to not conform to the world (Romans 12:1-2), that they are not of the world (John 17:16) and not to befriend the world (James 4:4).
  - c. Role models are sought in parents, policemen, teachers, elders, deacons and preachers; however, every Christian should be a role model for the world.
  - d. Christians should endeavor to live like Jesus lived and otherwise ask themselves regarding any given situation, "What would Jesus do?"

#### **Body:**

##### **I. Jesus Christ is our example when we face temptation.**

- A. Jesus overcame manifold temptations (Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 2:18)
- B. The Lord taught His disciples to pray that they might avoid temptation (Matthew 6:9-13).
- C. Scripture teaches that Christians **can** overcome temptations (1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 2:9).
- D. Each Christian should strive to overcome every temptation, as did Christ (Hebrews 4:15; Hebrews 6:1).
- E. A reward awaits those who overcome (Revelation 3:5).

##### **II. Jesus Christ is our example in prayer.**

- A. Christ's life was a life of prayer.
  1. The Model Prayer (Matthew 6:9-15).

# Godhead

2. Thanksgiving for things hidden and revealed (Matthew 11:25-26).
  3. At the grave of Lazarus (John 11:41-42).
  4. For Peter that his faith not fail (Luke 22:31-32).
  5. Prayer of thanks at the institution of the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-27).
  6. The great intercessory prayer on the way to Gethsemane (John 17).
  7. The prayer in Gethsemane (Luke 22:41-44).
  8. The prayer on the cross for His murderers (Luke 23:34).
- B. Many passages show that the early disciples prayed (Acts 2:42; 6:4; 7:59-60; 12:5).
- C. All Christians are urged to pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2).

### III. Jesus Christ is our example in forgiveness.

- A. Jesus taught forgiveness in prayer (Matthew 6:9-15).
- B. The Lord forgave His enemies, even while they were putting Him to death (Luke 23:34).
- C. Jesus is also willing to forgive all men their sins when they repent (Hebrews 10:15-17; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 1:9).
- D. Christians are urged to forgive others (Luke 17:3-4; Ephesians 4:32).

### IV. Jesus is our example in teaching the Word of God and condemning error.

- A. Jesus personally brought the Gospel from God (John 1:17), and He spoke the Word of God while on earth (John 3:34).
- B. Our Lord condemned religious error (Matthew 15:9; Matthew 23).
- C. Christians are commanded to speak only the Word of God and condemn error (Ephesians 5:11; 1 Peter 4:11; Romans 16:17-18).

### V. Jesus Christ did not allow His relatives to hinder His worship and work.

- A. Once the Lord's mother and brothers desired to interrupt His speaking, but He did not allow Himself to be interrupted (Matthew 12:46-50).
- B. On another occasion, His brothers tried to influence the career and work, but Jesus disallowed this interference (John 7:2-9).
- C. Jesus taught His disciples that they must love God and His Word more than even family members (Matthew 10:35-38).

### VI. Jesus never quit even when despised and not appreciated.

- A. If being despised and not fully appreciated were ever reason to quit, Jesus had plenty of reason (Hebrews 12:1-3; 1 Peter 2:21-25).
- B. Christians may also face despair and mistreatment, but they must not quit (Galatians 6:9; 1 Corinthians 15:58).

### Conclusion:

1. Jesus Christ is our perfect example (1 Peter 2:21-25; John 13:1-15).
2. We should ask ourselves, "How would we live if Jesus were our next-door

# Godhead

- neighbor or frequent guest?" Are there changes you would make in your life?
3. Jesus is really closer than a neighbor or houseguest; He dwells in each of us (2 Corinthians 13:5; Ephesians 3:17).
  4. Another question one might ask himself is, "Would I worship God more intently if Jesus were present in the assembly?" He **is** in the assembly (Matthew 28:20)!

## **Invitation:**

1. Finally, though Jesus Christ needed no remission of sins, He even left the unsaved the example of being baptized (Matthew 3:13-17).
2. Baptism takes away sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
3. The baptized believer ought to be careful not to waste his baptism through unfaithfulness (Acts 8:22; Hebrews 10:26).

## Jesus Is My Everything!

### Genesis 3:15

**Thesis:** To view a synopsis of the extended mission of Jesus Christ.

**Song:** He Is My Everything

#### **Introduction:**

1. Jesus Christ is the scarlet thread running through the entire Bible—from beginning to end.
2. Jesus Christ is the heart of the Bible, without which the Bible would be aimless and pointless.
3. The cross of Jesus Christ is the center theme of the Bible and the extended mission of our Lord.
4. *Everything in the Bible looks forward toward or back to the cross of Christ.*

#### **Body:**

##### **I. The Bible contains a beautiful declaration: Jesus is coming!**

- A. Genesis 3:15 contains a veiled promise about the coming of Jesus Christ.
  1. Genesis 12:1-3 expands upon the promise of a coming Messiah.
  2. There are approximately 332 Messianic prophecies relative to Jesus Christ recorded in the Bible (e.g. Isaiah 7:14; 53).
- B. In the first century, John the Baptist prepared the way for the coming of Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:1-3).

##### **II. The Bible heralds wonderful news: Jesus is here!**

- A. Angels announced that the Savior was born (Luke 2:10-11).
- B. The coming of Jesus was the fulfillment of John the Baptist's preaching (Matthew 3:13-17; 4:17).
- C. Christ's ministry ended with His sacrificial death upon the cross (John 19:30).
- D. He lingered prior to His Ascension to validate His resurrection (Acts 1:3).

##### **III. The Bible chronicles heavenly history: Jesus Christ is ascending!**

- A. Luke recorded the awe-inspiring Ascension of Jesus Christ in both of his epistles (Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11).
- B. Though our Lord entered this world under the humblest of circumstances, He left triumphantly and in glory.

##### **IV. The Bible records the magnificent present: Jesus is reigning as King!**

- A. An angel foretold that Jesus Christ would reign as King (Luke 1:32-33).
- B. Jesus Christ claimed for Himself a non-earthly kingdom (John 18:36-37).
  1. Jesus Christ will reign until the end of time (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).
  2. Jesus used the words "church" and "kingdom" interchangeably to refer to the same divine institution (Matthew 16:18-19).

## Godhead

3. Our Lord's kingdom is powerful and durable (Daniel 2:44; Mark 9:1; Romans 1:16).

### **V. The Bible discloses the happy future: Jesus is coming again!**

- A. Jesus Christ will appear a second time (Hebrews 9:27-28).
- B. Jesus Christ is coming to gather His saints to take them with Him back to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-3).

### **Conclusion:**

1. The Bible is all about Jesus Christ.
2. Our lives need to be all about Jesus Christ.
3. Our entire lives ought to revolve around Jesus Christ.
4. Jesus Christ ought to be the basis for our way of life and every decision we make.

### **Invitation:**

1. Jesus is coming back for His disciples, but is He coming back for you?
2. Look back to the cross of Christ for salvation (Colossians 1:20-21).
3. Look ahead for eternal rest for those who have put on Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:9; Galatians 3:27).

## The Lord Is the Strength of My Life

### Psalm 27:1

**Thesis:** To emphasize the child of God's dependence on the Lord.

**Introduction:**

1. People typically resort to a variety of resources for strength in this life.
  - a. Many turn to popularity among friends, family, peers or constituents.
  - b. Alcohol is often the hidden strength of many evildoers, robbers, murderers and adulterers.
  - c. A contemporary proverb says, "Behind every successful man is a good woman."
  - d. There may be numerous sources to which people ordinarily turn for strength in this life.
2. To what or to whom can and ought man turn for strength in this life?
  - a. Strength that comes by popularity is unstable and often short-lived.
  - b. Alcohol and other drugs are destructive and sinful rather than true sources of strength by which one can live his life.
  - c. Relying on frail humanity, male or female, for strength in this life is at best inadequate.
  - d. All temporal resources on which humanity may choose to rely for strength in this life lack the quality of eternal, guiding strength only accessible in Jesus Christ.

**Body:**

**I. "The Lord is my light."**

- A. Many passages refer to Jesus Christ as "light."
  1. The prophet Simeon said that the infant Jesus was to be a light (Luke 2:32).
  2. Jesus Christ referred to Himself as "light" (John 8:12; 9:5).
  3. Old Testament prophecies refer to Jesus Christ as the "light" (Isaiah 49:6; 58:8).
  4. Jesus Christ is described as the eternal "Sun" by which heaven will have light (Isaiah 60:19-20; Malachi 4:2).
  5. Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of light (1 Peter 2:9; Ephesians 5:14).
- B. God the Father is also called "light," indicating the unity of purpose and nature of the Godhead.
  1. The Father along with the Son provide the light of heaven (Revelation 21:23).
  2. God is called the Father of lights (James 1:17).
  3. "...God is light..." (1 John 1:5).
- C. Christians are imitators of Jesus Christ and also are called lights.

# Godhead

1. Christians are “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14-16; Philippians 2:15).
  2. Christians are “children of light” (1 Thessalonians 5:5; John 12:36; Ephesians 5:8).
  3. As Christians, we are obligated to “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7; Isaiah 2:5).
- D. All need to turn to the light.
1. Psalm 119:105, 130 describe the Word of God as light.
  2. We, like the apostle Paul, need to make it our goal to turn the lost world from darkness to light (Acts 26:18).

## II. “The Lord is my salvation.”

- A. Jesus Christ is the only salvation of mankind.
1. Our Lord purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20:28).
  2. Only Jesus has “the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).
  3. Jesus Christ saves every obedient soul (Hebrews 5:8-9).
  4. The Son of God left heaven for earth to save souls (Luke 19:10; John 3:17).
- B. There is no other source to which one can turn besides Jesus Christ for salvation.
1. Anyone desiring to be saved must be saved through Jesus (Acts 4:12).
  2. Jesus Christ alone is our Mediator before the Father (1 Timothy 2:5).
  3. The church is not the source of salvation, but rather it is the body of the saved (Acts 2:47).
  4. Human ingenuity lacks the capacity to save anyone from anything and only results in division (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).
- C. Every false prophet, ancient or modern, is unable to bestow salvation and will fall even as the prophets of Baal fell before the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 18).

## III. “Whom shall I fear?”

- A. The word “fear” in this context refers to reverence because of the revered One’s power and includes being afraid.
1. The same word is translated as “reverend” in Psalm 111:9.
  2. The same word is translated as “fear” in Psalm 111:5, 10.
  3. The question, then, in Psalm 27:1 is “Whom shall I revere?”
- B. Without doubt, the Godhead deserves our utmost reverence or godly fear.
1. Psalm 111:9 announces, not a new name for Deity, but a quality of Deity, “reverend is his name.”
  2. Psalm 33:8 says, “Let all the earth fear the LORD...”
  3. Saints and all who know of God need to greatly fear him (Psalm 89:7).
  4. God requires that His people fear Him (Deuteronomy 10:12-13).
  5. Fearing God is preparatory for the coming judgment (Ecclesiastes



# Godhead

12:13-14; Isaiah 8:13).

6. Christians are instructed in the New Testament to fear God (1 Peter 1:17; 2:17; Hebrews 12:28; Matthew 10:28).
  7. Fearing God will keep God's children from following other gods (Joshua 24:14).
- C. The fear of God will keep us true to Him throughout this life.
1. God's mercy overshadows those who fear Him (Luke 1:50; Psalm 147:11).
  2. God's good pleasure overshadows nations and their citizens that fear Him (Acts 10:35).
- D. Though our primary reverence must be directed toward God, reverence also must be directed to others, too.
1. Children are required to reverence parents (Leviticus 19:3).
  2. We are obligated to have reverence for civil rulers (Romans 13:1ff; 1 Peter 2:17).
  3. Christians must have reverence for the church as the divine institution founded by Jesus Christ with His blood (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 3:10-11).
  4. Mankind owes reverence toward the Word of God (Romans 1:16; Revelation 22:18-19).

## IV. "The Lord is the strength of my life."

- A. The divine strength of God perfects the otherwise weakness of men.
1. Weak, defenseless Israel was saved and the Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea, after which Israel praised God in song as their strength (Exodus 15:2).
  2. By the strength of God, weak Israel conquered Canaan (Deuteronomy 7:17-24).
  3. The apostle Paul trusted in the strength of God to compensate for his weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).
  4. Even the supposed weakness of God (as man maligns God) is stronger than the strength of men (1 Corinthians 1:25).
- B. Divine strength is the only true and enduring strength to which man can appeal.
1. King David cited God as his strength (2 Samuel 22:33).
  2. David further described God's strength as a saving shield (Psalm 28:7-8).
  3. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1; 73:26; 81:1; 84:5; 89:21; Isaiah 49:5).
- C. Happily, the strength of Deity is available to mankind.
1. God promises to be our strength (Isaiah 41:10).
  2. The apostle Paul trusted in Jesus Christ for his strength (Philippians

# Godhead

4:13).

3. Both testaments afford mankind the strength of God working in their lives (Daniel 11:32; Ephesians 3:16; Colossians 1:9-11).

## V. "Of whom shall I be afraid?"

- A. The child of God has nothing to fear of mankind.
  1. If not physically, Jesus Christ will preserve His followers spiritually (Matthew 10:28).
  2. Perseverance in the face of death will result in a crown of life (Revelation 2:10).
  3. Affliction in this life for the cause of Christ, in view of the eternal reward that lies ahead, permits the Christian to persevere in joy (1 Peter 3:14; 4:12-16).
- B. However, unrighteous and erring children of God have much for which to be afraid.
  1. Jesus will punish ungodly children of God along with those who never followed Him (Matthew 10:28; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
  2. Jesus will execute vengeance on unrighteous children of God (Hebrews 10:30-31).
  3. At Judgment, the ungodly will be cast into hell (Revelation 20:12-15; 21:8).
- C. The ungodly also have reason to be afraid of civil government.
  1. Civil government, with the approval of God, punishes criminals (Romans 13:1-7).
  2. Our Christian duty includes obeying civil government (Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14, 17).
  3. Historically, swift and severe punishment, with God's approval, was directed toward criminals (Leviticus 20:9-16; Exodus 21:12, 16-17).

## Conclusion:

1. The Lord is the all of a Christian.
2. Christianity demands one's complete dependence on God.
3. Without dependence on God (according to commands within the Bible), there is no reason to hope regarding this life or eternity to come.
4. David well said in Psalm 27:1, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

## Invitation:

1. The Lord is not the light, salvation and strength of non-Christians and erring Christians, but he can and wants to be.
2. God will be the strength of your life if you will submit to immersion in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
3. For erring Christians, God will be your strength upon your return to Him, penitently and in prayer.

# Godhead

## Be With Me Lord

### 2 Chronicles 15:2

**Thesis:** To emphasize under what conditions God is willing to be with us.

**Song:** *Be With Me Lord*

#### **Introduction:**

1. Asa was a righteous king of Judah, the southern kingdom of the Jews (14:2).
  - a. He reigned for 41 years and destroyed idolatrous altars throughout the kingdom (chapters 14-16; 14:3).
  - b. He built garrisons in Judah (14:6).
  - c. Though much of Asa's reign had been characterized by peace, in the context at hand, Asa was returning from a war in which Judah had been victorious because God fought for them (14:6, 9-15).
  - d. Near the end of his reign, Asa chose to rely on a heathen king for military support instead of relying on God, for which cause God's approval departed from Asa (16).
2. What the prophet Azariah said to Asa also applies to our relationship with God (2 Chronicles 15:2).
  - a. *"The Lord is with you, while ye be with him."*
  - b. "If ye seek him, he will be found of you."
  - c. "If ye forsake him, he will forsake you."

#### **Body:**

##### **I. The Lord Is With You, While Ye Be With Him.**

- A. "Be with me Lord" is conditional!
  1. It is man who must adhere to the ways of God and follow His paths; God does not walk after the manner of men (Isaiah 2:2-3).
  2. It is man who departed from God and who, then, must be reconciled to God (Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:20-22).
- B. With the Lord on our side, none can stand against us; if the Lord is for us who can be against us (Psalm 124:1-8; Romans 8:31)?
  1. God gave Asa's army a victory over a much greater army out of Ethiopia (2 Chronicles 14:9-15).
  2. Likewise, Christians today can persevere whatever buffets them through Jesus Christ (Philippians 4:13).
- C. There are some with whom God has never been.
  1. Contrariwise, God will root up every false religion (Matthew 15:9, 13).
  2. God is not with false prophets, teachers and preachers (1 John 4:1; Romans 16:17-18).

# Godhead

## II. If Ye Seek Him, He Will Be Found Of You.

A. This phrase offers hope and comfort.

1. Jesus promises that if we seek Him, we will find Him (Matthew 6:33; 7:7-8).
2. All men can find God, though not all men do find God (1 Chronicles 28:9).

B. *Finding God, though, is conditional.*

1. If we do not seek God, we will not find Him.
2. If we do not seek God in the right place (e.g., human doctrines instead of the Bible, manmade religion versus God-mandated religion—the church), we will not find Him.

## III. But If Ye Forsake Him, He Will Forsake You.

A. God turns His back on those who turn their backs on Him.

1. Sins put souls beyond the reach of God (Isaiah 59:1-3).
2. God does not hear (i.e., acknowledge) sinners (John 9:31).

B. God has turned away from many.

1. He turned away from the Jewish nations of Israel and Judah, sending them into their respective captivities.
2. God turned from numerous individuals whose names appear throughout the Bible.
3. There are some today from whom God turns away (Colossians 2:23).

### Conclusion:

1. We do not have a right to ask God in prayer to be with us when we are not with Him (Luke 6:46).
2. God is not with those who do not seek Him where He is to be found.
3. God turns from them who turn from Him.

### Invitation:

1. God, though, openly accepts all who turn to Him on His terms.
2. Non-Christians must repent and be converted to have their sins “blotted out” (Acts 3:19).
3. Erring Christians must repent and pray (Acts 8:22).

## The Gospel of the Empty Tomb

### 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 12-23

**Thesis:** To emphasize the extreme importance of the resurrection to Christianity.

**Song:** *Christ Arose*

**Introduction:**

1. Christianity is the most unique religion on earth because the tomb of its founder is empty!
  - a. The corpses of the founders of other world religions lie motionless in tombs across the globe, and their decaying remains offer neither hope regarding this life nor approaching eternity.
  - b. Jesus Christ, though, resurrected from the grave never there to return and is alive today, whereby He gives us great hope regarding life that now is and eternity to come.
2. The whole of Christianity depends on the cardinal doctrine of the resurrection of Christ.
  - a. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there would be no Christianity!
  - b. Without the resurrection of Christ, the despairing disciples would have long ago abandoned their posts as the apostles of Christ and proponents of Christianity.
  - c. Without the resurrection of Christ, the New Testament would not have been written and the Old Testament would remain incomplete, unfulfilled and worthless.
3. Every spiritual promise, the eternal character and nature of God, the deity and authority of Jesus Christ as well as the saving power of the Gospel rests firmly on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
  - a. From the first spiritual promise in Genesis 3:15, including the promises made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 and every promise respecting the establishment of the kingdom of God (Daniel 2; Isaiah 2; Joel 2) would be empty promises without the empty tomb.
  - b. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our all-knowing, just, merciful God would be a deceitful, fallen idol.
  - c. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Savior would be an imposter and a liar, not the Son of God and lacking divine authority.
  - d. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Gospel would not be the glad tidings of good news, but rather it would be a colossal hoax on humanity, completely lacking any power to redeem lost souls.
4. The biblical doctrines of eternal destiny involving death, the Second Coming, heaven, hell, the judgment and the authority of God rest or fall on the resurrection.

# Godhead

- a. Without the resurrection, there is no eternal destiny of heaven that mortals may pursue by the way in which they live their lives on earth.
  - b. Without the resurrection, either there is nothing beyond the grave or if there is a heaven, it is inaccessible and all souls who have ever lived will spend forever in hell.
  - c. Without the resurrection, there would be no Second Coming of Christ.
  - d. Without the resurrection, there would be no judgment.
  - e. Without the resurrection, God has nothing to offer mankind whereby men will heed the authority of God.
5. The saving power of the blood of Jesus Christ, the faithful obedience of countless souls throughout numerous generations, plus every aspect of worship and service would be void (useless) without the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
6. The resurrection of a crucified Messiah is the cardinal doctrine upon which God-approved religion has always depended!
- a. The Old Testament always foretold of a resurrected Messiah.
  - b. The Gospel records and the Book of Acts tell of a resurrected Messiah.
  - c. The New Testament foretells the return of the resurrected Messiah.

## **Body:**

- I. The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a primary subject of prophecy.**
- A. Genesis 3:15 is the first prophecy regarding the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
1. This prophecy was somewhat veiled and remained a mystery throughout Old Testament times.
  2. God's plan of redemption remained a mystery until God revealed it through Jesus Christ (Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:4, 9; Colossians 1:27; 4:3; 1 Timothy 3:16).
- B. Psalm 16:10 is another obvious prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
1. The apostle Peter, by inspiration, confirmed that Psalm 16:10 pertains to Jesus Christ (Acts 2:27).
  2. Psalm 16:10 remained a mystery until its exclusive fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
- C. Jesus Christ prophesied His own resurrection.
1. Sometimes His prophecy was veiled or misunderstood (initially) (John 2:18-22).
  2. Sometimes the prophecy was clear and unmistakable, but the hearers were shrouded in a veil of disbelief (Matthew 16:21-23; 20:17-19; 26:32; Mark 9:9; 14:28).
- D. The apostle Paul said the prophets and Moses had foretold of the resur-

# Godhead

rection of Jesus Christ (Acts 26:22-23).

- E. Numerous Old Testament passages refer indirectly to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
  - 1. Verses that refer to the Messiah's *triumphant death* indirectly refer to the resurrection.
  - 2. Verses that refer to Jesus Christ as the fitting sacrifice for sin involve the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
  - 3. Isaiah 53:10-12 is representative of Messianic passages that indirectly involve the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## II. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a primary teaching of the New Testament.

- A. Peter preached the resurrected Lord.
  - 1. The resurrection was the heart of the first recorded Gospel sermon (Acts 2:23-24).
  - 2. The resurrection was the thrust of the second recorded Gospel sermon (Acts 3:14-15).
  - 3. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the central theme of the apostles' defense before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:9-10).
  - 4. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the heart of the first recorded Gospel sermon to Gentiles (Acts 10:39-41).
  - 5. Peter also taught the resurrection of Jesus Christ in his first general epistle (1 Peter 1:3; 3:18).
- B. The resurrected Lord was the theme of the preaching of all the apostles (Acts 4:33).
- C. The evangelist Stephen preached the resurrected Christ for which the enraged Sanhedrin degenerated into a mob that stoned him to death (Acts 7:52, 55-60).
- D. The apostle Paul also taught the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - 1. Paul preached the resurrection of Christ in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:30, 33-34, 37).
  - 2. Paul preached the resurrection to the Thessalonian Jews in their synagogue (Acts 17:1-3).
  - 3. Paul wrote to the Roman Christians regarding the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:4, 9; 10:9).
  - 4. Paul also wrote of the resurrected Christ to the Christians at Corinth (1 Corinthians 15:1-23).
  - 5. Further, Paul wrote of Christ's resurrection to the Lord's church at Thessalonica, Ephesus, Philippi and to Timothy (1 Thessalonians 4:14; Ephesians 1:20; Philippians 3:10; 2 Timothy 2:8).
  - 6. Paul preached the resurrected Christ before kings and mobs (Acts 22:6-10; 23:6; 24:21; 26:22-23).

# Godhead

## III. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the resurrection of power.

- A. The power of the resurrection of Christ originated with Jesus Christ Himself (John 10:17-18).
  - 1. By His own power, Jesus Christ laid down His life.
  - 2. By His own power, Jesus Christ raised Himself.
  - 3. By His own power, Jesus Christ could foretell His death and resurrection.
  - 4. By His own power, Jesus Christ arose, triumphant over death, to die no more!
- B. The power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a cardinal doctrine of the New Testament (Philippians 3:10-11).
- C. The power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the force that makes the saving Gospel effective (1 Corinthians 15:1-23).
  - 1. The resurrection makes salvation possible (2).
  - 2. The resurrection of Jesus Christ vindicates the Old Testament respecting its prophecies of Jesus Christ.
  - 3. The resurrection of Jesus Christ qualified witnesses to proclaim the Gospel (5-8).
  - 4. The resurrection of Jesus Christ makes our own resurrection possible (12).
  - 5. The resurrection of Jesus Christ vindicates the preaching of the Gospel (14-15).
  - 6. The resurrection of Jesus Christ validates the Christian faith (14).
  - 7. The power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ makes the forgiveness of sins possible (17).
  - 8. The power of the resurrection comforts the living regarding dead saints (18).
  - 9. The power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ validates the Christian hope (19).
  - 10. The power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ emboldens Christians regarding the Second Coming and final judgment (24-28).
- D. The resurrection of Jesus Christ causes the Gospel or the Word of God to be powerful (Romans 1:16; Hebrews 4:12).
- E. The resurrection or the empty tomb is the power of Christianity, without which Christianity would not exist!

## IV. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a matter of faith and one doctrine that has always been a test of fellowship.

- A. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact that must be believed.
  - 1. The Jews on Pentecost believed in the existence of God (Deity) and the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth before the apostles preached.
  - 2. The resurrected Lord was the subject of the first recorded Gospel



# Godhead

sermon:

3. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the doctrine at which the Jewish leaders and many other Jews balked.
  4. However, about 3,000 that day acknowledged the resurrected Christ and were baptized.
- B. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the chief tenet of both faith and confessing Christ (Romans 10:9-10).
1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis for acknowledging Him as the Son of God (Matthew 10:32; Acts 8:37).
  2. *There would be no point in professing allegiance to a dead Savior!*
- V. **Opponents of Christianity have made every effort to discredit the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**
- A. Opponents of Christianity fully realize that Christianity stands or falls on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- B. Critics counter with the Swoon Theory.
1. This attempt to discredit the resurrection of Jesus Christ says that Jesus merely pretended death while on the cross.
  2. In addition, the theory supposes that the coolness of the tomb revived our Lord.
  3. Next, the theory supposes that Jesus escaped from the tomb and persuaded His disciples that He had resurrected.
  4. In truth, the professional soldiers charged with the executions and verification of death, complete with thrusting a spear into the side of Jesus, confirm the death of Christ (John 19:31-33).
  5. The Roman Governor, Pilate, also confirmed the death of Jesus before releasing the Lord's body to be buried (Mark 15:43-45).
  6. Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus prepared the body of Jesus for burial and entombed Him, which they would not have done were Jesus alive.
  7. The Swoon Theory is a feeble attempt to discredit Christianity.
- C. Some critics assert that the enemies of our Lord stole His body.
1. To the contrary, the enemies of Jesus Christ most of all desired the body of our Lord to remain entombed, and they had soldiers posted to guard the tomb (Matthew 27:62-66).
  2. If the enemies of our Lord had stolen His body, they would have presented it at Pentecost or on some other occasion of the preaching of the Gospel to discredit the resurrection.
  3. Christianity would have been stopped cold had the enemies of Jesus Christ been able to produce the corpse of Jesus Christ after it was preached that He had resurrected.
- D. The oldest theory opposing the resurrection of Jesus Christ is that the

## Godhead

disciples stole the body of their crucified Lord.

1. This lie originated with the Jewish leaders who bribed the soldiers to say that the disciples stole the body while they slept (Matthew 28:11-15).
  2. The testimony of sleeping witnesses would be inadmissible in any court of law.
  3. The disciples did not have enough courage to confront Roman soldiers guarding the tomb; they had fled from a living Savior (Matthew 26:56).
  4. The day of the resurrection the disciples were fearfully assembled in hiding (John 20:19).
  5. If the disciples had really stolen the body of Jesus, it would not have been necessary to bribe the soldiers to say so.
  6. Doubtless, disciples who had stolen the body of Jesus and proceeded to preach falsely that He had resurrected would not have endured grave persecution and martyrdom for a lie.
  7. It is obvious that the disciples did not steal the body of our Lord.
- E. One theory states that the women went to the wrong tomb.
1. People do not forget where they have recently buried their loved ones.
  2. Surely, Joseph would remember where his own tomb was in which he buried Jesus.
  3. Mary the mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene took special care in observing the place of the entombment of Jesus Christ (Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55).
- F. Other opponents of Christianity claim that the disciples deliberately deceived the people with lies.
1. Again, Jewish leaders would have produced the unresurrected corpse of Jesus if they could have done so.
  2. Disciples of Christ experienced grave persecution and martyrdom, which they would not have done based on what they knew to be a lie (1 Corinthians 4:9-13; 2 Corinthians 11:23-28).
- G. Still another theory is that the disciples were sincerely deceived into believing Jesus Christ had resurrected.
1. However, hundreds saw the resurrected Lord at one time, and they could not all have been deceived (1 Corinthians 15:6).
  2. Those who knew Him the best saw, heard and ate with Him, including His mother and the apostles (Luke 24:42-43; John 21).
  3. The Lord appeared to His disciples at different times and in different places over a period of 40 days.
  4. If the disciples had been deluded into thinking Jesus resurrected, when He had not resurrected, the Jewish leaders could have produced

# Godhead

the unresurrected corpse of Jesus.

II. Hallelujah, the Lord is Risen!

## **Conclusion:**

1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the heartbeat of Christianity, without which Christianity cannot exist.
2. The resurrection of Jesus Christ turned the dejected, fearful disciples of Jesus Christ into bold proclaimers of the Gospel, who were willing to suffer torture and death if need be.
3. The resurrection of Jesus Christ on the first day of the week is commemorated each first day of the week by our assembling to worship.
4. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the lifeblood of the church for which Jesus Christ died.
5. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the death nail to atheism, other world religions, worship of nature and every false way.

## **Invitation:**

1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is in vain for every soul who chooses to ignore the instructions of Jesus respecting salvation.
2. Jesus would have every accountable soul believe in him as the Son of God (John 8:24), repent of sins (Luke 13:3), confess him as Lord (Matthew 10:32) and be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16).
3. Jesus would have erring Christians repent and pray (Acts 8:22).

# Godhead

## Another Jesus, Another Spirit & Another Gospel

### 2 Corinthians 11:2-4

**Thesis:** To caution against accepting corrupted teaching respecting Jesus Christ.

#### **Introduction:**

1. The apostle Paul feared lest his relentless labors for Christ among the Corinthians would be wasted owing to someone corrupting fundamental teaching about Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2-4; Galatians 4:11).
  - a. Other first century inspired writers shared the same alarm about false teachers corrupting the teaching about Jesus Christ (2 Peter 2:1-2; 2 John 9-11).
  - b. However, there is only one Jesus Christ by whom one's sins can be forgiven (Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Timothy 2:5).
2. The apostle Paul also feared lest someone would preach "another Gospel" (2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 1:6-9).
  - a. This many years since Paul's ministry, literally thousands of different Jesus' and gospels are being proclaimed within the denominational world.
  - b. Further, the secular world routinely attempts to makeover Jesus Christ into someone He was not, or to deny His historicity altogether.
  - c. The secular world and many religious leaders as well also have taken ungodly liberties the Gospel, too.

#### **Body:**

- I. **Paul exclaimed that the Corinthians were vulnerable to receiving another Jesus, another spirit and another Gospel.**
  - A. "Preach" means "to be a herald...to proclaim" (*Vine's*).
    1. A different Jesus, a different spirit and a different gospel is proclaimed whenever men deviate from divine truth (for us, the New Testament).
    2. The danger respecting "another Jesus," "another spirit" and "another gospel" is not confined to the first century.
  - B. The "another" relative to "another Jesus" is "*allos*," whereas the "another" relative to "another spirit" and "another Gospel" is "*heteros*."
    1. "*Allos*...denotes 'another of the same sort'; *heteros*...denotes 'another of a different sort'" (*Vine's*).
    2. The Corinthians were in danger of receiving another of the same kind Jesus—a counterfeit or substitute Messiah.
    3. Robertson remarks: "...any other 'Jesus' is a rival and so wrong. That would deny the identity."

## Godhead

4. “The English Revised Version (1885): ‘another’ Jesus, a ‘different’ Spirit. ... ‘Another’ denies the ‘identity;’ ‘a different’ denies the ‘similarity of nature’” (*Vincent’s*). (See also ASV, NKJV.)
5. The Corinthians were in danger of receiving another of a different kind spirit and Gospel—counterfeits bearing similarity to the genuine only in name.

C. Context always determines the sense in which “spirit” is used in Scripture.

1. Barnes was of the opinion that the word “spirit” in this verse refers to the Holy Spirit.
2. However, none of the standard English translations capitalized “spirit” in 2 Corinthians 11:4, indicating the translators believed there was no direct reference to the Holy Spirit in the verse.

This is not a reference to the Holy Spirit... The spirit that is received as a result of obeying the gospel is that frame of mind of the one who knows he is a child of God and can give expression to this knowledge by calling God “Father.”... What, then, was the different spirit which they received when they submitted to false teachers? It was a spirit of faction, jealousy, and deception that characterizes the children of the devil. (Applebury)

3. First John 4:6 introduces the concept of “the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error,” which may well be the sense in which the word “spirit” is used in 2 Corinthians 11:4.
- D. The word “accepted” here means “to accept, by a deliberate and ready reception of what is offered” (*Vine’s*).

1. The same fervor with which the Thessalonians embraced the true Gospel, the Corinthians were likely to adopt a false gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:13).
2. Paul noted that doctrinal error taught in the first century would “overthrow the faith of some” (2 Timothy 2:18).

E. The words “bear with” mean “put up with” (*Biblesoft’s*).

1. Aware that a contrast exists between the real Jesus, the genuine spirit and the certified Gospel, the Corinthians were susceptible to ‘putting up with’ variations from these truths as though it were inconsequential or made little difference.
2. Paul and other first century inspired writers adamantly affirmed that the slightest variation from divine truth was monumental to the affecting the eternal disposition of souls, or “concerning faith have made shipwreck” (1 Timothy 1:19; 2 John 9-11).
3. “Too often we in the church do not look at problems within the church

# Godhead

close enough and we sometimes 'gladly tolerate' them until it is too late" (Martin).

## II. Religious people in any age, including today, likewise are vulnerable to receiving another Jesus, another spirit and another gospel.

- A. The significance of variations from divine truth were lost on the Corinthians because of the subtlety with which errors were interjected.
  - 1. With "good words and fair speeches," false teachers deceive the hearts of the "innocent" (Romans 16:17-18 ASV, "naïve people" NIV or the "unsuspecting" NASV).
  - 2. "Deceitful workers" represent themselves to be what they are not (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).
  - 3. Subtly, false teachers "delude...with persuasiveness of speech" (Colossians 2:4 ASV).
  - 4. "False prophets" "exploit...with deceptive words" (2 Peter 2:3 NKJV).
  - 5. False teachers "speak great swelling words of emptiness" (2 Peter 2:18 NKJV) or "great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage" (Jude 16 NKJV).
  - 6. The church today is no less susceptible to corruption from true Christianity through subtle means (from without and within the church).
- B. Espoused (a bride) to Christ, the church at Corinth was at risk of spiritual adultery (2 Corinthians 11:2).
  - 1. The imagery of God's people being married to Him appears throughout the Old Testament (Isaiah 54:5; 62:4-5; Hosea 2:19-20).
  - 2. God's Old Testament people had often committed spiritual adultery (Ezekiel 16:15-16).
  - 3. The New Testament, likewise, uses the imagery of God's people being married to God (Matthew 9:15; Romans 7:4; Revelation 21:9).
  - 4. So, the church in any age, including today, can be as an adulterous wife to our Lord.
- C. Some ancient examples strengthen our understanding of the potential today for embracing a "another Jesus," "another spirit" and "another gospel."
  - 1. "Gnosticism...denied the humanity of Christ, even to the extent of denying the reality of His human body" (*New Unger's*); see Colossians 2:18; 1 Timothy 6:20-21 ASV, NKJV; 1 John 2:22-23; 2 John 7.
  - 2. Another early error regarding Jesus Christ was Ebionism, which acknowledged the humanity of Jesus Christ but denied His divinity.

Ebionism, or the doctrine of the Ebionites, a Jewish sect that existed even in the time of the apostles. This error arose from mistaken Jewish preconceptions concerning the Messiah and con-

## Godhead

sisted in the denial of the divine nature of Christ. (*New Unger's*)

3. One characteristic of Ebionism appears prominently today in the form of the false doctrine of premillennialism (Zechariah 6:13; Hebrews 7:12-14; 8:4).

Another feature of Ebionism...is their...view—the personal reign of Our Lord for 1,000 years as the Jewish Messiah.” (ISBE)

- D. Some contemporary examples strengthen our understanding of the potential today for embracing a “another Jesus,” “another spirit” and “another gospel.”

1. The Mormon Church with its Book of Mormon (supposedly “another testament of Jesus Christ”) is a good example of preaching “another gospel.”

...Mormons have “another Jesus” (2 Corinthians 11:4), and are not familiar with the Bible’s message of the gospel of Jesus Christ, even though they use his name all the time. (Hearn)

2. Ecumenical, across denominational lines, movements, such as the Promise Keepers, Billy Graham crusades, etc. give Jesus Christ a makeover before presenting Him to their audiences.

Do the Promise Keepers really expect us to fellowship Catholics, Muslims, and Mormons (and other religious groups) when they teach such egregious error? The apostle Paul expressed his concern that the Corinthians might accept someone who came and preached “another Jesus” (2 Corinthians 11:3-4). He was concerned about doctrine. It is typical for those with an ecumenical agenda to verbally claim that sound doctrine is precious to them, but when it comes to their actual practice, they are much more elastic than commitment to sound doctrine will allow. (Clarke)

3. The Jehovah’s’ Witnesses are a prime example of a religious group making drastic (salvation issue) changes to Jesus Christ.

The New World Translation of Holy Scripture robs Jesus Christ of His Eternality. They preach another Jesus Christ—not the Christ of the Bible. (Taylor)

4. Every deviation from New Testament Christianity (the only kind), which manifests itself in different doctrines and different churches (denominationalism), is the embodiment today of what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 11:4.

This shows that men may acknowledge many of the leading

# Godhead

truths of the Christian religion, yet so pervert the teachings as to make it another gospel. ... Many now do as these false teachers did—acknowledge Jesus and the Spirit, and the gospel from God, yet change and pervert the teaching. They are placed by Paul as he did these early teachers, in company with the serpent in Eden deceiving Eve. (Lipscomb)

## Conclusion:

1. John the Baptist once sent some of his disciples to Jesus to inquire if he ought to look for another Jesus; however, the miracles of Jesus proved that He was the one and only of whom the Old Testament prophesied (Matthew 11:2-6; John 20:30-31).
2. No one dare preach “another Jesus,” “another spirit” or “another gospel,” though many have and yet do (1 Timothy 1:3-7; 4:1-3; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; 4:3).

## Invitation:

1. Jesus Christ, God incarnate, died upon the cross of Christ, and only Jesus Christ is a suitable sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10:26).
2. No other Jesus can take away one’s sins (Acts 4:12; Mark 16:16).
3. No other Jesus can take away the sins of erring Christians (Hebrews 10:26; Acts 8:22).

## Works Cited

- Applebury, T.R. *Studies in Second Corinthians*. CD-ROM. Joplin: College P. 1966.
- Barnes' Notes*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft, 1997.
- Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, 1994.
- Clarke, B.J. “A Closer Look at Promise Keepers.” CD-ROM. *Power* (1988): 7-79.
- Hearn, W.L. “Mormonism.” *Grace Abounding*. Winford Claiborne, ed. CD-ROM. Henderson: Freed-Hardeman College, 1987. 179-185.
- Lipscomb, David. *A Commentary on The New Testament Epistles: Second Corinthians and Galatians*. Edited with additional notes by J. W. Shepherd. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1989. CD-ROM. Austin: Wordsearch, 2005.
- Martin, F.H. (Buddy). “Immature Christianity—The Multiplying Ministries.” *Love for God and his Word*. Winford Claiborne, ed. CD-ROM. Henderson: Freed-Hardeman College, 1988. 214-236.
- Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Nashville: Broadman, 1985. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, 1997.
- Taylor, Robert R., Jr. “Version Violations: Additions and Subtractions from the Word.” *The Book of Deuteronomy: The Love of God and Man's Response*. Curtis A. Cates, ed. CD-ROM. Memphis: Memphis School of Preaching, 1988. 417-456.
- Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft, 1997.
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*. CD-ROM. Nashville: Nelson, 1985.



## A Stone of Stumbling

### Isaiah 8:14-15

**Thesis:** To examine the dual role of Jesus Christ respectively toward the obedient and the disobedient by examining the illustration in Isaiah 8:14-15 and similar passages in both testaments of the Bible.

**Song:** *Rock of Ages*

#### **Introduction:**

1. Jesus Christ is the Savior of the obedient (Hebrews 5:9).
2. Yet at the same time, Jesus Christ is the executioner of harsh punishment to the disobedient (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
3. Isaiah 8:14-15 some 700 years before the ministry of Jesus Christ used an illustration to teach that dual role of our Lord toward humanity.
4. The illustration of our Savior being a stone that punishes the disobedient whereas the obedient are rescued appears in both testaments of the Bible.

#### **Body:**

##### **I. Let's look more closely at Isaiah 8:14-15.**

- A. First, God is willing to provide salvation to mankind.
  1. The word "sanctuary" in Isaiah 8:14 "means an asylum, or a refuge, to which one might flee in case of danger, and be safe" (Clarke).
  2. God has always been willing to be man's refuge (Proverbs 18:10; Psalm 46:1).
  3. The longsuffering of God in our present age is attributed to God's desire that mankind be saved rather than be eternally lost (2 Peter 3:9-11).
- B. A rock, mountain, etc. is used often in Scripture to represent Deity (Daniel 2:34, 45).
  1. God is mankind's Rock on whom he can rely for defense, even "the Rock of his salvation" (Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 18, 30-31; Psalm 28:1; 31:2; 42:9).
  2. Lamentably, God's own people often stumbled over the Rock of their salvation: "a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence" (cf., 1 Peter 2:8; Romans 9:32-33).
- C. Rather than an Agent for the salvation or refuge of the ancient Israelites (i.e., the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah), Deity became to them "a trap and a snare" (NKJV).
- D. Isaiah 8:15 emphasizes the demise of disobedient Israelites and adds that they shall "be taken."
  1. The Assyrians defeated the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C. and took many of the survivors as prisoners to foreign lands.

# Godhead

2. The Babylonians defeated the southern kingdom of Judah in 587 B.C. and took many of the survivors as prisoners to Babylon.

## II. The Jews of the Old Testament as well as in the first century rejected Deity and suffered rebuff for it (Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 21:42-44).

- A. Isaiah 28:16 uses an illustration of the Messiah or Savior being a foundation stone or “chief corner stone.”
  1. The illustration refers to the ordinary practice of constructing a stone building (1 Kings 5:17; 7:9; Job 38:6).
  2. The illustration in Isaiah 28:16 means that despite the rejection of Jesus Christ, our foundation or corner stone, He is our Messiah and founder of His kingdom or church (Matthew 21:42-44).
  3. The apostle Paul also referred to Jesus Christ as the “chief corner stone” of the New Testament kingdom or church (Ephesians 2:20).
- B. God’s provision for the establishment of the Messianic kingdom was already initiated in Isaiah’s day.
  1. Butler comments about the Hebrew word for “lay” in Isaiah 28:16:

The Hebrew word *yisad* (lay) is past tense. God had already started the foundation. It was the Messianic promise. It was started at least as early as David (cf. 2 Sam. 7: 12ff). The completion of the foundation would be found in the Messiah Himself (cf. Mt. 21:42, 44; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; Romans 9:33; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Pet, 2:4-6). (69)
  2. Prediction with God is as certain as a present or past event is with us.
  3. Imagine the care and solidity of a foundation that began to be laid about a 1,000 years before the superstructure was added (i.e., from the time of King David to the first century A.D.).
- C. A sure foundation, often cut into or laid upon bedrock, is preferable for the construction of a durable structure, rather than a soft foundation such as sand (Matthew 7:24-27).
  1. First century Jews were essentially building on sand when they rejected Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God and their Savior (Acts 4:11-12).
  2. First century Jews proceeded to build without the sure foundation by building their own religion through modifications of God-given Judaism (Matthew 15:9, 13; Romans 10:1-3).
- D. Isaiah 28:16 also describes the Messiah as “a tried stone,” meaning that there was no uncertainty as to the stability of the Messiah as the unmovable foundation (i.e., for the establishment of the then future New Testament kingdom or church).
  1. Albert Barnes writes: “Such a reference also exactly suits the connection.

# Godhead

The stability of the kingdom of God on earth rests on the Messiah.”

2. Wycliffe pens that “tried stone” was “one with no faults or cleavages,” hence completely suitable for being the foundation.
  3. The *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary* relates that Jesus Christ was tried “both by the devil (Luke 4:1-13) and by men (Luke 20:1-38), and even by God (Matt 27:46): a stone of tested solidity to bear the vast superstructure of man’s redemption.”
- E. Our Savior is also illustrated by reference to “a precious corner stone.”
1. Comparably, the everlasting kingdom, the church, is described as magnificent in precious or expensive foundation stones (Revelation 21:19).
  2. Jesus Christ is the foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11).
  3. Faithful Christians are described as “lively stones” in God’s “spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5).
- F. The stumbling of the Jews over the Messiah hastened the proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles.
1. The apostle Paul accused the Jews of the very crime of rejecting their Savior, whereupon he took the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13:45-48).
  2. The apostle Peter explained that the reluctance of the Jews to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior was offset by the acknowledgment of our Lord as Savior by many Gentiles (1 Peter 2:4-10).

### **III. Jesus Christ remains a stone of stumbling today to most of this world’s population.**

- A. Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling to proponents of world religions other than Christianity, such as Judaism.
1. Lamentably, most people of Jewish ancestry have never acknowledged that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God.
  2. For the most part, Jews today who have any interest in religion are doing exactly what Paul accused his countrymen of doing in his day (Romans 10:1-3).
  3. Rather than being religious at all, secular Judaism or merely awareness of a Jewish heritage (i.e., recognition of their ethnicity) best describes a large number of Jews today.
- B. Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling to proponents of several additional world religions other than Christianity.
1. World religions other than Christianity include Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Taoism, witchcraft, Confucianism, Jainism, Shinto, Sikhism, voodoo, Bahai plus numerous more.
  2. While all world religions other than Christianity are spiritually detrimental to their followers, especially Islam poses a real physical threat to all non-adherents (e.g., the current brand of terrorism that has been ongoing in recent history for over the last 30 years, only recently realized [but not

# Godhead

- fully] for the serious danger it poses to the rest of the world).
- C. Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling as evidenced by the vast and diverse denominational world.
    - 1. Many hundreds of major denominations exist in distinction from each other with literally thousands of divisive subsets within those denominations.
    - 2. Each of these thousands of so-called Christian churches has its own version of Jesus Christ, its own creed, essentially its own God and its own unique perception of eternity.
  - D. Unfortunately, Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling to many Christians, members of the Lord's church, today as well.
    - 1. For some, Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling because our Lord accepts all races of humanity into His church (Mark 16:15-16).
    - 2. For some, Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling because of what He teaches about marriage, divorce and remarriage (Matthew 19:9).
    - 3. For some, Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling because He expects us to worship with other Christians every first day of the week (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
    - 4. For some, Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling because He requires of us godly, Christian living (Romans 12:1-2; Titus 2:12; Philippians 4:8).
    - 5. For some, Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling because He requires of us godly Christian service (Titus 2:14; James 2:17, 20, 26).
    - 6. For some, Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling because He expects us to obey him (Romans 6:17).

## Conclusion:

- 1. In our age, Jesus Christ is the Savior of the obedient (Hebrews 5:9).
- 2. Yet at the same time, Jesus Christ will be the executioner of harsh punishment to the disobedient (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

## Invitation:

- 1. Whereas Jesus Christ remains a stone of stumbling to most of the world, may our Savior not be a stone of stumbling to us.
- 2. However, Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling to those who reject His solution for the sin problem mankind experiences (Mark 16:16).
- 3. Jesus Christ is also a stone of stumbling for erring Christians who continue in their sins rather than repenting and praying for forgiveness (Acts 8:22).

## Works Cited

- Barnes, Albert. *Barnes' Notes*. CD-ROM. Seattle: BibleSoft, 1997.  
Butler, Paul T. *Isaiah*. Vol. 2. CD-ROM. Joplin: College P., 1976.  
Clarke, Adam. *Adam Clarke's Commentary*. CD-ROM. Seattle: BibleSoft, 1996.  
Jamieson, Fausset and Brown *Commentary*. CD-ROM. Seattle: BibleSoft, 1997.  
*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*. CD-ROM. Chicago: Moody P., 1962.

## Why Was Jesus Hated?

### John 15:18-25

**Thesis:** To ascertain why Jesus was hated by some men and determine whether the church should similarly imitate Christ, even if that means the world will hate the church and Christians.

**Song:** *Lead Me to Calvary*

#### **Introduction:**

1. Though Jesus was loved by the masses, He was as passionately hated by many as well, leading to His crucifixion.
2. Jesus was hated chiefly because He taught that the differences in religion really matter.
3. The church for which Jesus died and over which He is the Head was hated also in the first century.
4. The church was hated chiefly also because it taught that differences in religion really matter.

#### **Body:**

- I. Jesus Christ was hated because He taught that differences in religion really matter.**
  - A. Jesus did not win the *popular vote* in either of the two instances when He cleansed the Temple of moneychangers (John 2:13-17; Matthew 21:12-13).
  - B. Jesus did not gain popularity among religious party leaders when He condemned them (scribes and Pharisees) for their sinfulness (Matthew 15:1-14; 23).
  - C. The world hated Jesus because the light of the Gospel that He brought exposed the world's darkness of sin (John 3:19-20; 15:18-25).
- II. The early church was hated because it taught that differences in religion really matter.**
  - A. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was hated for teaching that differences between Judaism and Christianity really matter (Acts 6:8-7:60).
  - B. The early church was hated because it taught that the differences between idolatry and Christianity really matter (Acts 19:18-41).
  - C. In the first century, some Christians hated the church and fellow Christians because the apostles taught that the difference between Gospel truth and doctrinal error really matters (Galatians 1:6-9; 4:16; Romans 16:17-18; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 John 4:1; 3 John 9-10).
  - D. The early church was hated because the light of the Gospel that it proclaimed exposed the world's darkness of sin (John 17:14).

# Godhead

## **Conclusion:**

1. Jesus forewarned His apostles before He sent them on the Limited Commission that the world would hate them (Matthew 10:22-25).
2. Likewise, the early church was well aware that the world would hate it (2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:16).
3. Yet, the early church gladly accepted its charge to evangelize the world despite often-severe persecution (Acts 8:1-4; Revelation 2:10).
4. Even our own family members may oppose us, yet we must obey the Gospel and remain faithful (Matthew 10:34-39).

## **Invitation:**

1. The world really hates God's plan of salvation or conditions on which He can and will save human souls.
2. Summarized, God will save the obedient and punish the disobedient (Hebrews 5:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2 Peter 2:9).

## The Goodness and Severity of God

### Romans 11:22

**Thesis:** To emphasize the dual attributes of God versus the tendency to declare only the love of God.

**Song:** *There's a Great Day Coming*

#### **Introduction:**

1. Our God is not only a God of terror, punishment and judgment.
2. Neither is our God only a God of love, grace and mercy.
3. Rather, our God is a God of terror, punishment and judgment as well as a God of love, grace and mercy.

#### **Body:**

- I. **The Bible uniformly represents God as a God of goodness and severity.**
  - A. The goodness and severity of God in the context of Romans 11:22 pertains to the expulsion of Jews from recognition as the people of God and the opportunity of Gentiles to be recognized by God as the people of God.
    1. The severity of God is represented by the expulsion of disobedient Jews from the kingdom of God.
    2. The goodness of God is represented by the inclusion of Gentiles in the kingdom of God.
    3. Albert Barnes remarks regarding the goodness of God toward the Gentiles, "The **benevolence** or mercy of God toward you in admitting you to his favor" (emphasis added).
    4. *Even the goodness or benevolence of God toward the Gentiles is conditional and may be replaced with the severity of God in response to human disobedience.*
  - B. God has always been a jealous and vengeful God toward the disobedient.
    1. The famed Ten Commandments denote this attribute of God (Exodus 20:5).
    2. God still punishes desertion (Hebrews 10:22-31).
    3. God still punishes disobedience (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
  - C. However, God has always exhibited an unsurpassed love for mankind.
    1. Our God was interested in the spiritual and eternal welfare of humanity even when mankind was unaware or cared little about his own sinful and lost condition (Romans 5:8; John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10).
    2. God loved mankind first (1 John 4:19).
    3. God still rewards obedience (Hebrews 5:8-9).

# Godhead

## II. God's servants must preach God's message, in which both the goodness and severity of God are represented.

- A. God's preachers and teachers have an obligation to God to present all of God's Word.
  - 1. Proclaimers of the Gospel must keep back nothing, but present "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:20, 27 ASV).
  - 2. Preachers and teachers must present God's Word in all seasons and when its auditors want to hear it and when they do not want to hear it (2 Timothy 4:1-4).
- B. Sometimes, the Word of God is cutting.
  - 1. It is described as a sword with two edges, which cuts coming and going (Hebrews 4:12).
  - 2. The Word of God cuts or pricks the very depths of the human heart (Acts 2:37; 7:51-54).
- C. Yet, the Word of God can be comforting.
  - 1. The Word of God boosts hope for the faithful regarding the return of our Lord and the commencement of eternity (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
  - 2. The Word of God provides the ultimate hope respecting the salvation of souls (Matthew 28:18-20).
  - 3. Both testaments afford the faithful child of God comfort and hope (Romans 15:4).

## III. The goodness and severity of God is illustrated by parental treatment of children.

- A. Sometimes a parent's treatment of his children is representative of the severity of God.
  - 1. Parental discipline of children as well as God's discipline of humanity are both calculated to be in one's best interest (Hebrews 12:5-11).
  - 2. Discipline must be offense appropriate and not harsher than what is warranted (Ephesians 6:4).
  - 3. Yet, sometimes punishment, especially under Old Testament Judaism was severe (Deuteronomy 21:18-20).
- B. Sometimes a parent's treatment of his children is representative of the goodness or benevolence of God.
  - 1. The apostle Paul compared his love for Christians in Thessalonica to the love of a nursing mother toward her baby (1 Thessalonians 2:7).
  - 2. The apostle further exhorted or encouraged those Christians as a father exhorts or encourages his own children (1 Thessalonians 2:11).
- C. In the family, the child's conduct determines how a child in a given instance will be treated.
  - 1. Likewise, the goodness or benevolence of God blesses obedient souls (Romans 6:17).



## Godhead

2. The severity of God is reserved for disobedient souls (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
3. Faithful preachers and teachers of God's Word, then, must proclaim both the goodness and severity of God—"all the counsel of God."

### **Conclusion:**

1. For instance, faithful preachers make no apology for preaching about the wrathful, vengeful God of Judgment.
2. Neither do faithful preachers apologize for preaching about a God of love, grace and mercy.
3. Faithful preachers make no apology for preaching about a Gospel that sometimes offends its hearers (Galatians 4:16).
4. Neither do faithful preachers apologize for preaching about a comforting Gospel.
5. *Faithful preachers preach the whole counsel of God, whether or not its auditors appreciate it!*

### **Invitation:**

1. Faithful preachers of God make no apology for teaching the Bible's plan of salvation, found exclusively in the New Testament.
2. Hearing God's Word only, faith, repentance, professing Christ, immersion for the forgiveness of sins and Christian obedience work together to save souls (Romans 10:17; John 8:24; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 22:16; Revelation 2:10).
3. Erring Christians need to repent and pray (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

# Godhead

## God Is

### John 4:24

**Thesis:** To walk around God, as though that were possible, and view Him from various angles.

**Song:** *God Is Love; Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

#### **Introduction:**

1. Imagine for a moment that we could be literally in the vicinity of God.
2. Further imagine that it were possible to walk around God to view Him from various angles.
3. What could we discern about God?
4. Of course, we cannot walk around God literally, but we can examine Him through the vehicle of the Word of God—the Bible.
5. Thereby, we can ascertain that God is Spirit, changeless, all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere, eternal, holy, righteous, love, truth, wisdom and faithful.

#### **Body:**

##### **I. God is Spirit.**

- A. Jesus affirmed that God is wholly a Spirit Being (John 4:24).
- B. That means God has neither physical form nor is He visible.
- C. The Son of God was visible only because of His fleshly incarnation through the vehicle of the Virgin Birth (John 1:1, 14).

##### **II. God is changeless.**

- A. God is the same though His interaction with mankind may be progressive (e.g., Patriarchy, Judaism and Christianity, Hebrews 1:12).
- B. Consequently, because Jesus Christ is deity, too, the divine character of Jesus is changeless, though His interaction with mankind may be progressive (e.g., incarnation) (Hebrews 13:8).

##### **III. God is all-powerful.**

- A. “God’s power is unlimited. He can do anything that is not inconsistent with His nature, character, and purpose (Gen 17:1; 18:14). The only limitations on God’s power are imposed by Himself (Gen 18:25)” (*Nelson’s*).
- B. God made the worlds and by the same power the worlds continue to exist (and all the universe, too) (Colossians 1:16-17; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9).

##### **IV. God is all-knowing.**

- A. No one knows more than God, for instance, as though someone could counsel God (Romans 11:33-34).
- B. Mankind does not know as much as God, despite thorough honest scientific evaluation: man regularly discovers new truths to him in this physical world.

# Godhead

C. God's knowledge is as infinite as He is in every way (Psalm 147:5).

## V. God is everywhere.

- A. David acknowledged that there is nowhere in the universe to which he or anyone could resort that would be beyond the presence of God (Psalm 139:7-12).
- B. God said of Himself that He fills heaven and earth (Jeremiah 23:23-24).

## VI. God is eternal.

- A. Past, present and future that we call time has no relationship to God (2 Peter 3:8).
- B. David noted that a 1,000 years was no more extensive to God than the normal soldier's watch of four hours would be to him (Psalm 90:4).
- C. "Time is like a parade that man sees only a segment at a time. But God sees time in its entirety" (*Nelson's*).
- D. God is "forever and ever" (Hebrews 1:8).

## VII. God is holy.

- A. The prophet Isaiah saw in a vision special angelic creatures in heaven crying aloud "holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts" (Isaiah 6:1-3).
- B. The people of God are to imitate the holiness of God (Hebrews 3:1; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 2:5, 9).

## VIII. God is righteous.

- A. As God, God gets to determine what constitutes righteousness, to instruct mankind accordingly, to reward obedience and to punish unrighteousness (Romans 1:16-17; 3:24-26; 6:16).
- B. Mankind does a grave and eternal disservice to himself whenever he fails to adopt the righteousness of God or goes about to establish his own empty standard of righteousness (Romans 10:3).
- C. Sinners and saints must "awake to righteousness and sin not" (1 Corinthians 15:34).

## IX. God is love.

- A. Scripture plainly declares that "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16).
- B. "Divine love runs like a golden thread through the entire Bible" (*Nelson's*) and is evident from every benevolent gesture of God toward man from the Garden of Eden to final redemption (Genesis 1:26-31; Ephesians 3:3-11).

## X. God is truth.

- A. Simply, "God is true" (2 Corinthians 1:18).
- B. Without God to set the standard of right and wrong, true and false, there is no truth (Romans 1:25; 15:8; John 14:6, 17; 2 Corinthians 11:10; 1 John 5:6).
- C. Consequently, the second person of the Godhead personally brought the truth that really matters to earth (John 1:17; 18:37; Galatians 2:5; Ephesians 1:13; Colossians 1:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:15).
- D. This truth can make a soul free from sin (John 8:32; 17:19; Romans 2:8).

# Godhead

E. We all need “words of truth and soberness” (Acts 26:25).

## XI. God is wisdom.

A. God is infinitely wiser than mankind (1 Corinthians 1:25).

God’s wisdom is revealed in His doing the best thing, in the best way, at the best time for the best purpose. Some people have knowledge, but little wisdom, while the most wise at times have little knowledge. But God is “the only wise God” (1 Tim 1:17). In creation, history, human lives, redemption, and Christ, His divine wisdom is revealed. (*Nelson’s*)

B. Like Solomon or the Christians of whom James wrote, all we need to do is request wisdom of God (and follow through in our conduct) (1 Kings 3:9; James 1:5).

## XII. God is faithful.

A. God is reliable or faithful to whom we can turn with confidence that He has our best spiritual and eternal interest at heart (1 Corinthians 1:9).

B. God is faithful in that He will not allow mankind to be tempted beyond his ability to resist (1 Corinthians 10:13).

C. God is faithful to forgive penitent man his sins (1 John 1:9).

### Conclusion:

1. The Bible reveals the existence of God and the nature of God.
2. Therefore, mankind can know God from the Bible.
3. Finally in eternity, each soul will know God more fully, but for now we must content ourselves with Bible knowledge of God.
4. *Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary* categorizes the characteristics of God that we have examined into natural attributes and moral attributes.
5. Natural attributes include: Spirit, changeless, all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere and eternal.
6. Moral attributes include: holy, righteous, love, truth and wisdom.

### Invitation:

1. Humanity imitates the moral attributes of God by obeying the Gospel of Jesus Christ and becoming Christians (Romans 1:16; 6:17; Acts 11:26).
2. Sinners need to become holy, righteous, practice love, tell the truth, resort to divine wisdom and be faithful (1 Peter 1:15-16; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 13:8; Ephesians 4:25; 1 Corinthians 1:21, 24; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10).
3. Christians must conduct themselves as holy, righteous, in love, in truth and wisely (Revelation 22:11; Ephesians 5:2; Colossians 4:5).

### Works Cited

*Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. CD-ROM. Nashville: Nelson, 1986. [Indebted to *Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary* for the format of this lesson.]

# Godhead

## Proof That God Exists!

### Psalm 14:1

**Thesis:** To use the reasoning and common sense, complemented by Scripture and observation of the universe to correctly conclude that God exists.

**Song:** *How Great Thou Art*

#### Introduction:

1. The Psalmist stated that only a fool would conclude that God does not exist, Psalm 14:1.
2. The apostle Paul wrote that the created universe provides sufficient testimony to the existence of God (Romans 1:19-20).
3. Of course, with the acknowledgement of God comes also divine revelation with its instructions for which mankind is accountable to God.
4. It is no wonder, then, that mankind is anxious to conclude that there is no God.
5. However, the evidence in the physical world, properly and honestly handled, testifies of the existence of God.
6. We briefly consider herein these evidences that God exists.
  - a. The existence of the universe,
  - b. The existence of morals, and
  - c. The existence of design in the universe.

#### Body:

1. **The existence of the universe proves that God exists.**
  - A. Reasoning that God exists from consideration of the existence of the universe is called the *Cosmological Argument*.
    1. One dictionary definition of “cosmology” is “a theory or doctrine describing the natural order of the universe” (*Merriam*).
    2. Another definition of “cosmology” “is the study of the Universe in its totality, and by extension, humanity’s place in it” (“Cosmology”).
  - B. Respecting the existence of the universe, “there are only three options [as to its origin]: (1) it is eternal; (2) it created itself from nothing; or (3) it was created” (Harrub 15).
  - C. The universe is expanding similar to the ripples in water moving away from the entry point of a pebble tossed into a puddle.
    1. This indicates that the universe had a beginning.
    2. Therefore, *the universe is not eternal!*
    3. Evolutionary scientists also readily admit that the universe is not eternal.
    4. Like a little boy who tossed a pebble into a puddle, which caused water to ripple outward, the expanding universe requires some funda-

# Godhead

mentally necessary *cause* to explain the universe expanding outward from some center.

- D. Similarly, the Second Law of Thermodynamics is a universally recognized scientific fact that implies that everything had a beginning.
1. The Second Law of Thermodynamics includes the breakdown and increasing chaos of everything that exists.

The 2nd Law of Thermodynamics describes basic principles familiar in everyday life. It is partially a *universal law of decay*; the ultimate cause of why everything ultimately falls apart and disintegrates over time. *Material things are not eternal*. ... Everything ages and wears out. Even death is a manifestation of this law. The effects of the 2nd Law are all around, touching everything in the universe. ... It is well known that, *left to themselves, chemical compounds ultimately break apart into simpler materials; they do not ultimately become more complex*. ... The natural tendency of complex, ordered arrangements and systems is to become simpler and more disorderly with time. Thus, in the long term, *there is an overall downward trend throughout the universe*. (Taylor emphasis added)

2. However, evolutionary theory requires exactly the opposite of observable, scientific fact.

To put it simply: *In the real world, the long-term overall flow is downhill, not uphill*. All experimental and physical observation appears to confirm that the Law is indeed universal, affecting all natural processes in the long run. *Naturalistic Evolutionism requires that physical laws and atoms organize themselves into increasingly complex and beneficial, ordered arrangements. Thus, over eons of time, billions of things are supposed to have developed upward, becoming more orderly and complex. However, this basic law of science (2nd Law of Thermodynamics) reveals the exact opposite*. In the long run, complex, ordered arrangements actually tend to become simpler and more *disorderly* with time. *There is an irreversible downward trend ultimately at work throughout the universe. Evolution, with its ever increasing order and complexity, appears impossible in the natural world*. (Taylor emphasis added)

3. Consequently, some evolutionists, recognizing the significance of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, have abandoned the theory of evolution as absurd and unscientific.

## Godhead

A number of scientists believe the 2nd Law, when truly understood, is enough to refute the theory of Evolution. In fact, it is one of the most important reasons why various Evolutionists have dropped their theory in favor of Creationism. (Taylor)

4. Hence, the Second Law of Thermodynamics implies that everything, including the universe itself, had a beginning, since everything has been wearing out (Isaiah 51:6; Psalm 102:25-26; 2 Peter 3:10).
  5. Brother Edward Benesh aptly cites “the Second Law of Thermodynamics as the basal piece of evidence that the universe had a beginning.”
  6. The universe, then, had a beginning, and it is not eternal.
- E. Since the universe had a beginning, did it create itself?

1. The Latin expression “*Ex nihilo nihil fit*” means “[f]rom nothing comes nothing—i.e. every effect must have a *cause*” (“Nihilo” emphasis added).
2. With noted writer Charles Hodge we concur:

It is a self-evident truth that existence cannot spring spontaneously from non-existence. In this sense *ex nihilo nihil fit* is an universally admitted axiom. Those, therefore, who deny the existence of an extramundane mind, are forced to admit that as the universe now is, it must have always been. But as it is in a state of perpetual change it has not always been as it now is. (411)

3. Another notes:

The phrase *ex nihilo nihil fit* is true in the sense that there must be a *cause* of every finite substance. And nothing can come from nothing either (a) by finite [limited] power; (b) as material source; or (c) by emanation, generation and evolution. (Hall)

4. The absurdity of trying at all costs to avoid the logical and inevitable conclusion of a *first cause* (which many utterly refuse could be God) is seen in the lengths to which one will go into irrationality.

One of the most inviolate and oldest laws of science is *Ex nihilo nihil fit*—“Out of nothing, nothing comes.” When scientists ascribe absolute power to nothing, they are creating myths. Here, chance is the “magic wand to make not only rabbits but entire universes appear out of nothing.” (Ankerberg and Weldon)

- F. Since obviously the universe did not create itself, that only leaves one possibility.
1. The only reasonable explanation for the existence of the universe is that it was created or caused to exist.

# Godhead

2. There simply must be a *first cause*, and nothing has the ability to cause itself (Benesh 68).
3. The Bible ascribes that first cause to God (Genesis 1:1; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 8:3; 33:6; 102:25; Proverbs 3:19; Hebrews 3:4; 11:3).
4. However, admittedly God must be eternal and Himself forever existent *without a first cause*.

One may ask, however, if everything in the universe has to have a cause, then what caused God? Many have asked this question and all of them have made the same mistake. The fallacy here is one of category. Events do not happen without a cause. However, God, who is neither an event nor an unnecessary (contingent) being, does not need a cause. God has no beginning and no end, as our universe and existence. (Benesh 82)

- G. That the first cause is a personal being, God, becomes evident through appreciation of the existence of morals and intelligent design in the universe.

## II. The existence of morals proves that God exists.

- A. Reasoning that God exists from consideration of the existence of morals is called the *Anthropological Argument*.

1. *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines "anthropology" as "the science of human beings; especially : the study of human beings in relation to distribution, origin, classification, and relationship of races, physical character, environmental and *social relations*, and *culture*" (emphasis added).

2. Another definition reads: "The scientific study of the origin, the behavior, and the physical, *social, and cultural development of humans*" ("Anthropology" emphasis added).

- B. The theory of evolution as an explanation for origins is incapable of producing human morality.

1. With brother Harrub we concur:

It is impossible for matter—by itself—to evolve a system of moral "right" and "wrong." Yet, man recognizes right and wrong. The question arises from whence did moral originate? ...in order for something to be "right" or "wrong" demands that there is an absolute standard for morality. ... (1) either they [morals] were conjured up and created by man; or (2) they originated with God. (Harrub 15).

2. Evolutionary theory of the survival of the fittest is essentially "Might makes right," "What's yours is mine if I can take it" and "every man is a law unto himself" (Judges 17:6; 21:25).



## Godhead

3. The only restraint under the system of survival of the fittest is self-preservation in not provoking someone tougher than oneself.
  4. Completely absent from survival of the fittest is compassion, sexual morality, etc.
- C. The universality of morality among humans speaks to a single source of morality beyond any individual mortals.

The human race experiences a sense of morality that when compared is very similar no matter the location on the globe. This cannot be the result of self-invention; thus, the source for morality must be from *outside* of mankind. (Phillips 191)

1. "The existence of a world-wide system of morals is excellent proof that God exists" (Harrub 15).
  2. Only a superhuman Being (God) could possibly mold a universal moral code and instill it within all of humanity.
- D. The vehicle or mechanism of moral judgment or a sense of morality is one's conscience.
1. No purely material or evolutionary explanation can account for the capacity of conscience.
  2. From the conscience only proceeds the sense of "ought" or moral obligation.
  3. A conscience can be misinformed and thereby allow what it should not and prohibit what it need not, but the conscience is still there.
  4. A conscience may be ignored until it hardens and its voice is little heard, but the conscience is an innate part of humanity (1 Timothy 4:2).
  5. A person may not want a conscience or he may desire to refuse morality, but each human debuts, howbeit involuntarily, with a conscience of an unspoken moral code of ethics that surpasses his own devising.
- E. Believing in evolution as an explanation of origins instead of biblical creation has resulted in gross immorality (Romans 1:19-32).
1. "It seems pretty clear that an evolutionary explanation will not provide a foundation for morality. ...On the other hand, it seems that the evolutionary explanation may undermine commitment [Australian spelling] to morality" (Kilcullen).
  2. Expunging God from American society has replaced morality with amorality, a void of awareness of any ethical code to which anyone is accountable.
  3. Removing God from the classroom, from our legislatures and from courtrooms amounts to a self-fulfilling prophecy of evolutionary thought—the survival of the fittest.
  4. We have exchanged God and His Bible in schools for guns and con-

# Godhead

doms, etc.

5. We did not start out as monkeys as evolutionists claim, but evolutionists are turning mankind into a bunch of monkeys and beasts.

### III. The existence of design in the universe proves that God exists.

- A. Reasoning that God exists from consideration of the existence of design in the universe is called the *Teleological Argument*.

1. *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines "teleology" as "the study of evidences of design in nature."

2. A definition for "Teleological Argument" is "an argument for the existence of God or a creator based on perceived evidence of order, purpose, design and/or direction in nature" ("Teleological").

3. "The argument for design simply stated notes where there is purposeful design, there must be a Designer" (Board 288).

- B. Design in the starry universe proves that God exists.

1. Our planet is a small speck in a universe so vast that it is incomprehensible.

We live in a tremendously large Universe. While its outer limits have not been measured, it is estimated to be as much as 20 billion light years in diameter. [A light-year is the distance that light travels in a vacuum in one year at a speed of slightly more than 186,000 miles per second. ... There are an estimated one billion galaxies in the Universe (Lawton, 1981), and an estimated 25 sextillion stars. The Milky Way galaxy in which we live contains over 100 billion stars, and is so large that even traveling at the speed of light would require 100,000 years to cross its diameter. (Thompson)

2. The position of the earth exactly where it is in relationship to our sun keeps it from being incinerated or frozen.

If the Earth were moved just 10% closer to the Sun (about 10 million miles), far too much radiation (and heat) would be absorbed. If the Earth were moved just 10% farther from the Sun, too little heat would be absorbed. Either scenario would spell doom for life on the Earth. ... The Earth is rotating on its axis at 1,000 miles per hour at the equator, and moving around the Sun at 70,000 miles per hour (approximately 19 miles per second), while the Sun and its solar system are moving through space at 600,000 miles per hour in an orbit so large it would take over 226 million years just to complete a single orbit. This rotation provides periods of light and darkness—a phenomenon neces-

## Godhead

sary for sustaining life as we know it. If the Earth rotated much faster, fierce cyclones would stir over the Earth like a kitchen food-mixer. If the Earth turned significantly slower, the days and nights would be impossibly hot or cold. ... The Earth's orbit is not a perfect circle, however, but is elliptical. This means that sometimes the Earth is closer to the Sun than at other times. In January, the Earth is closest to the Sun; in July, it is farthest away. When it is closer, the Earth "speeds up" to avoid being pulled into the Sun; when it is farther away, it "slows down," so that it remains in a position in space that is "just right." ... Interestingly, as the Earth moves in its orbit around the Sun, it departs from a straight line by only one-ninth of an inch every eighteen miles. If it departed by one-eighth of an inch, we would come so close to the Sun that we would be incinerated; if it departed by one-tenth of an inch, we would find ourselves so far from the Sun that we would all freeze to death... The Earth is tilted on its axis at exactly 23.5 degrees. If it were not tilted, but sat straight up in its orbit around the Sun, there would be no seasons. (Thompson)

3. The position of the oceans and continents on the earth as well as their proportions to each other are just right to produce beneficial weather patterns on the planet.

The Earth's oceans are another good example of perfect design. Water covers about 72% of the Earth's surface, which is good because the oceans provide a reservoir of moisture that constantly is evaporating and condensing. Eventually, this causes rain to fall on the Earth. It is a well-known fact that water heats and cools at a much slower rate than a solid land mass, which explains why desert regions can be blistering hot in the daytime and freezing cold at night. Water, however, holds its temperature longer, and provides a sort of natural heating/air-conditioning system for the land areas of the Earth. The Earth's annual average temperature (56°F; 13.3°C) is closely maintained by the great reservoir of heat found within the waters of the oceans. Temperature extremes would be much more erratic than they are, were it not for the fact that approximately four-fifths of the Earth is covered with water. (Thompson)

A casual look at any world map shows that most of the land-mass of planet earth is in the Northern Hemisphere. This natu-

## Godhead

rally leaves most of the Southern Hemisphere covered by water. Water has a large heat capacity, whereas land does not. This means that water both absorbs and releases a lot of heat slowly. Landmasses, on the other hand, do just the opposite. Therefore, when the Southern Hemisphere is close to the sun, most of the sun's intense heat is dissipated when it reflects off the water. Some of the heat that the water does absorb is circulated to the colder Northern Hemisphere by ocean currents. If water were not concentrated in the Southern Hemisphere, this heat dissipation and transfer system would not work. These two properties, working in conjunction with the earth's tilted axis, help to moderate global temperatures. The northern landmass area absorbs maximum solar energy when the earth is farthest from the sun, while the southern waters both store and reflect heat when the earth is closest. (Clayton and Jansma 26)

- C. Design in the animal and plant world proves that God exists.
1. Consider the immediately necessary and essential exchange of carbon dioxide and oxygen between animals and plants.

In addition, humans and animals inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. On the other hand, plants take in carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. We depend upon the world of botany for our oxygen supply, yet we often fail to realize that approximately 90% of our oxygen comes from microscopic plants in the seas (see Asimov, 1975, 2:116). If our oceans were appreciably smaller, we soon would be out of air to breathe. (Thompson)

2. Second, consider this unusual creature, the Bombardier Beetle.

The bombardier beetle has two glands in the abdomen that it uses to make and store two chemicals, hydroquinone and hydrogen peroxide. ...When the beetle is about to be attacked by a frog, mouse or other insect, he quickly squirts some of the mixture into twin combustion tubes, which can be aimed in a 360-degree radius. These tubes secrete two special chemicals called enzymes that cause a change in the mixture. ...The chemical reaction that occurs leads up to the explosive finale. ...As this reaction occurs, heat is given off which brings the liquid to boiling at 212 degrees Fahrenheit and builds up a great deal of pressure. The combustion tube has valves at the outside that can be closed until the pressure rises sufficiently to expel the liquid a fair distance giving off an audible "pop" as it does

## Godhead

so. It is this mixture that is expelled into the mouth and face of an attacker. ...The question must now be asked, "How did this beetle get such an extravagant mechanism of self-defense?" The evolutionist must believe in millions of small accidents and changes to get this mechanism. Yet, why would a beetle evolve any of this mechanism if it did not produce a beneficial result the first time it was used? The mixture is of no use without the enzymes. The enzymes are of no use without the mixture. The mixture and enzymes are of no use without the combustion tube. The combustion tube is of no use without the valves to control direction and build up pressure. This could go on and on, but what it really means is that there is no way that this defensive mechanism could come about unless it all happened at once. An impossibility for evolution, a simple matter for the Great Designer! "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 14:1). (Everson, "Bombardier")

### 3. Third, consider this unusual plant, the Venus Fly Trap.

The structure that it uses is a modified leaf. It is hinged at the middle to form a trap. The outside of the trap is lined with long pike-like extensions that form a nice barred cage long before the trap has completely closed. The inside of the trap is lined with very important trigger hairs. These hairs are the "eyes" of the trap. The cells lining the leaf have special digestive enzymes that can be secreted when a victim is caught. ...Now, for the bait, this complex mechanism is not just a bare trap that snaps randomly or when a luckless insect falls into it. It is baited with a chemical produced by the cells that smells for all the world like rotting meat. ...When the proper signal has been sent, the cells on the outside of the leaf begin growing at a very rapid rate. With growth on the outside, but not on the inside, the leaf, in effect, closes on itself, curling inward. The opposite would be true when the trap needs to open. The cells on the inside grow and push the trap open. ...Once the leaf has trapped an insect, the plant will press both sides of the leaf tightly against its victim. The release of digestive enzymes then dissolves the prey. Once the insect is gone, the leaf then opens again to wait for another luckless victim. Indeed, this is a marvelous system that has been designed and should cause each of us to wonder at the miracles of the creation. The Venus Fly Trap is also an example of how hard it is to imagine a method of evolution

# Godhead

by accidents happening over thousands and thousands of years.  
(Everson, *And God Created*)

D. Design in mankind proves that God exists.

1. Consider the humble cell in the human body for its complexity and design, which before the arrival of modern instruments was simply considered a “black box” or comparable to a blob of Jell-O.
2. “The term ‘black box’ was employed as a symbolic expression ‘for a device that does something, but whose inner workings are mysterious’” (Jackson, “Science”).
3. However, many of the secrets of the cell have been discovered, with those discoveries *the end of the road* respecting design or complexity in nature.

...because *irreducible complexity* occurs at the biochemical level, there is no more fundamental level of biological analysis to which the irreducible complexity of biochemical systems can be referred... (Behe qtd. in Thompson and Harrub, “Molecular” emphasis added)

4. Simply, that means there are no more black boxes; we have arrived at *irreducible complexity* or *design* that proves an Intelligent Designer.
5. “What we are looking for... is not just complex arrangement of parts, but *irreducible* complexity. We want to dig down deep enough until we find no more black boxes” (Major).
6. The key to the proof for an Intelligent Designer in *irreducible complexity* or *design* is that undeniably all of the parts that make the whole are unique (serve no other purpose) and necessary (existence is impossible without all of the unique parts working in perfect harmony).

By irreducibly complex, I mean a single system composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning. (Behe qtd. in Thompson and Harrub, “Molecular”)

When special kinds of scientists—people such as biochemists—open up the black boxes of molecular machines, blood coagulation, and the metabolic pathway... they fail to find still smaller black boxes. At some point they run into “irreducible complexity”—*a single system which, if any part were removed or crippled, would cease to perform its obvious function.* (Major emphasis added)

# Godhead

7. Consequently, true science proves the existence of an Intelligent Designer, who is God.

As modern science has acquired the ability to see deeper and deeper into the natural world, problems with the waning theory of evolution continue to plague its proponents. A multiplicity of natural, biological systems exhibit complexity that could not have arisen through natural, evolutionary processes. In response to these findings, the Intelligent Design movement has begun to gain major footholds in academic circles. In a nutshell, intelligent design suggests that many natural systems are too complex to have evolved. (Butt)

## Conclusion:

1. A number of independent but related lines of reasoning each conclude based on fair treatment of evidence that God exists.
  - a. Collectively, independent lines of reasoning that conclude that God exists are a formidable testimony to the existence of God.
  - b. The very existence of the universe proves the existence of God.
  - c. "The existence of a world-wide system of morals is excellent proof that God exists" (Harrub 15).
  - d. The existence of design in the universe proves that God exists.
2. Some of the most highly educated people on the planet, sometimes reluctantly, acknowledge that the universe bears unmistakable evidence of having been made by an Intelligent Designer.

Australian astrophysicist Paul Davies, in his book, *The Cosmic Blueprint*, opined: here is for me powerful evidence that there is something going on behind it all.... It seems as though somebody has fine-tuned nature's numbers to make the Universe.... ***The impression of design is overwhelming*** (1988, p. 203, emp. added). (qtd. in Thompson and Harrub, "Our Finely Tuned")

British cosmologist Sir Fred Hoyle wrote: A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question (1982, 20:16). (qtd. in Thompson and Harrub, "Our Finely Tuned")

- a. Prominent cosmologist Frank Tipler wrote:

# Godhead

When I began my career as a cosmologist some twenty years ago, I was a convinced atheist. I never in my wildest dreams imagined that one day I would be writing a book purporting to show that the central claims of Judeo-Christian theology are in fact true, that these claims are straightforward deductions of the laws of physics as we now understand them. I have been forced into these conclusions by the inexorable logic of my own special branch of physics (1994, preface). (qtd. in Thompson and Harrub, "Our Finely Tuned")

In 1995, NASA astronomer John O'Keefe stated in an interview: We are, by astronomical standards, a pampered, cosseted, cherished group of creatures. ...If the Universe had not been made with the most exacting precision we could never have come into existence. It is my view that these circumstances indicate the universe was created for man to live in (as quoted in Heeren, 1995, p. 200). (qtd. in Thompson and Harrub, "Our Finely Tuned")

- b. British molecular biologist Michael Denton wrote in his 1998 book, *Nature's Destiny*:

Whether one accepts or rejects the design hypothesis...there is no avoiding the conclusion that the world **looks** as if it has been tailored for life; it **appears to have been designed**. All reality appears to be a vast, coherent, teleological whole with life and mankind as its purpose and goal (p. 387, emp. in orig.). (qtd. in Thompson and Harrub, "Our Finely Tuned" emphasis added)

- c. Michael J. Murray summarized the reluctance of scientists to acknowledge an Intelligent Designer in the design or complexity they observe in the universe.

Almost **everything about the basic structure of the universe**—for example, the fundamental laws and parameters of physics and the initial distribution of matter and energy—**is balanced on a razor's edge** for life to occur. ...Scientists call this extraordinary balancing of the parameters of physics and the initial conditions of the universe the "fine-tuning of the cosmos" (1999, p. 48, emp. added). (qtd. in Thompson and Harrub "Our Finely Tuned" emphasis added)

- d. "The 'design' of nature seems so compelling. The more one learns about how things have been 'put together,' the more difficult it becomes to



# Godhead

deny the logic of intelligent design” (Jackson, “Skepticism”).

- e. It’s only a small step with a lot of courage that hinders many of these outstanding thinkers to admit that the Intelligent Designer is God.
- f. The evidence for the existence of God in the created universe is overwhelming (Psalm 19:1 NIV; Romans 1:19-20).

## Invitation:

1. The God who created the universe invites you and me to come home to live with Him forever.
2. Eternal habitation with Almighty God in His heavenly home is conditional (Acts 17:24-31; 2:38; 8:22).

## Works Cited

- Ankerberg, John and John Weldon. “The Evolution of Life, Probability Considerations and Common Sense, Part 7.” *Ankerberg Theological Research Institute*. 19 Jan. 2007 <[http://www.johnankerberg.org/Articles/\\_PDFArchives/science/SC1W0502.pdf](http://www.johnankerberg.org/Articles/_PDFArchives/science/SC1W0502.pdf)>.
- “Anthropology.” *The Free Dictionary*. Farlex, Inc. 19 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/anthropology>>.
- Benesh, Edward. “The Causal Argument Proves God Exists.” *Christian Evidences*. Louis Rushmore, ed. Moundsville: West Virginia School of Preaching, 2005: 64-91.
- Board, John F. “The Design Argument.” *Christian Evidences*. Louis Rushmore, ed. Moundsville: West Virginia School of Preaching, 2005: 285-302.
- Butt, Kyle. “Evolution, *Intelligent Design and Testability*.” *ApologeticsPress.org* 20 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/2778>>.
- Clayton, John and Nils Jansma. *The Source*. West Monroe: Howard, 2001.
- “Cosmology.” *Wikipedia*. 19 Jan. 2007 <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmology>>.
- Everson, David P. *And God Created*. Cameron: Rushmore, 2005.
- - -. “The Bombardier Beetle.” *Gospel Gazette Online* May 2001. 20 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.gospelgazette.com/gazette/2001/may/page5.htm>>.
- Hall, Francis J. “Cosmology.” *Theological Outlines*. 9 Aug. 2005. *disseminary.org*. 19 Jan. 2007 <[http://disseminary.org/hoopoe/dogma/2005/08/q\\_2\\_doctrine\\_of.html](http://disseminary.org/hoopoe/dogma/2005/08/q_2_doctrine_of.html)>.
- Harrub, Brad. *Think*. 2.1 (2007): 14-15.
- Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1. (1878) CD-ROM. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2005.
- Jackson, Wayne. “Science and Faith: The Budding Romance.” 1 Jun. 1999 *ChristianCourier.com*. 20 Jan. 2007 <[http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/read/science\\_and\\_faith\\_the\\_budding\\_romance](http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/read/science_and_faith_the_budding_romance)>.
- - -. “Skepticism Abandons Logic.” 18 Feb. 2002 *ChristianCourier.com* 20 Jan. 2007 <[http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/read/skepticism\\_abandons\\_logic](http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/read/skepticism_abandons_logic)>.
- Kilcullen, John. “Can Evolution Explain Morality?” 1996 *Macquarie University*. 19 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.humanities.mq.edu.au/Ockham/y641052.html>>.
- Major, Trevor. “The Design’s in the Details.” Oct. 1996 *ApologeticsPress.org* 20 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/2459>>.
- Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. CD-ROM. Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 1993.
- “Nihilo.” *infoplease*. 19 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.infoplease.com/dictionary/brewers/nihilo>>.

# Godhead

html>.

- Phillips, Michael E. "The Moral Argument Proves God Exists." *Christian Evidences*. Louis Rushmore, ed. Moundsville: West Virginia School of Preaching, 2005: 189-194.
- Taylor, Paul S. "Second Law of Thermodynamics: Does the Basic Law of Nature Prevent Evolution?" *ChristianAnswers.Net* 19 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.christiananswers.net/q-edn/edn-thermodynamics.html>>.
- "Teleological Argument." *Wikipedia*. 19 Jan. 2007 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teleological\\_argument](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teleological_argument)>.
- Thompson, Bert. "Design in Nature—The Teleological Argument." *ApologeticsPress.org*. 19 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/1969>>.
- Thompson, Bert and Brad Harrub. "Molecular Evidence of Human Origins, Part II." May 2005 *ApologeticsPress.org* 20 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/2734>>.
- "Our Finely Tuned Universe." Jun. 2003 *ApologeticsPress.org* 19 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/53>>.

## The Promise of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

John 14:26

**Thesis:** To briefly analyze passages that predict the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit by the apostles of Christ.

### Introduction:

1. The following is an overview of prophetic and predictive references about the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit by the apostles of Christ.
  - a. We will examine both general and specific predictive references to the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit by the apostles.
  - b. The prophets whose messages we will consider include those of Joel, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
2. These prophetic messages find their fulfillment, respectively, in part or wholly in the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles of Christ.
  - a. These biblical references appear in both testaments of the Bible.
  - b. The correlation between prophecy and fulfillment regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles justifies one's faith in God, His Word and His plan for man.
  - c. Prophecy and fulfillment do for the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles what they do for confirmation of other cardinal doctrines of Christianity (e.g., the birth of Jesus Christ, the ministry of Christ, the death and resurrection of Christ), which were brought about by Divine foreknowledge, providence and intervention.
3. We expect to emphasize the specific promises by Jesus Christ to His apostles regarding their baptism with the Holy Spirit.
  - a. We will address how promises made *exclusively* to the apostles regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit can appear in the same context with other promises that are applicable to Christians in every generation.
  - b. We also will enumerate the specified role of the Holy Spirit, working in conjunction with the apostles after their Spirit baptism.

### Body:

- I. **Consider the following overview of prophetic and predictive references to the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit by the apostles of Christ.**
  - A. Joel 2:28-32 is a general prophecy inclusive of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
    1. That Joel's prophecy is predictive of the baptism of the Holy Spirit

## Godhead

- upon the apostles of Christ is evident because the apostle Peter by inspiration confirmed it (Acts 2:1-4, 16-21).
- a. Acts 2:1-4 records the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the 12 apostles (Acts 1:26).
  - b. Acts 2:16 begins with “this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.”
2. However, it is apparent that the Joel prophecy includes more than a reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles.
- a. Recipients of miraculous power according to the prophecy as it is recorded in Joel and quoted by Peter (and recorded by Luke) include persons who were not the recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 (e.g., “all flesh,” young and old, women).
  - b. Therefore, the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles was a partial and the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecy in Joel 2:28-32.
  - c. Joel 2:28-32 was completely fulfilled when others besides the apostles also received miraculous power, including women and Gentiles (Acts 8:14-17; 21:9; 10:45).
- B. Matthew 3:11 is a general prophecy inclusive of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
1. Three separate baptisms are addressed in Matthew 3:11.
    - a. John’s baptism, which he was administering.
    - b. A then future baptism of the Holy Spirit to be administered by Jesus Christ.
    - c. A then future baptism of punitive, destructive fire to be administered by Jesus Christ.
  2. The audience to whom John the Baptist spoke in Matthew 3 was comprised of various individuals, to whom the baptisms of which John spoke also variously applied.
    - a. The general populace surrounding Jerusalem and in Judaea was there and was being baptized by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:5-6).
    - b. Wicked Pharisees and Sadducees were also present (Matthew 3:7-8).
    - c. Some of the future apostles of Christ were apparently present, then being disciples of John the Baptist (i.e., at least some of the disciples of John the Baptist subsequently became disciples of Jesus Christ, John 1:35-42).
  3. Incidentally, the baptism of fire is as punitive and destructive as the references to fire in the verses on either side of Matthew 3:11.
    - a. In verse 10, fruitless trees by which John described the Pharisees and Sadducees were burned—destroyed with fire.
    - b. In verse 12, the waste products from the harvest were to be burned with fire after their separation from the grain.

# Godhead

- c. Therefore, the reference to fire in verse 11 is also destructive and punitive; it is applied to impenitent souls, such as the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
- d. As such, then, the baptism of fire equates to the eternal fire of a devil's hell to which the ungodly will be consigned at the Great Judgment; this baptism is yet future.
- C. Mark 9:1 is a general prophecy inclusive of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
  - 1. This verse aptly describes the birthday of the church in Acts 2, inaugurated with the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the apostles of Christ.
    - a. The passage defines the timetable for the establishment of the church within the lifespans of those listening to Jesus speak.
    - b. The power with which the Lord's kingdom would be established was distinguished from the usual circumstances with which earthly kingdom's arise and sustain themselves.
  - 2. Other predictive passages and biblical references to their fulfillment clarify the power mentioned in Mark 9:1.
    - a. The recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit are not herein identified.
    - b. The nature, purpose and manifestations of this "power" are not here mentioned.
- D. John 14-16 is a specific prophecy of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of Christ.
  - 1. At great length, Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit **exclusively** to His apostles.
  - 2. Since the major thrust of this discourse pertains to these three chapters, we will address this context more thoroughly after we notice some additional prophecies of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of Christ.
- E. Luke 24:49 is a specific prophecy of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of Christ.
  - 1. Here, Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit **exclusively** to His apostles.
    - a. This was an extension and a repetition of His promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon his apostles, which we read in John 14-16.
    - b. This passage corresponds to Luke's continuation of the narrative that records this same discourse in Acts 1:8.
  - 2. Based on Luke 24:49, no student of the Bible would expect anyone besides the apostles alone to be recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
    - a. One, therefore, is not surprised that only the apostles in Acts 2:1-4 received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
    - b. Though, one should be surprised were the event occurring in Acts

# Godhead

10-11 at the house of Cornelius to be dubbed the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.”

- c. Careful examination of predictive passages pertaining to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the event at the house of Cornelius would preclude saying that Cornelius, his family and friends received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- F. Acts 1:8 is a specific prophecy of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of Christ.
1. This verse records our Lord’s remarks to His apostles immediately preceding his Ascension.
    - a. Essentially, these words in Acts are a part of the overlap in the continuation of Luke’s narrative to Theophilus in the books of Luke and Acts.
    - b. Here, Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit *exclusively* to His apostles.
    - c. This was an extension and a repetition of his promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon His apostles, which we read in John 14-16.
  2. Based on Acts 1:8, no student of the Bible would expect anyone besides the apostles alone to be recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
    - a. One, therefore, is not surprised that only the apostles in Acts 2:1-4 received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
    - b. Though, one should be surprised were the event occurring in Acts 10-11 at the house of Cornelius to be dubbed the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.”
    - c. Careful examination of predictive passages pertaining to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the event at the house of Cornelius would preclude saying that Cornelius, his family and friends received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
  3. Acts 1:8 also alludes to the empowerment by the Holy Spirit whereby the apostles could effectively serve as apostles of Christ.
    - a. The apostles were perfect witnesses because they had been so long with Jesus during His personal ministry.
    - b. The apostles were the perfect heralds of the Gospel of the resurrected Christ because they were by the Holy Spirit caused to remember what Jesus had said to them, and they were guided into all truth.
    - c. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the apostles were to take the universal Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:15-16).
- II. John chapters 14-16 promise the baptism of the Holy Spirit exclusively to the apostles of Christ.**
- A. Though the baptism of the Holy Spirit in this passage was promised only to the apostles, other promises in these three chapters are applicable to

# Godhead

Christians in every generation—including today.

1. Only the apostles of Christ were present when the discourse of John 14-16 was made (John 13:1ff).
2. The *specific* promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is *exclusively* promised to the apostles.
  - a. There is no promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit *where that baptism and the recipients are indicated* includes anyone besides the apostles of Christ.
  - b. The exclusive application of this promise to the apostles is not modified by any passages outside the context of John 14-16.
  - c. Therefore, only the apostles were to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
  - d. Accordingly, the only undisputed, recorded fulfillment of the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit involves the apostles of Christ alone (Acts 2:1-4).
3. John 14:1-3 promises that Jesus is preparing heaven as an eternal habitation for the apostles of Christ.
  - a. The apostles are included in the provision of eternal heaven, but they are not the exclusive candidates for heaven.
  - b. It is true, of course, that the apostles alone comprised the audience to whom the promise of heaven was made *on this occasion*.
  - c. However, the promise of heaven, in other passages, is not limited to the apostles, but includes all of God's faithful children (Colossians 1:5; Philippians 3:20; 1 Peter 1:3-4).
  - d. Therefore, it is clear how a portion of John 14-16 (namely the baptism of the Holy Spirit) can apply exclusively to the apostles while other portions of the same context also apply to Christians today.
- B. John 14:13-14 apply to only to the apostles.
  1. This promise to fulfill miscellaneous requests pertains exclusively to the apostles and corresponds to the exclusive promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the apostles.
    - a. The requests, which when made, that Jesus would fulfill pertained to and were limited to the execution of the work of the apostles.
    - b. In context, this promise does not pertain to other legitimate prayerful requests that the children of God might make today.
    - c. The scope of this promise was to enable the apostles to adequately fulfill the mission for which Jesus had selected them.
    - d. "This promise referred particularly to the apostles in their work of spreading the Gospel" (Barnes).
  2. This promise to the apostles is similar to the special apostolic responsibilities contained in Matthew 18:18-19.

## Godhead

- a. In both passages, divine assistance is promised whereby the apostles could fulfill their apostolic duties.
  - b. In both passages, acknowledgment by the apostles of the divine origin of the special assistance was a prerequisite to its reception and use.
- C. John 14:16-17, 26 apply only to the apostles.

1. The “Comforter” is identified in verse 26 as the Holy Spirit.
  - a. The Greek word here translated “Comforter” appears five times in the Bible, all by the pen of the apostle John (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1).
  - b. The first four occurrences are applied in Holy Writ to the Holy Spirit, whereas the final appearance is applied to Jesus Christ.
  - c. The Greek word has a number of subtle variations in meaning whereby it could be rendered “helper” or “advocate,” too.

The role of intercession has certain legal implications, and accordingly *parakletos* is justifiably related to legal procedures... The principal difficulty encountered in rendering *parakletos* is the fact that this term covers potentially such a wide area of meaning. The traditional rendering of ‘Comforter’ is especially misleading because it suggests only one very limited aspect of what the Holy Spirit does. A term such as ‘Helper’ is highly generic... A rendering based upon the concept of legal advocate seems in most instances to be too restrictive. (Louw and Nida)

The idea that the advocacy takes place both in heaven and on earth is also common to the OT and Judaism. On balance it seems that the NT usage is more closely linked to the ‘advocate’ concept of the OT than to the ‘helper’ concept of the Mandaean world. (Kittel and Friedrich)

- d. “*Paraclete*” literally means “a call to one’s side.”
  - e. From John’s usage of this term, it is apparent that the Holy Spirit is an advocate or legal counsel for the sinner at the bar of God, as Romans 8:26 also teaches.
2. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit share the same role as the verse reads “another Comforter.”
    - a. The Greek word for “another” is “*allon*,” which means “another of the same kind.”
    - b. Therefore, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are both “*paracletes*” or advocates for faithful children of God.
    - c. The apostle John precisely taught this in 1 John 2:1 when he used



# Godhead

- “*paraclete*,” there (translated “Advocate”) regarding Christ as the Christian’s legal counsel before the bar of God because of man’s sin.
- d. As the word indicates, Jesus in 1 John 2:1 and the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John and Romans 8:26 plead our case before the Father.
  - e. As such, the Holy Spirit is as much a person and not a mere influence as Jesus Christ is a person and a member of the Godhead.
3. The teaching all things and causing them to remember the sayings of Jesus pertains to the ministry of the apostles.
- a. This was to furnish the apostles for their unique ministry.
  - b. This activity of the Holy Spirit applied **only** to the apostles and does not pertain to any Christians today.
  - c. The “all things” is limited by whatever pertained to the apostolic mission and did not extend to other matters or make the apostles omniscient.
  - d. The Holy Spirit is eminently qualified to reveal the mind of God because He knows the “deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10).
  - e. This verse amounts to the declaration of divine inspiration for the apostles, as Jesus earlier promised in Matthew 10:19-20.
- D. John 15:16 applies only to the apostles.
1. Reference to those specially chosen by Jesus and set apart or appointed to certain duties clearly indicates that the verses and the immediate context apply exclusively to the apostles.
  2. Their fruit would remain in the sense that their labors would permanently affect the Christian religion.
    - a. Once more, the authority of the apostles comes to mind as it is expressed in Matthew 18:18.
    - b. The words of Jesus in Matthew 19:28 indicated that the role of the apostles was permanent, even surviving them after their deaths.
    - c. The apostles possess as much authority in religion today as they ever did, and we are thereby obligated to abide in the “apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42).
  3. As we have already stated regarding John 14:13-14, these petitions and subsequent fulfillment, in this context, apply exclusively to the apostles and their special ministry in the early church.
- E. John 15:26-27 apply only to the apostles.
1. Jesus in verse 26 affirms that He would send the Holy Spirit (baptism) to the apostles.
    - a. Formerly in John 14:16 and 26, Jesus stated that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to the apostles.
    - b. Rather than a contradiction, the verses indicate the unity and oneness of the Godhead, as well as the Godhead’s oneness in purpose.

## Godhead

2. The Holy Spirit is designated as the "Spirit of Truth" since the Spirit's mission toward man and namely the apostles was to reveal the truth of God.
    - a. The vehicle of transmission of the mind of God to mortal man, which Jesus promised would unfold through the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon His apostles, was absolutely necessary to equip the church.
    - b. Without this divine mechanism for the revelation of the mind of God to man, fallible, mortal human beings could not possibly have presented a flawless and complete revelation from God.
    - c. Without divine inspiration that is implied in these verses, one could not know either the blessings or the punishments God has reserved for mankind; one could not know how to correctly worship or serve God; one could not know definitively how to participate in his own redemption and otherwise prepare for death and judgment; one could not know how to practice Christian living.
    - d. The promises to the apostles in John 14-16 equate to the New Testament version of the Old Testament inspiration affirmed in 2 Peter 1:20.
  3. The words "proceedeth from the Father" literally mean that the Spirit was to come from "beside the Father," as opposed from any place or position that would relegate the Holy Spirit to anything less than equality with the other persons of the Godhead.
    - a. The Bible teaches that there are three persons in one Godhead (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:18-20).
    - b. The doctrine of the Trinity is not taught any more forcefully anywhere than it is in John 14-16.
    - c. That the Father, Son and Spirit are distinct persons and that each has a role in the redemption of man, but in unison with the other two persons of the Godhead, is clearly and undeniably taught in John 14-16.
  4. The mission of the Holy Spirit toward the apostles is further unfolded.
    - a. The Holy Spirit was not to initiate a new ministry or system of religion or bring a different Gospel (Galatians 1:6-9).
    - b. The mission of the Holy Spirit toward the apostles was to confirm and augment the ministry of Jesus Christ.
  5. The phrase "ye have been with me from the beginning" further determines that the immediate context (relative to the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit) pertained exclusively to the apostles of Christ.
- F. John 16:7-8 apply only to the apostles.
1. There were several reasons for which it was "expedient" for Jesus to "go away."

## Godhead

The establishment of a world-wide religion with benefits of salvation from sin and eternal life for all humanity would have been impossible if the head of it had remained on earth, limited by earthly conditions, physically present at only one place at a time, inaccessible unless approached through other men... (Coffman)

That by his departure, his death, and ascension—by having these great facts before their eyes—they would be led by the Holy Spirit to see more fully the design of his coming than they would by his presence. ...*It was an evident arrangement in the great plan of redemption that each of the persons of the Trinity should perform a part.* (Barnes)

With their false ideas of an earthly political kingdom with Jesus their King, nothing could have seemed harder to receive than this. They might submit to the inevitable, but that the departure of Jesus should be expedient—desirable—this was too hard to receive” (Lipscomb 252).

What then seemed a crushing sorrow was a real blessing (Johnson 241).

The original for “depart” is the idea of leaving for a *purpose* (Vincent).

2. In verse 8, the mission of the Holy Spirit to the apostles was through them to “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

In the NT the use [of ‘reprove’ John 16:8] is restricted. With the accusative of person it means “*to show people their sins and summon them to repentance...*” (Kittel and Friedrich)

- a. God’s prophets in all ages were divinely inspired to convict the world of sins, offer pardon and strongly affirm that the judgment of God is pending.
  - b. None of God’s servants were so bold based on mere human authority, but by divine authority they *condemned sin and demanded repentance!*
  - c. Acts 2:36-38 in the New Testament on the inaugural day of the Lord’s church demonstrates this pattern.
- G. John 16:13-14 apply only to the apostles.
1. The mission of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, as noted already, includes the declaration of the Gospel truth.
    - a. It is important to remember that the verse before us was addressed

## Godhead

exclusively to the apostles and that the Holy Spirit does not guide Christians today into all truth, except through the New Testament.

“He shall guide...” indicates a progressive revelation from one level to higher levels; and thus Revelation with its prophecies of the future exceeds what the apostles at first knew. (Coffman)

Enigmas would be solved, mysteries would be clear (Johnson).

- b. The words “all truth” certify the complete instructional sufficiency of the Word of God—namely here the New Testament.
  - c. Again, the emphasis appears that there is a system of faith ‘once and for all delivered to the saints’ to which the Holy Spirit was to limit His expression (Jude 3).
  - d. The Holy Spirit confirmed and elaborated on the ministry of Christ, but He did not provide alternative or ‘other gospels’ (Galatians 1:6-9).
2. The phrase “things to come” is limited by the revelations pertinent to the Christian religion.
- a. The apostles were not promised knowledge of future events not strictly related to the development of New Testament Christianity.
  - b. “That is, truth which pertained to the establishment of the Christian system...” (Barnes).
- H. John 16:23-24 apply only to the apostles.
1. The apostles would not ask questions of Jesus as they had before, for a number of reasons.
    - a. According to Vincent, the verb for “ask” that first appears in verse 23 is the idea of “continuous asking.”
    - b. The apostles would be unable physically to petition Jesus after His departure as they had while with Him in His ministry.
    - c. Further, after receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the apostles would have a more complete and infallible knowledge of God’s will so that they would not need to ask questions as before.
  2. After the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, petitions the apostle might have were to be directed to the Father.
    - a. In this context, the reference applies to the apostles alone.
    - b. By the authority of heaven, the apostles spoke and presented doctrine (Matthew 10:19-20; 18:18-19; Acts 2:42).

This also indicates that the apostles would soon understand the great spiritual verities and would not need to ask, “Where art thou going?” (13:36), or “How can we know the way?” (14:5), or “Show us the Father” (14:8), or “Lord, what has happened that

# Godhead

thou art about to manifest thyself to us and not to the world?" (14:22), or "What is this that he saith, A little while?" (16:18). All such uncertainties would disappear in the light of the events which would, in a matter of hours, be unfolded. (Coffman)

- c. Vincent observes that the phrase "may be full" means "may be having been fulfilled."

## Conclusion:

1. Predictive prophecy regarding the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles appears in both testaments.
  - a. The fulfillment of any predictive prophecy corroborates the fact that the Bible is from God and that it is reliable.
  - b. Therefore, the predictive prophecies regarding the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, now long since fulfilled, contributes to the faith of the children of God in the Bible and to confidence in all of God's promises including those not yet realized (e.g., eternal life in heaven).
  - c. A multitude of prophetic witnesses attest to the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as well as the fulfillment of those prophecies.
2. General and specific prophecies include references to the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of Christ.
  - a. General prophecies where the specific recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit are not named include Joel 2:28-32, Matthew 3:11 and Mark 9:1.
  - b. Specific prophecies where the recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit are designated include Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8 and John 14-16.
3. The apostles of Christ alone received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
  - a. Prophetic references regarding the intended recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit were to the apostles of Christ only.
  - b. The sole undisputed, recorded occasion of the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, in fulfillment of the prophecies, shows that only the apostles received the Spirit baptism.
  - c. No one should expect any others in the first century or since to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
  - d. In part, the event at the house of Cornelius should be evaluated based on the specific promises and the subsequent fulfillment of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.
4. Some topics in John 14-16 do apply to Christians today.
  - a. Only those topics in John 14-16 that are applied also outside the context of John 14-16 to Christians apply today.
  - b. The promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in John 14-16 and the resulting powers and authority apply exclusively to the apostles of Christ.
5. Both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit make intercessions before the bar of God for faithful children of God.
  - a. The Holy Spirit is the Christian's "Advocate" or legal counsel (John 14-16; Romans 8:26).

## Godhead

- b. Jesus Christ is also the Christian's "Advocate" or legal counsel (1 John 2:1).
6. The Holy Spirit (baptism) was the divinely chosen mechanism for providing the inspiration of the New Covenant.
  - a. The apostles were largely charged with the flawless transmission of God's will for man to mankind.
  - b. Without the divine intervention of the Holy Spirit, we would not have a final, absolute standard of authority in religion; ***due to the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles of Christ and their special mission, we do have a final, absolute standard of authority in religion—the Bible*** (and namely for us, the New Testament) (Matthew 19:28).
7. Perfect harmony or unity exists between the three persons of the Godhead.
  - a. Consequently, they each and lastly the Holy Spirit brought the same divine message to mankind.
  - b. The doctrine of the Trinity is established in John 14-16.
  - c. Each person of the Godhead participated in the mission to redeem fallen man.
8. God's servants have the responsibility to condemn sin and demand repentance—based on the authority of God who sends those servants with his message.
  - a. The apostolic authority that animated the first century church is no less effective today (Matthew 19:28).
  - b. The "apostles' doctrine" would have us today assume the same responsibilities toward convicting the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.
9. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was essential to the development of the early church and to biblical authority in every generation—including today.
  - a. The promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit necessarily preceded the actual event.
  - b. The promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a key faith-builder in the child of God.
  - c. The promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit harmoniously has its place in the will of God—much like the exact match of the right piece in the right place in a comprehensive jigsaw puzzle.

### Works Cited

- Barnes, Albert. *Barnes' Notes*. CD-ROM. Seattle: BibleSoft, 1997.
- Coffman, Burton. *James Burton Coffman Bible Study Library*. CD-ROM. Abilene: ACU Press, 1989.
- Johnson, B.W. *A New Testament Commentary*. Vol. III—*John*. Delight: Gospel Light.
- Kittel and Friedrich, editors. *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Abridged in One Volume. CD-ROM. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- Lipscomb, David. *A Commentary on the Gospel According to John*. edited with additional notes by C.E.W. Dorris. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1976.
- Louw, Johannes P. and Eugene A Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*. CD-ROM. New York: United Bible Societies, 1989.

## The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

### Matthew 3:11

**Thesis:** To identify the recipients, nature and manifestations of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to learn whether this baptism can be received today.

#### Introduction:

1. The Old Testament looked forward toward the Pentecost of Acts 2, and Christianity looks back to that Pentecost for its beginning.
  - a. Old Testament prophecy predicted events associated with the Pentecost of Acts 2 (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3).
  - b. The Lord's church came into existence on the Pentecost of Acts 2 (Acts 2:47).
2. Pentecost was an Old Testament Jewish feast that God had ordained as a part of Judaism.
  - a. Also called the Feast of Weeks, Pentecost was one of three annual feasts that Jewish males were required to attend (Exodus 34:22-23).
  - b. Pentecost was observed seven weeks and one day (a total of 50 days) after the Passover Sabbath (Leviticus 23:4-21).
  - c. Hence, Pentecost was always on the first day of the week.
  - d. Visitors to Jerusalem and residents together during Pentecost often would number over a million people.
  - e. That was the likely scene in Jerusalem on the birthday of the Lord's church on the Pentecost of Acts 2.
3. The Pentecost of Acts 2 was unique in that the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit, after which they began to preach by inspiration, and at which time the Lord's church was established (Acts 2:1-47).
  - a. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was upon the **12 apostles only** (Acts 1:26; 2:1-4, 7, 14).
  - b. The baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles was accompanied by a **sound** (Acts 2:2).
  - c. The baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles was accompanied by something to **see**, too (Acts 2:3).
  - d. **The baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles resulted in something being done**; after being filled with the Holy Spirit, the apostles spoke God's Truth in other tongues or languages that they had not learned.
4. Let's examine some facts about the baptism of the Holy Spirit to determine from the Bible if the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs today.
  - a. If we should find by an examination of Scripture that the baptism of the Holy Spirit does not occur today, then whatever passes for the baptism of the Holy Spirit today is something else and not the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

# Godhead

- b. *Whatever the Bible says about the baptism of the Holy Spirit (or any other subject) is definitive or absolute and should be accepted without reservation or hedging by every Bible believer.*

## Body:

### I. Deity alone is the administrator of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

- A. Jesus Christ alone is accredited in Scripture with being the Administrator of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; John 16:7; Acts 1:4; 2:33).
- B. God the Father participated in sending the baptism of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; 15:26).
- C. Nowhere does Scripture attribute the administration of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to anyone besides deity (Matthew 3:11).

### II. The apostles of Christ were to be the only recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5).

- A. The prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 promised miraculous power would accompany the birthday of the church.
  1. The apostle Peter confirmed Joel's prophecy applied to the birthday of the church commencing with the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:16-21).
  2. Joel's prophecy does not distinguish between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and other miraculous power enabled by the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 2:4; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11).
  3. Whereas the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, others in the first century received miraculous power after an apostle laid his hands on them and prayer (Acts 8:15-17; 19:6).
- B. The pronoun "you" in Matthew 3:11 concerning who would receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit is identified by Jesus to be His apostles (Acts 1:2-5).
- C. The apostles of Jesus were the only ones to whom the baptism of the Holy Spirit was specifically promised.
  1. The apostles were the only ones present when Jesus promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit (John 14: 26; 15:26-27; 16:7, 13).
  2. Accordingly, on the birthday of the church in Acts 2, only the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:26; 2:1-4, 7, 14).
- D. Furthermore, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a *promise* rather than a *command* like the Great Commission baptism (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33, 39; 10:48).

### III. What was the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

- A. A primary purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to adequately prepare the apostles for their special ministry.
  1. Through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the apostles were taught the



# Godhead

will of God and caused to remember what Jesus had already taught them (John 14:26).

2. Through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the apostles were guided into all truth (John 16:13).
- B. Another major function of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to confirm God's Word and validate His holy apostles who proclaimed it.
  1. The purpose of miracles was to validate Jesus Christ as the Son of God—the Messiah (John 20:30-31).
  2. The apostles before any others were to use miracles to confirm the Word of God and prove they were God's spokesmen (Mark 16:17-20).
- C. The Word of God—the New Testament—has been confirmed already through miracles attributable to both Holy Spirit baptism upon the apostles and those upon whom the apostles laid hands to give miraculous power (Hebrews 2:3-4).

## **IV. The duration of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was limited.**

- A. God determined that miracles would cease when they accomplished the purpose for which they were given.
  1. Miracles were temporary and especially useful during and shortly after the establishment of the Lord's church (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).
  2. Miracles enabled early church leaders at the beginning of the church and for decades following to appropriately guide the church in God's will (Ephesians 4:11-14).
- B. Miracles ceased when they had accomplished the purpose for which they were given.
  1. Miracles were no longer needed after the New Testament was written and collected (1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Ephesians 4:11-14).
  2. After the apostles died, and after the last person upon whom an apostle had laid hands to give miraculous power died, there were no more miracles.
- C. By the time the Book of Ephesians was penned, the apostle Paul wrote that there was only one baptism still valid in Christianity (Ephesians 4:5).
  1. That one baptism is the baptism of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:20).
  2. That baptism is a water baptism that saves (1 Peter 3:20-21; Acts 22:16).

## **Conclusion:**

1. Only the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
  - a. It was promised exclusively to the apostles (John 14-16).
  - b. Only the apostles on the birthday of the church received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:26; 2:1-4, 7, 14).
  - c. The 3,000 converts on the birthday of the church continued in the apos-

## Godhead

- bles' doctrine, not the doctrine of the 120, etc. (Acts 2:42).
- d. There is no record of the 120 or anyone else receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
  - e. Penitent souls in Acts 2 appealed to the apostles rather than to the 120 or others for information about salvation (Acts 2:37).
  - f. The recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 were referred to as Galileans, which narrows down the identity of who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
  - g. Luke did not write the Book of Acts respecting the deeds of the 120, but the deeds or acts of the apostles.
2. Miracles ceased with the death of the last apostle and the last one upon whom an apostle laid hands to give miraculous ability.
  3. There are no living candidates to be apostles of Christ, because no one living today accompanied Jesus in His earthly ministry and saw the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:21-22; 9:3-6; 1 Corinthians 15:8).
  4. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not needed since His role has been completed (1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Ephesians 4:11-14; Jam. 1:25; Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4; John 20:30-31).
  5. From the Bible one learns that neither the baptism of the Holy Spirit nor other miracles are needed or occur today.

### **Invitation:**

1. However, the baptism with which people living today need to concern themselves is the baptism of the Great Commission (Mark 16:16).
2. Furthermore, once one becomes a baptized believer, on occasions of future sin, he or she must repent and pray (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

# Parables

## The Remarkable Parables

### Matthew 13:10

**Thesis:** To examine the value of parabolic teaching to see why our Lord used them extensively in his teaching.

#### Introduction:

1. What is a parable?
  - a. A parable is a short story that teaches a moral lesson.
  - b. Strictly, the word for “parable” in Greek means “to throw along side of something else.”
  - c. Hence, *a biblical parable parallels something with which man is intimately familiar to illustrate a spiritual truth about which man knows little or nothing.*
  - d. One might say that *a parable is “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.”*
2. Our Lord’s parables, then, illustrate divine truth.
  - a. Parables paint mental pictures.
  - b. References to literal things in parables help us better understand spiritual things.
  - c. The storytelling of parables is more effective than lecturing alone.

#### Body:

1. **Parables appeal to simple aspects of daily life to illustrate heavenly truth.**
  - A. Several parables refer to agriculture:
    1. The *Parable of the Sower* examines the relationship between the Gospel and men’s hearts respecting growth of the kingdom (Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-18).
    2. The *Parable of the Seed* is about the Word of God (Mark 4:26-29).
    3. The *Parable of the Tares* warns about false teachers and their false teaching, urging watchfulness (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43).
    4. The *Parable of the Mustard Seed* emphasizes faith (Matthew 13:31-32).
    5. The *Parable of the Barren Fig Tree* warns about deception (Luke 13:6-9).
    6. The *Parable of the Laborers* is one of the several kingdom parables (Matthew 20:1-16).
    7. The *Parable of the Vineyard and the Wicked Tenant Farmers* teaches about faithfulness (Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-18).
    8. The *Parable of the Budding Fig Tree* refers to the signs of the times (Matthew 24:32-35; Mark 13:28-31; Luke 21:29-33).
    9. The *Parable of the Vine and the Branches* teaches about serving our

# Parables

Lord (John 15:1-8).

10. The *Parable of the Lost Sheep* teaches about zeal in rescuing the perishing (Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:1-7).
  11. The *Parable of the Sheepfold* teaches about entrance into the kingdom (John 10:1-18).
- B. Several parables pertain to stewardship and riches.
1. The *Parable of the Two Debtors* teaches about forgiveness (Luke 7:36-50).
  2. The *Parable of the Hidden Treasure* emphasizes the immense value of the church or the kingdom (Matthew 13:44).
  3. The *Parable of the Pearl of Great Price* also emphasizes the immense value of the church or the kingdom (Matthew 13:45-46).
  4. The *Parable of the Rich Fool* illustrates the uncertainty of temporal riches (Luke 12:13-21).
  5. The *Parable of Counting the Cost* focuses on discipleship (Luke 14:25-33).
  6. The *Parable of the Lost Coin* emphasizes the necessary and joyous zeal in rescuing the perishing (Luke 15:8-10).
  7. The *Parable of the Unrighteous Steward* encourages faithfulness (Luke 16:1-13).
  8. The *Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus* is about judgment (Luke 16:19-31).
  9. The *Parable of the Unprofitable Servant* is about faithful discipleship (Luke 17:5-10).
  10. The parables of the *Pounds* and the *Talents* deal with reward and punishment in the Judgment (Luke 19:11-27; Matthew 25:14-30).
  11. The *Parable of Treasure in Heaven* encourages followers of Jesus to seek heaven instead of material wealth on earth (Matthew 6:19-21).
  12. The *Parable of the Unmerciful Servant* teaches about forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-35).
  13. The *Parable of the Prodigal Son* teaches about apostasy and repentance (Luke 15:11-32).
- C. Several parables refer to weddings or marriage.
1. The *Parable of the Ten Virgins* teach faithfulness (Matthew 25:1-13).
  2. A *Parable of Watchfulness* in Luke 12:35-41 illustrates faithfulness in anticipation of our Lord's return.
  3. The *Parable of the Marriage Feast* is about accepting God's invitation (Matthew 22:1-14).
  4. The *Parable of the Chief Seats* teaches about humility (Luke 14:7-11).
- D. Other parables refer to miscellaneous circumstances in everyday life.
1. The *Parable of the Friend at Midnight* teaches persistency in prayer

# Parables

(Luke 11:5-13).

2. The *Parable of the Leaven* shows how the kingdom grows (Matthew 13:33).
3. The *Parable of the Good Samaritan* teaches responsibility toward one's fellow man (Luke 10:25-37).
4. The *Parable of the Net* is about Judgment (Matthew 13:47-50).
5. The *Parable of Excuses* is about accepting God's invitation (Luke 14:15-24).
6. The *Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican* taught humility (Luke 18:9-14).
7. The *Parable of the Two Sons* teaches repentance (Matthew 21:28-32).
8. A *Parable of Judgment* (goats and sheep) is about Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46).
9. The *Parable of Gates and Ways* also is about Judgment (Matthew 7:13-14).
10. The *Parable of Salt* concerns discipleship (Matthew 5:13).
11. The *Parable of Light* concerns discipleship (Matthew 5:14-16).
12. The *Parable of the Offending Eye* teaches self-discipline (Matthew 5:29-30).
13. The *Parable of the Defiled Man* and the *Blind Leading the Blind* is about corruption (Matthew 15:10-20).
14. The *Parable of New Patches on Old Clothes and New Wine in Old Wine Skins* teaches about the covenants of God (Matthew 9:16-17; Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:36-39).

## II. Parables teach in a variety of ways.

- A. Jesus used parables to answer questions: The *Parable of the Good Samaritan* was our Lord's response to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:25-37).
- B. *Jesus used parables to teach divine truth to honest hearts while concealing the same truth from corrupt hearts who would misuse it (Matthew 13:10-17).*
- C. *Parables were used to cause people to acknowledge truth before they realized that it applied to them.*
  1. Jesus used the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* in that way.
  2. The classic example of a parable teaching someone the truth before he realized it applied to him was the *Parable of the Little Ewe Lamb* (2 Samuel 12:1-14).
- D. Parables were used to as simply as possible teach divine truth.
  1. Jesus resorted to stories about daily life that could have been actual accounts.

## Parables

2. *Jesus illustrated divine truth about which man knows little or nothing by referring to things with which man is familiar.*
3. The Word of God does not need to be dressed up with big words and complicated explanations.
4. The Word of God must be presented as simply as possible for it to be as effective as it can be in the lives of those who hear it.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Parables teach truth to those who will receive it.
2. *Parables embalm truth and cause truth to be more easily remembered.*
3. Parables appear in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.
4. Nearly all of Jesus' teaching was parabolic.
5. The parables of Jesus touch on subjects that are still vital to Christians respecting salvation, Christian living, Christian duty and Judgment.

### **Invitation:**

1. The simple teachings of the New Testament unfold the mystery of salvation in such plain language that every accountable soul can understand it.
2. The human side of salvation requires faith, repentance, profession of Jesus as the Son of God and immersion in water for the remission of sins (Romans 10:17; Luke 13:3; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38).
3. Erring Christians need to repent and pray (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

# Parables

## The Parable of the Unjust Judge

Luke 18:1-8

**Thesis:** To urge persistency in prayer.

### Introduction:

1. The message or lesson of the *Parable of the Unjust Judge* is clearly stated in the first verse of its context (Luke 18:1).
2. Students of this parable are uplifted by the realization that God is not indifferent toward the prayers of His children.
3. The primary characters in the parable are a judge, a widow and her adversary.
  - a. Anciently, Israel was instructed by God to appoint judges to determine disputes among people, and these judges were supposed to be careful not to accept bribes (Deuteronomy 16:18-20; Exodus 23:6-9; 2 Chronicles 19:5-7).
  - b. Especially, judges were supposed to make sure that they dealt honestly and justly with the poor (Deuteronomy 1:16-17).
  - c. Among the poor, judges were particularly required to make sure that they dealt righteously with widows (Exodus 22:22-24; Deuteronomy 24:17).

### Body:

#### I. I. Let's consider the judge in the parable.

- A. The judge in the parable "feared not God" (Luke 18:2, 4).
  1. Fear or reverence for God is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom (Proverbs 1:7; 15:33; Psalm 119:98).
  2. The judge in the parable had forsaken the integrity of his office and was unwilling to judge according to divine wisdom.
- B. The judge in the parable also regarded not his fellow man (Luke 18:2, 4).
  1. It is no surprise that since he had no regard for God that, likewise, he had no regard for man either.
  2. This judge in Israel had abandoned his civil responsibilities before both God and man.
  3. This judge was perverse and blameworthy.
- C. The judge reluctantly exercised just judgment for the wrong reason.
  1. He was not moved by either divine or civil responsibility.
  2. He was not moved by compassion.
  3. However, he was prompted to act because of the widow's incessant, bothersome pleading.
- D. The unjust judge in the parable represents God.
  1. Obviously, the unjust judge does not represent the **character** of God.
  2. The unjust judge typifies God who hears and answers prayerful peti-

# Parables

tions of His children (Luke 18:7-8).

3. Incidentally, this parable is a prime example of how *careful* one must be *not to apply Scripture beyond its intended application* (i.e., here God would be construed as unjust were the parable applied beyond its intended application).

## II. Let's consider the widow in the parable.

- A. The widow in the parable had been wronged.
  1. She needed a judicial benefactor.
  2. The widow sought justice from the appropriate officer of the law.
  3. She lacked other legal recourse, and there was no one else to whom she could appeal.
  4. Likely, the widow was too poor to offer a bribe, which possibly would have aroused the interest of the unjust judge.
- B. The widow pleaded continually.
  1. Continual pleading moved the judge to do what he should have done.
  2. Reoccurring petitions effected what individual petitions failed to accomplish.
- C. The widow typifies the children of God whose constant prayers move God.
  1. Prayers are not supposed to be vain repetitions (i.e., rote prayers, Matthew 6:7-8).
  2. Yet, the Christian's prayers should be frequent (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Colossians 4:2; Ephesians 6:18; Romans 12:12).

## III. Now, let's consider the conclusion of the parable (Luke 18:8).

- A. The Bible identifies a number of different types of faith mankind may possess:
  1. Weak faith (Romans 14:1).
  2. Dead faith (James 2:17, 20, 26).
  3. Enduring faith (Matthew 24:13; Revelation 2:10).
  4. No faith (2 Thessalonians 3:2).
  5. Trembling faith (James 2:19).
  6. Little faith (Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 17:17-21).
  7. Unfeigned faith (2 Timothy 1:5).
  8. Great faith (Luke 7:9).
  9. Working faith (2 Thessalonians 1:11; James 2:18).
  10. Fighting faith (1 Timothy 6:12).
  11. Shielding faith (Ephesians 6:16).
  12. Unwavering faith (James 1:6).
- B. Godly faith is a prerequisite factor underlying persistent, patient prayer.
  1. Satisfactory prayers are prayers of faith, which save the penitent child of God from his sins (James 1:5-8; 5:15).
  2. The prayers of the righteous are fervent and effectual, resulting in



# Parables

much good (James 5:16).

- C. Faith comes from the written Word of God.
  - 1. This faith has been delivered already once and for all (Jude 3 ASV).
  - 2. Faith rests on the evidence of God's Word (Romans 10:17).

## Conclusion:

- 1. God hears prayers conditionally.
  - a. He hears those who hear Him (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46-49).
  - b. God hears those who pray with the proper spirit (John 4:24).
  - c. God hears those who pray in faith (James 1:5-8).
  - d. God hears those who pray according to His will (1 John 5:14).
  - e. God hears the prayers of the righteous (1 Peter 3:12).
  - f. God hears the prayers of those who forgive others (Matthew 6:9-15).
  - g. God refuses to hear a willful sinner's prayer (John 9:31; Psalm 66:18; 1 Peter 3:12).
  - h. God will not hear in substitution for other commands (i.e., in lieu of obedience, Hebrews 5:8-9).
- 2. God is not unaware or indifferent toward the needs of his children.
  - a. God is aware of even a fallen sparrow (Matthew 10:29; Luke 12:6).
  - b. God is mindful of the grass of the field (Matthew 6:28-34).
  - c. God is aware of what we need before we ask in prayer (Matthew 6:8).
- 3. Patience and persistence should characterize our prayers.
  - a. The *Parable of the Friend at Midnight* also emphasizes persistency in prayer (Luke 11:5-13).
  - b. We should be longsuffering in prayer since God is longsuffering toward mankind (2 Peter 3:9).
  - c. Sometimes God answers prayers, and we do not recognize the answers: "No," "Yes," "Maybe," "Later" or "Conditionally."

## Invitation:

- 1. The apostle Paul had a prayer relative to salvation for his countrymen, which prayer we share for humanity today (Romans 10:1).
- 2. Such prayers are answered when non-Christians are immersed into Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38).
- 3. Such prayers are answered when erring Christians repent of their sins and ask God for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

# Parables

## The Parable of the Sheepfold

John 10:1-18, 26-27

**Thesis:** Exposition of the parable.

### Introduction:

1. The *Parable of the Sheepfold* refers to farm life.
  - a. Several of Jesus' parables also pertain to agriculture: *The Sower, The Seed, The Tares, The Mustard Seed, The Barren and Budding Fig Trees, The Laborers in the Vineyard, The Lost Sheep*, etc.
  - b. The purpose of the *Parable of the Sheepfold* was not to lecture on how to correctly raise sheep.
  - c. Rather, Jesus referred to a common circumstance with which His audience was familiar to teach and illustrate divine truth.
2. The *Parable of the Sheepfold* evidences some unique characteristics of raising sheep in Palestine.
  - a. At night, sheep were kept in an enclosure called a sheepfold, and the shepherd slept in the doorway of the sheepfold so he would be aware of either sheep trying to leave or thieves trying to enter the sheepfold.
  - b. Each sheep had a name and was known by its shepherd.
  - c. The sheep recognized the voice of its shepherd.
  - d. The shepherd led his sheep in pastures during the day.
3. The apostles Paul and Peter also used illustrations about shepherds and sheep to teach spiritual truths.
  - a. Paul taught that elders are shepherds to the congregational flock over which they serve (Acts 20:28).
  - b. Peter taught the same thing and referred to Jesus Christ as the Chief Shepherd and to elders as under-shepherds (1 Peter 5:1-4).

### Body:

#### I. Verses 1-6.

##### A. Verse 1.

1. Every attempted entrance to the sheepfold other than through the door and past the shepherd was illicit.
2. Jesus Christ is the Shepherd and the door through which one must go to be added to His flock (John 10:7, 9; cf. John 14:6).
3. Any attempt to become a member of the Lord's sheepfold other than through our Shepherd is illicit, e.g. unbiblical plans of salvation, manmade churches, etc.

##### B. Verse 2.

1. Since Jesus Christ as the Shepherd is the true Prophet and Leader, He

# Parables

is pictured as entering through the door.

2. All other contrary prophets are styled as robbers (1 John 4:1).

## C. Verses 3-4.

1. The “porter” is “a watcher” or “gatewarden” (*Strong’s*).
2. John the Baptist essentially was the “porter” who identified Jesus Christ as the Shepherd (Matthew 3:3; John 1:29-34).
3. Just as sheep know the true shepherd, the children of God are not fooled by false shepherds or prophets.
4. Our Shepherd has named His sheep (Isaiah 62:2; Acts 11:26)—and no goats are allowed (Matthew 25:31-46).
5. As the shepherd leads rather than drives his sheep, Jesus Christ does not force Christians to follow Him, but He invites humanity to follow Him (Matthew 11:28-30).

## D. Verse 5.

1. It is as important **not** to follow the voice of the counterfeit shepherd as it is important to follow the voice of the Shepherd.
2. **Illustration:** On one occasion when I was in boot camp, my drill instructor was marching his troops to the sound of his voice commands, when another drill instructor came by and began issuing contradictory voice commands. The result was utter chaos as the columns of troops disintegrated and soldiers crashed into each other. We were being taught to learn the voice of our drill instructor and to ignore all others.
3. True Christians will not be fooled by either false messiahs or false teachers (Matthew 24:23-27; Revelation 1:7).

## E. Verse 6.

1. Parables are supposed to enhance understanding of spiritual lessons.
2. Those who heard the parable did not understand the spiritual truth upon hearing the parable, but they did acknowledge the truthfulness of the illustration in the parable.
3. Therefore, when Jesus Christ explained the application of the parable, those who heard the parable understood the spiritual teaching also.

## II. Verses 7-10.

### A. Verse 7.

1. As the shepherd is the one past which sheep must enter the sheepfold, Jesus Christ is the Shepherd past which one must enter the church.
2. First century Jews were required to pass from Judaism into Christianity through Jesus Christ.
3. Everyone now living who knows the difference between right and wrong must pass from the sinful world past Jesus Christ into the church to be saved.

# Parables

## B. Verse 8.

1. Other doors, prophets, messiahs and religious leaders are false (Acts 4:12).
2. Alert sheep know the difference between the Shepherd and imposters.
3. For the first 10 years of the church's existence, it was comprised exclusively of righteous Jews who recognized the Shepherd from the prophetic portrait in the Old Testament.

## C. Verse 9.

1. Jesus Christ is the key to salvation, which is not attainable by any other means or persons.
2. Salvation involves baptism "into" Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27; 2 Timothy 2:10).
3. "Pasture" pertains to the blessings of the kingdom or church found exclusively "in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

## D. Verse 10.

1. In first century Palestine, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Jewish high council (Sanhedrin) were the corrupt religious leaders.
2. Any religious leader who defects from primitive Christianity is a dangerous false teacher (Romans 16:17-18).
3. Jesus Christ is the only source of eternal life (John 6:68; 1 Corinthians 11:1).

## III. Verses 11-18.

### A. Verse 11.

1. Like the shepherd willing to die for his sheep, Jesus Christ willingly laid down His life for humanity on the cruel Calvary cross (1 Timothy 2:6).
2. Our Shepherd, Jesus Christ, is loyal to His sheep.

### B. Verses 12-13.

1. We can rely on Jesus Christ to be our Savior.
2. Jesus will not allow His flock (the church) to be prey for any adversary.

### C. Verse 14.

1. Our Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and we His flock intimately know each other.
2. The names of our Lord's sheep appear in the Book of Life (Revelation 20:12-15).

### D. Verse 15.

1. Jesus our Shepherd is our connection to the Heavenly Father.
2. The ultimate test of loyalty is for the Shepherd to die for his sheep as Jesus did.

### E. Verse 16.

1. This is not a reference to denominations as sometimes sectarians and

# Parables

misguided brethren want to believe.

2. Instead, Jesus informed the Jews that Gentiles also would be added to the sheepfold, which occurred about 10 years after the beginning of the church (Isaiah 62:2; Acts 10-11).
  3. Jesus Christ made both Jews and Gentiles one in Himself in the church (Ephesians 2:11-22).
  4. The church of Christ is one fold or one body (Ephesians 4:4; 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18).
- F. Verses 17-18.
1. Jesus' statement implies His deity.
  2. Deity personally came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ to become our vicarious sacrifice (John 1:17; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

## Conclusion:

1. There is one Shepherd and one fold now.
  - a. That one fold includes all classes of humanity (i.e., Jews and Gentiles, Romans 1:16).
  - b. That one fold does not include manmade churches and their members (Matthew 15:13).
2. Jesus Christ is the one Shepherd over the one flock.
  - a. Jesus adds the saved to the church or flock (Acts 2:47).
  - b. Only those in Jesus Christ are saved (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27).
  - c. Everyone outside of Jesus Christ is lost!

## Invitation:

1. Each person who knows the difference between right and wrong needs to ask himself, "Is Jesus Christ the Shepherd of my life?"
2. Jesus is not the Shepherd of those who have not obeyed His instructions (Mark 16:16).
3. Jesus is not the Shepherd of erring Christians who have not acknowledged their sins (1 John 1:9).

## Works Cited

*BibleSoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary.* CD-ROM. BibleSoft and International Bible Translators, 1994.

# Parables

## The Parable of the Ten Virgins

### Matthew 25:1-13

**Thesis:** Exposition of the parable.

**Introduction:**

1. The larger context of this parable includes Matthew 24:36-51—the end of the world and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
  - a. The *Parable of the Ten Virgins* is one of three parables in Matthew 25 following and pertaining to the latter half of Matthew 24.
  - b. The other two parables in Matthew 25 are the *Parable of the Talents* and the *Parable of the Great Judgment*.
2. The *Parable of the Ten Virgins* employs the beautiful portrait of an oriental marriage.
  - a. This happy portrait of life is used to warn against a tragic eternity.
  - b. Picture 10 virgins accompanying the bridal party—a nearly universal marriage custom comparable to our brides maids.
  - c. Imagine a bridegroom proceeding to the bride's home to escort her to his home where the marriage feast would occur.
  - d. Friends accompany the groom, other friends accompany the bride and additional friends join in along the way or wait at the groom's home.
  - e. The wedding of the bride and groom in this parable may have been arranged while they were children; several months to a year earlier they were likely betrothed, from which they could only be released by divorce or death (Matthew 1:18-19).
  - f. The marriage feast typically was held at night and continued for some time (cf., Jacob and Leah, Genesis 29:21-25).
3. The apostles were the original audience for Jesus' *Parable of the Ten Virgins*.
  - a. The parable applied first to them.
  - b. By implication, the parable applies to all disciples of our Lord in every generation.
  - c. ***The Parable of the Ten Virgins does not apply to non-Christians.***
4. The purpose of the parable is found in verse 13, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."
  - a. The keyword of the parable is "watch."
  - b. This parable hints at the delayed return of the Lord from the time of the discourse, but had Jesus plainly said that He would not return for several centuries, such would have been counterproductive to the purpose of the parable—watch, and strive always to be ready.
5. The Second Coming has always been certain, though the time of Jesus' return is ever uncertain (among humans) (Matthew 24:36).

# Parables

- a. Date setters, then, are hopelessly wrong.
- b. Therefore, Christians must constantly *watch!*

## Body:

### I. Exposition.

#### A. Verse 1.

1. The word “Then” links this parable to the preceding chapter.
2. The “kingdom of heaven” equates to the church/kingdom at the end of time and the commencement of eternity.
3. Ten was considered by the Jews as a number representing completeness (e.g., 10 Jewish men were obligated to establish a synagogue; Elkanah told his barren wife, Hannah, that he was better to her than 10 sons, 1 Samuel 1:8).
4. Virgins are pure, chaste and morally clean, which virtue should characterize the children of God (2 Corinthians 11:2).
5. The ten virgins represent all who obey the Gospel.
6. Lamps were typically small pottery covered bowls, possibly mounted on poles
7. The bridegroom in the parable represents Jesus Christ.

#### B. Verses 2-4.

1. The only difference noted between the virgins was that some of them were wise and some were foolish; none of them was accused of being immoral, hypocritical, etc.
2. The wisdom among some and the lack of wisdom among others was demonstrated by the preparation made by the former and the lack of preparation made by the latter.
3. All of the virgins made initial preparation by taking oil in their lamps, but the foolish virgins did not prepare for the possibility of a delay and took no additional oil with them.
4. So, the “oil” equates to preparation made or not made, representing preparation or the lack thereof for the end of the world and the Second Coming.

#### C. Verse 5.

1. The time of the bridegroom’s arrival was unknown, so they waited; waiting equates to waiting for the Second Coming.
2. All ten virgins slumbered and slept; unaware of when the bridegroom would come, becoming tired, they naturally slept—even as Christians today will continue to function as they normally do while not aware of when the Lord shall return (Matthew 24:36-39).

#### D. Verse 6.

1. The “midnight” hour equates to the unexpected time of the bride-

## Parables

- groom's coming and the reason for the slumber.
2. The announcement that the bridegroom was coming was not made by any of the virgins, even as the church is unable to ascertain when the Lord shall return.
  3. There was no further opportunity for additional preparation; the event for which they had been waiting *was occurring*.
- E. Verses 7-9.
1. Insufficient oil was only discovered upon waking from the slumber.
  2. Though making initial preparation, five of the virgins did not make adequate preparation—especially in light of the delay involved.
  3. The wise had no oil to spare.
  4. ***Doubtless, the foolish virgins had good intentions, but good intentions without sufficient preparation were useless.***
- F. Verses 10-13.
1. The key word of verse 10 is "ready"; only the ready were permitted entrance to the marriage feast.
  2. The door was shut, by which those on the inside were *included* in the marriage feast and all on the outside were *excluded* from the marriage feast (cf. when God shut the door of Noah's ark, Genesis 7:16).
  3. The Lord refused to acknowledge the late-coming, foolish virgins, though it is implied He knew who they were and previously acknowledged them (cf. Matthew 7:21-23).
  4. ***The foolish virgins were close, but they were outside!***
  5. The purpose of the parable is discerned from verse 13: watch, patiently wait and make ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

### II. Lessons.

- A. Initial and continued personal preparation for the Second Coming of Christ must be first priority of every soul aspiring to spend eternity in heaven.
- B. One cannot recall lost opportunities.
- C. The anguish of the lost will not sway God in the Judgment.
- D. Faith plus works are required in order to arrive on heavenly shores (James 2:17, 20, 24, 26).
- E. ***No one can rescue the unprepared when time runs out; salvation is an individual responsibility.***
- F. Living good moral lives alone will not provide passage at time's end into heaven.
- G. The possibility of apostasy is a very real danger (1 Corinthians 10:12).
- H. When Jesus returns, the door will be shut; only the saved will be inside heaven, while all others will be excluded from heaven.
- I. Professing membership among the saved by itself does not guarantee inclusion in the kingdom of heaven (Acts 5:1-10).



# Parables

- J. The children of God must ascertain whether they have made sufficient preparation to enter in the last day (2 Corinthians 13:5).

## **Conclusion:**

1. Sadly, some Christians will be lost when Jesus returns (2 Peter 2:20-22; Luke 8:6-7, 13-14).
2. Worldliness detracts from Christianity and will cause some children of God to be eternally lost (James 4:4).
3. Every child of God must continually seek the kingdom of God first (Matthew 6:33).
4. Therefore, even Christians must examine themselves in light of Scripture (1 Corinthians 11:31).

## **Invitation:**

1. *Close is not close enough if one spends eternity outside of heaven's gate.*
2. Erring Christians must repent or else suffer eternal loss (Revelation 2-3).
3. The message has not changed from the time of the first recorded Gospel sermon; non-Christians must repent and be immersed for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

# Parables

## The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

### Matthew 20:1-16

**Thesis:** To learn a lesson from the *Parable of the Laborers* in the Vineyard that we can use.

**Song:** *I Want to be a Worker*

#### **Introduction:**

1. This parable was spoken directly to the apostles respecting two preceding events.
  - a. First, the rich, young ruler had just sorrowfully left Jesus, after which our Lord announced that it would be difficult for a rich man to enter heaven (Matthew 19:16-26; Luke 18:18-27).
  - b. Second, the apostle Peter had just contrasted the other apostles and himself with the rich man and others like him (Matthew 19:27-30).
2. This parable especially explains Matthew 19:30 and 20:16, plus it teaches that incidental circumstances are not the criteria by which God saves souls (Romans 2:11).
  - a. The earliest hired laborers in the parable were not entitled to special consideration just because they had labored longer.
  - b. Similarly, the Jewish people were not entitled to special consideration simply because they had been the custodians of God's revelation to man.
  - c. In addition, the apostles themselves were not entitled to special consideration because they were among the first followers of Jesus.
3. There are several additional parallels and lessons to be drawn from this parable.
  - a. The householder represents Jesus Christ.
  - b. The marketplace represents the world (i.e., people).
  - c. The laborers before they were hired represent the lost.
  - d. The vineyard represents the church.
  - e. The reward represents eternal salvation.
  - f. This is one of the kingdom parables.

#### **Body:**

##### **I. Consider Matthew 20:1-7.**

- A. The householder went to the marketplace and hired all the laborers he found there.
  1. The marketplace was a public area into which the unemployed, among others, would go to wait someone to hire them.
  2. The Jews divided the daylight hours into 12 segments from about 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.
  3. Therefore, the parable refers to different hours of the day (i.e., the 6th hour = noon and the 11th hour = 5:00 p.m.).
- B. The first laborers hired agreed upon specific wages with the householder

# Parables

and were sent to the vineyard.

1. The only way in which the householder could have cheated them was if he failed to pay them what he agreed to pay them for a day's labor.
2. The other laborers who were hired throughout the balance of the day did not enter into an agreement with the householder for a specific wage, but they trusted the employer to pay them fairly.

## II. Consider Matthew 20:8-16.

- A. All of the laborers were paid at the end of the day.
  1. Judaism required employers to pay their employees at the end of each workday (Deuteronomy 24:15; Leviticus 19:13).
  2. The first laborers received exactly what they had agreed with the householder to receive for a day's labor.
  3. The rest of the laborers relied upon the word of the householder to pay them "whatsoever is right."
  4. However, the first laborers murmured against the householder because he was gracious and merciful to the other laborers.
- B. The householder defended his actions variously.
  1. First, he noted that he had honored the contract between himself and the complaining laborers.
  2. Second, the householder declared that he was at liberty to dispose of his own material wealth as he saw fit.
  3. Third, he affirmed that reward is not always determined solely by length of time in service.

## III. Consider some parallels and applications from the parable.

- A. Jesus Christ invites all men in the marketplace of humanity to labor in His vineyard—the church.
  1. Jesus personally invited humanity (Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:17).
  2. Jesus through the Great Commission invites the world to obey the Gospel (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Romans 6:17; Hebrews 5:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
  3. Jesus does not hire the idle and the lazy; anyone not in the marketplace looking for work to do in the vineyard of God will not be sent to the vineyard.
- B. Furthermore, *Jesus Christ calls His laborers to work in a specific vineyard.*
  1. In the parable, the householder would have been under no obligation to pay workers who had labored in another householder's vineyard.
  2. Likewise, Jesus Christ does not call people to work outside of His church in some manmade church (Matthew 15:13; 16:18).
  3. Therefore, Jesus will not reward anyone, even though they may be sincere, who labors in denominations instead of the church for which

## Parables

He died and over which He is the Head (Ephesians 3:21; Matthew 7:13-14; Acts 20:28; Colossians 1:18; 1 John 4:1).

- C. Like the householder in the parable, our Lord calls people (through the Gospel) at different times in history or in their lives.
  - 1. The Gospel call always sounds forth from the revealed and written Word of God—the Bible.
  - 2. However, the young, middle-aged and old hear and obey the Gospel at different times in their lives.
  - 3. ***Just as the laborers in the parable went to the vineyard as soon as they were hired regardless of the time of the day, souls today need to begin serving Jesus in the church immediately regardless of when in life they hear and obey the Gospel.***
- D. As the householder settled with his laborers at the day's end, Jesus Christ will settle with His servants at the end of time.
  - 1. The settlement or reward will not be exclusively according to **seniority** or time in service, though God does want us to serve Him all the days of our lives.
  - 2. Eternal reward, good or bad, will depend upon the way in which one serves God (Romans 6:23; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Matthew 16:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15).
  - 3. There will come a time beyond which it is impossible to serve the Lord, so one must serve the Lord **now** (Hebrews 9:27; 2 Corinthians 6:2).

### Conclusion:

- 1. The Lord calls laborers into His vineyard—the church—today, but they must be qualified.
  - a. They must be able and willing to **hear** the Lord's instructions (Romans 10:17).
  - b. They must **believe** or obey Jesus (Mark 16:16; Numbers 20:7-12).
  - c. They must **repent** of their sins (Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3; 2 Peter 3:9).
  - d. They must **acknowledge** that Jesus is the Son of God (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37).
  - e. They must be **buried** in water for the remission of sins (Acts 22:16; 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12).
- 2. After entering the vineyard—the church, one must prove himself to be a useful servant (John 15:1-6).
- 3. If the apostles needed this type of exhortation from Jesus, we also need similar exhortation today.

### Invitation:

- 1. With whom do you more nearly compare, the lost, young, rich ruler or the apostles who faithfully followed Jesus?
- 2. Both unbaptized believers and erring Christians can be fruitful laborers in the Lord's vineyard—**only if** they come to Jesus on His terms (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

# Parables

## The Parable of the Tares

### Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

**Thesis:** To exhort faithful Christians to be watchful respecting enemies of the Lord's church.

**Introduction:**

1. The phrase "while men slept" appears in the kingdom parable, *The Parable of the Tares* (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43).
  - a. The kingdom or church becomes polluted through the efforts of Satan.
  - b. The infamous tares were sown while no defense was made (i.e., "while men slept").
  - c. No one resisted the devil (James 4:7)!
2. Throughout history, our Lord's church has suffered much harm because not enough Christians watched to ensure the devil was not attacking and corrupting the church.
  - a. Especially the New Testament is filled with statements calling upon God's people to defend the Gospel and the church of the Gospel.
  - b. Similarly, the Old Testament called upon the people of God to be watchful against spiritual harm.

**Body:**

**I. Elders are charged with the defense of the church.**

- A. Elders are to be leaders in the defense of the Gospel and the church of the Gospel.
  1. The apostle Paul so warned and charged the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:28-31).
  2. At least one of the qualifications of elders calls upon elders to protect the church from spiritual harm (Titus 1:9-11).
- B. Churches of Christ have been ruined repeatedly because elders have slept when they should have watched.
  1. False teachers are plentiful and must be identified (1 John 4:1).
  2. Furthermore, false teachers never announce themselves as false teachers, but they pretend to be righteous when they are not (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).
  3. Often false teachers come from within a congregation (Acts 20:29-30).
- C. The New Testament guides the church and its leaders respecting how to deal with evil in the church.
  1. First, the true Gospel must be recognized, and every subtle variation from the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be rejected (Galatians 1:6-9).
  2. Like cowbells to herald the whereabouts of livestock or buoys in the

## Parables

sea to warn of treacherous reefs, false teachers must be identified (Romans 16:17-18).

3. Impenitent factious brethren and the spiritually disorderly must be forbidden a platform from which to continually affect the Lord's church adversely (Titus 3:10 ASV; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14).

### II. Yet, all Christians are charged with the defense of the church.

A. Preachers are charged to defend the Gospel and the church of the Gospel (Philippians 1:17).

1. Preachers must preach "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).
2. Preachers must preach the Gospel with a sense of urgency continually (2 Timothy 4:2).
3. Unfortunately, many preachers in the Lord's church are asleep!

B. All Christians must defend the Gospel and the church of the Gospel.

1. Christians can contribute to the defense of the Gospel and the church of the Gospel by holding up the arms of others who defend the Gospel.
2. Christians can contribute to the defense of the Gospel and the church of the Gospel by diligently studying God's Word and applying it to their lives (2 Timothy 2:15).

### III. Finally, for what will God hold the church accountable respecting tares among the wheat in the church?

A. God expects the church to police itself when it can discern between right and wrong.

1. This is the *fruit inspection* principle (Matthew 7:20).
2. Christians are not permitted to allow fellow Christians to continue in their sins unchallenged, and become guilty of sin themselves for tolerating sin (1 Corinthians 5:6).
3. Christians are obligated to discipline themselves when they can clearly see the difference between right and wrong (1 Corinthians 5:12-13).

B. However, like the *Parable of the Tares*, there are sins among Christians for which faithful Christians are not responsible for policing.

1. The church could hardly be expected to discipline sinful members respecting sins of which it is not aware (1 Corinthians 4:5).
2. Secret things will be judged by Jesus Christ according to the Gospel (Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 3:13).
3. Nothing will escape the notice of God in Judgment (Luke 12:2; Hebrews 4:13).

### Conclusion:

1. The Lord's church can prevail despite attacks by the devil, if we resist the devil (James 4:7).

## Parables

2. The Lord's church can prevail despite attacks by Satan if Christians wear the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17).
3. The Lord's church can avoid much heartache brought on by the devil if it will like watchmen of old watch for the devil's devices (Ezekiel 3:17).

### **Invitation:**

1. Otherwise faithful Christians are often asleep and liable to become the prey of Satan.
2. Non-Christians are asleep in sin from which they need to be awakened with the Gospel of Christ (Mark 16:16).
3. Erring Christians, likewise, are asleep in sin from which if they are not awakened, they will perish (Romans 6:23; 1 John 1:9).

# Parables

## The Parable of the Sower

**Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15**

**Thesis:** To identify every soul who hears the Gospel.

### Introduction:

1. If this parable fairly represents percentages respecting people's response to the Gospel (and the numbers appear to correspond to reality), then:
  - a. 25% of people who hear the Gospel reject it outright.
  - b. 25% of people who hear the Gospel initially accept it but quickly fall away.
  - c. 25% of people who hear the Gospel accept the Gospel but never mature or profit by it.
  - d. 25% accept the Gospel and mature to become profitable servants of God.
  - e. 75% or  $\frac{3}{4}$  of people who hear the Gospel will still be lost.
  - f.  $\frac{1}{3}$  of those saved by the Gospel abandon the church.
  - g. 50% or  $\frac{1}{2}$  of those who continue to profess faithfulness are also lost.
  - h. Only  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the people who hear the Gospel will be saved.
2. Each of us is represented by one of these soils in the parable.
  - a. The wayside soil is not here with us today because it would not come.
  - b. The stony soil is here but will not be for long (some already left).
  - c. The thorny soil is here, but it is unprofitable and will not be harvested (some have already left).
  - d. The good soil is here, and it is this kind that will remain and produce fruit.
3. Sadly, few, comparatively speaking, will be saved eternally, yet there will be an innumerable host in heaven (Matthew 7:13-14; Revelation 7:9).
4. The parable represents the same seed being planted in each soil, with the same potential except for the varying soils (Luke 8:11).
  - a. Hence, the preaching of Peter on Pentecost prompted about 3,000 souls to become Christians, while about 997,000 souls did not become Christians (Acts 2:37, 41).
  - b. Stephen's audience had wayside hearts, and so the hearers of the Gospel on that occasion murdered God's preacher (Acts 7:54, 58-60).
  - c. The seed—the Word of God—was the same in both instances, but the soils were different.
5. Remember as we briefly examine the *Parable of the Sower* that the ultimate Teacher is Jesus Christ, and the seed is the Word of God.
  - a. Each child of God needs to be a sower also (Hebrews 5:12-14; Acts 8:4).
  - b. Seed contains the germ of life and produces after its own kind (Genesis 1:11; Galatians 6:7).



# Parables

## Body:

- I. Consider the wayside soil or the heart that Satan keeps (Luke 8:5, 12).**
- A. In this case, though the seed is sown, there is absolutely neither germination nor any development.
  - B. The heart did not believe the Word of God and was not saved.
  - C. Satan substitutes lies in place of the Word of God (Genesis 3:4-5; John 8:44).
  - D. Some of Satan's lies today are:
    - 1. Worship at the church of your choice, instead of worshipping at the church of Christ's choice (Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16).
    - 2. One church is as good as another, despite that Jesus purchased His church with His own blood (Acts 20:28).
    - 3. One can be saved apart from the Lord's church and worship under a shade tree in a meadow, etc. (Hebrews 10:25-31).
  - E. *The devil never misses an evangelistic study, Bible class, an assembly or any other opportunity to snatch the Word of God from the hearts of men, women, boys and girls (1 Peter 5:8).*
  - F. Satan always has a better idea, or so he claims (Hebrews 11:25).
- II. Consider the rocky soil or the heart that temptations overpower (Luke 8:6, 13).**
- A. The seed is sown and begins to grow immediately, but it dies because there is no root.
  - B. This type of heart did believe and was saved, but fell away through temptation (affliction or persecution or tribulation, cf. Matthew and Mark).
  - C. Satan participates in apostasy (1 Peter 5:8).
  - D. The result of apostasy is said to be worse than being lost (2 Peter 2:20-22).
  - E. To avoid apostasy, the child of God must avoid every category of evil and present his life as a living sacrifice (1 Thessalonians 5:22; Romans 12:1-2).
  - F. The child of God must be rooted and established in the Christian faith (Colossians 2:6-7).
  - G. Satan drew away the first pair and Judas; he sought Job, and he seeks you and me.
  - H. *The devil never misses an assembly, but many of his converts do.*
  - I. Remember, withered branches of the True Vine are gathered and burned (John 15:6).
- III. Consider the thorny soil or the heart that is overcome with cares, pleasures and riches (Luke 8:7, 14).**
- A. The seed is sown and grows, but it never matures.
  - B. This type of heart did believe and was saved, but it is the heart of an

# Parables

unprofitable servant.

- C. Unprofitable servants will be cast out (Matthew 25:30).
  - D. Unfruitful branches of the True Vine will be cut off (John 15:2).
  - E. However, the Word of God can perfect Christianity in our lives if we let it (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Luke 8:11).
  - F. Christians must be careful to seek spiritual pursuits first and not develop a preference for the world, lest cares for the world displace our Christianity (Matthew 6:33; James 4:4).
  - G. A concern for monetary matters over spiritual values ruins Christians (1 Timothy 6:6-12; Matthew 6:24).
- IV. Consider the good soil or the heart that is secure in the faith (Luke 8:8, 15).**
- A. The seed is sown and grows to maturity.
  - B. This type of heart believed, was saved and continues to grow, producing much spiritual fruit.
  - C. Only this comparatively small group of hearts will make it to heaven (Matthew 7:21-23).
  - D. The first recorded Gospel sermon netted about 3,000 conversions out of a potential audience of 1,000,000 souls.
  - E. Jesus called this type of heart-soil alone the “honest and good heart” (Luke 8:15).

## Conclusion:

1. Luke’s account of the *Parable of the Sower* is the shortest of the three accounts in Gospel records.
2. Matthew and Mark’s accounts of this parable provide some additional information.
3. It is important to remember that each of us is represented by one of the soils, but which one?
4. Satan has or will covert three of four souls to whom the Gospel message is presented.
5. Though the good soil-heart endures unto salvation, it is hampered by thorny soil-hearts—and others outside the faith.

## Invitation:

1. We must come to realize that we are lost if we are the wayside soil, the rocky soil or the thorny soil.
2. An unbaptized believer can prove that he has an “honest and good heart” by obeying the words of Jesus (Mark 16:16).
3. An erring child of God can prove that he has “honest and good heart” by repenting and seeking forgiveness (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

# Parables

## The Parable of the Talents

### Matthew 25:14-30

**Thesis:** To see that the children of God must exhibit faithfulness and work for the Lord, without which one cannot enter the eternal kingdom of heaven.

#### **Introduction:**

1. The *Parable of the Talents* illustrates divine truth relative to preparation for heaven with references to a first century businessman who entrusts his business to his servants or employees.
2. This parable is about entrance into the eternal kingdom of heaven.
  - a. The man going into a far country represents Jesus Christ (John 14:1-3).
  - b. The servants or stewards represent the children of God.
  - c. The talents in the parable were quantities of silver or gold and represent abilities or opportunities of Christians in serving Jesus Christ.
  - d. Each first century silver talent was worth about \$1,642.50, and each talent of gold was worth about \$26,280.

#### **Body:**

#### **I. The talents were distributed variously among the stewards.**

- A. Each steward received something from his master.
  1. No servant was left without something and some responsibility.
  2. There were not any no-talent servants.
- B. Each steward received talents according to his ability.
  1. The master expected no more of his servants than they were capable of doing.
  2. However, the master did expect each of his servants to do what they were capable of doing.

#### **II. The talents were variously used by the stewards.**

- A. Two of the stewards invested the money that was entrusted to them.
  1. Each of these two earned a 100% profit through their respective efforts.
  2. 100% of the stewards who acted as stewards ought to act made a profit.
- B. *One steward used his master's money to fill a hole in the ground!*
  1. He did not invest it.
  2. He earned nothing for his master and was an example of failed stewardship.

#### **III. The Lord of the stewards returned and compensated his stewards according to their faithfulness.**

- A. "Well done" and the good pleasure of the master was the reward for the faithful stewards.

# Parables

1. They had proven themselves loyal and faithful stewards.
2. They acted as stewards were obligated to conduct themselves.

**B. The unfaithful steward was condemned.**

1. The master had a right to expect that his stewards faithfully serve him.
2. The unfaithful steward had refused to practice stewardship.
3. Instead of “well done,” he was greeted with the words “wicked and slothful [lazy] servant.”
4. This man had not performed even any minimal duty as a steward.

**IV. How can we apply the Parable of the Talents to us?**

**A. No unprofitable servant of Jesus Christ will enter heaven (Matthew 25:29-30).**

1. Unprofitable or unfruitful Christians will not be allowed to enter heaven (John 15:1-6; Matthew 7:19).
2. Only faithful or fruitful Christians will be permitted entrance into heaven.

**B. Each Christian has potential, has capacity and has opportunities that are represented by “talents” in the parable.**

1. Jesus Christ expects Christians to develop potential, exercise capacity and seize opportunities.
2. Only then will Jesus say “well done” to us.
3. No one who tries to serve Jesus Christ will be a failure as far as God is concerned (1 Corinthians 3:6).

**C. Christians rob Jesus Christ of service rightfully owed to Him when they do not actively serve Him.**

1. True Christianity is not a passive religion!
2. Just as an employer would fire employees who never did any work, Jesus Christ will commit to eternal fire even Christians who never do any work for Him.
3. The Christian’s faith must be alive and active to profit anything (James 2:14-26).

**D. What are the talents that we are obligated to use as good stewards of Jesus Christ?**

1. First, not everyone can do the same things, but everybody can do something (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).
2. Prosperous Christians have a responsibility to use some of their prosperity in the service of our Lord.
3. Healthy Christians have an obligation to use their healthy bodies to serve Jesus Christ in some way.
4. Christians possessing abilities that especially enable them to tell others about the Gospel, publicly or privately, need to do so.
5. Every Christian who has some opportunity or an ability of some kind

# Parables

needs to serve Jesus Christ accordingly.

## 6. *There are not any "no-talent" Christians!*

### **Conclusion:**

1. This parable pertains primarily to the children of God.
2. The talents in the parable increased or decreased according to their use or non-use; the stewards had to *use it or lose it!*
3. Like the stewards in the parable, every soul must give an account of himself before the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27).
4. Some will be rewarded (2 Timothy 4:8).
5. Some will receive punitive compensation (Revelation 20:15).

### **Invitation:**

1. Each soul is personally responsible for the type of eternity he will experience, based on what kind of a steward he is with the Gospel in this life.
2. Before one can become a good steward, he must become a child of God first (Acts 2:38).
3. Erring Christians must also repent and pray before they can become good stewards (Acts 8:22).

# Parables

## The Parable of the Marriage Feast

### Matthew 22:1-14

**Thesis:** To illustrate the preparation with which the children of God must prepare themselves to enter the eternal kingdom heaven.

**Introduction:**

1. The *Parable of the Marriage Feast* is transparent so that it is not difficult to see the spiritual lesson that Jesus taught.
  - a. The marriage feast represents the kingdom of heaven.
  - b. The king in the parable represents God the Father.
  - c. The son in the parable represents Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
  - d. The guests who were invited first represent the Jews, who as the custodians of God's Word under Judaism had enjoyed an intimate relationship with God over the centuries.
  - e. The abused and slain servants represent the prophets of God throughout the centuries (including John the Baptist) who were abused and murdered by God's rebellious people.
  - f. The second invitation represents the Great Commission, which included a group of people not included in the former invitation—the Gentiles.
  - g. The casting out of an unprepared wedding guest represents the removal of unprepared children of God from the church at Judgment.
  - h. The remaining guests represent those who are invited to the marriage of the Lamb of God, and at the same time represent the bride of Christ.
2. The *Parable of the Marriage Feast* and the *Parable of the Great Supper* teach the same spiritual lesson (Luke 14:15-24).
  - a. The *Parable of the Great Supper* is sometimes called the *Parable of Excuses*.
  - b. The **first excuse** was that a man bought a piece of land and needed to travel some distance to evaluate it, but typically people evaluate land **before** they buy it.
  - c. The **second excuse** was that a man bought five oxen and needed to examine them, but typically people do not buy livestock unseen.
  - d. The **third excuse** was that a man married a wife, and he had no power or authority to come, but especially men anciently and even today often do what they want to do.
  - e. It would have made as much sense for someone to have said he could not come because he had **a bone in his leg!**
  - f. There is a difference between a legitimate reason and an excuse.
  - g. This parable illustrates that the Gospel invitation is commonly spurned by humanity.

# Parables

- h. In both parables, the second invitation represented God's invitation to Gentiles to become the children of God.
- 3. Directing our attention back to the *Parable of the Marriage Feast*, a marriage feast was a tradition of Mideastern people anciently.
  - a. Guests were usually invited well in advance of the marriage feast and reminded to come at the time of the feast.
  - b. The Jews, though spiritually invited and further bidden as if to a marriage feast, refused God's invitation.
  - c. The purpose of the parable was to correct the Jewish mistaken notion that they were already charter members in the kingdom of heaven through natural birth (Matthew 21:42-46; 3:7-10).
  - d. The Jews also incorrectly anticipated an earthly kingdom comparable to the kingdom of Solomon instead of a spiritual kingdom of heaven.
  - e. The parable was meaningless to hard-hearted Jews, but it was meaningful to Jews and Gentiles whose hearts were honest.

## Body:

### I. Matthew 22:2-3 introduce a king making a marriage feast for his son.

- A. The marriage feast represents the kingdom of heaven (v. 2).
  - 1. The kingdom of heaven was the subject of Old Testament prophecies and the preaching of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-3).
  - 2. Specifically, the marriage feast represents the spiritual marriage of the Son of God, the Lamb, and the church, the spotless bride of Christ (Revelation 21:2; 22:17).
  - 3. 3. The church is the "heavenly Jerusalem," Hebrews 12:22-23.
- B. Those first invited represent the Jews (v. 3).
  - 1. As custodians of the Old Testament, the Jews received God's first invitation to become members of the church and entertain the prospect of someday entering the eternal habitation of heaven (Romans 1:16; Acts 13:46).
  - 2. Especially the Pharisees, Sadducees and many of the priests would not accept the Gospel invitation.
  - 3. For the most part, the Jews *refused* to enter into the kingdom of heaven in the first century, and comparatively few Jews obey the Gospel today as well (Romans 10:1-3).

### II. Matthew 22:4-7 portray the guests first invited not only despising the invitation, but abusing and killing the king's messengers.

- A. The Jews were repeatedly invited into the kingdom of heaven (v. 4).
  - 1. Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, the twelve apostles, the 70 disciples and Jesus Christ invited the Jews into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 10:5-7; Luke 10:1-9; Matthew 4:17).
  - 2. God, through His servants, made ample preparation for the feast, and

## Parables

all was ready.

3. God has done His part respecting man's entrance into the kingdom of heaven!
4. It is now time for mankind to do his part respecting entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

B. The Jews were disinterested, but more than simply disinterested in God's invitation (v. 5-6).

1. The Jews would not heed the invitation of God.
2. The Jews emphasized their rejection of God's invitation into the kingdom by harming or murdering the messengers of God.
3. Likewise, the world today often is more than merely disinterested in the invitation of God and seeks to harm God's servants.

C. God is not helpless and will not recompense lightly those who either reject His invitation or maim and kill His messengers (v. 7).

1. God knows the hearts of every soul (Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 4:5).
2. God will discern between the unrighteous and the righteous in Judgment (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12).
3. All unrighteous souls will be dispatched to a devil's hell (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:15; 21:8).

### **III. The king in the parable expanded the invitation to the wedding to include everyone (v. 8-10).**

A. A second guestlist was made that permitted anyone to attend the wedding feast.

1. This is comparable to the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-16).
2. The apostles of Christ were the primary heralds of this invitation (Acts 1:8).
3. Because the Jews demonstrated that they were unworthy, the invitation was taken to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; 2:39).

B. The second invitation was gladly accepted.

1. Overall, Gentiles have always been more receptive to the Gospel of Christ than have the Jews (Acts 13:46-49).
2. Consequently, Gentiles were grafted into the kingdom of heaven (Romans 11:17-24).
3. Now, Jews and Gentiles alike or all of humanity is subject to God's invitation (Romans 1:16).
4. "Whosoever will" may enter the kingdom of heaven, irrespective of one's ethnicity, skin color or national origin (Revelation 22:17).

### **IV. Matthew 22:11-14 represent the removal from the church at the Judgment anyone who is spiritually unprepared to enter the eternal kingdom of heaven.**

A. The kingdom of heaven cannot be attained without preparation on man's



# Parables

part (Luke 1:17).

1. **Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people (John 14:1-3).**
  2. Those who never obey or do not continue to obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be greeted with fiery Judgment in eternity (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
  3. "Weeping and gnashing of teeth" represents the misery of hell into which disobedient souls will be cast for eternity (v. 13; Matthew 8:12; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28).
  4. Comparatively few souls will enter the eternal kingdom of heaven (v. 14; Matthew 7:13-14; 20:16; Luke 13:23-24).
- B. God will not always strive with sinful mankind.
1. At some future time the patience of God will be exhausted (2 Peter 3:9-10).
  2. Formerly, God's patience with mankind was exhausted prior to the universal flood of Noah's day (Genesis 6:3).

## Conclusion:

1. The Jews who rejected God's invitation and murdered the Son of God received a double condemnation.
  - a. Of course, they were guilty of the death of Jesus (Acts 2:36-38).
  - b. In addition, through His providence, God caused the city of Jerusalem to be destroyed (Matthew 23:37-38; 24:1-35).
2. All humanity is amenable to the Gospel and availed of its blessings through obedience (Hebrews 5:8-9).
3. All of the unprepared or lost will be without excuse in the Judgment.
  - a. All mankind will bow (happily or reluctantly) before the throne of God (Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11).
  - b. Some will argue in vain trying to alter their eternal destiny (Matthew 7:21-23).
  - c. Others will attempt to hide from God, howbeit unsuccessfully (Revelation 6:16).
  - d. The *Parable of the Ten Virgins* illustrates the tragedy of being unprepared to meet God in Judgment (Matthew 25:1-13; Amos 4:12).

## Invitation:

1. Becoming a member of the church today provides a valid hope of entering the eternal kingdom or habitation of heaven someday.
2. Anyone who can understand elementary math can easily understand how to become a child of God and be added to the church by Jesus (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 41, 47).
3. Every reader can understand the simple instructions that the apostle Peter gave to an erring Christian how to receive forgiveness of sins (Acts 8:22).

# Parables

## The Parable of the Vine and the Branches John 15:1-8

**Thesis:** Exposition.

### **Introduction:**

1. John 15:1-8 is one of several New Testament contexts that compare the faithful pursuit of Christianity to bearing fruit.
2. The vineyard was familiar to people living in first century Palestine, and it is easy enough for people today to understand as well.
3. Contrary to popular thought, we will see that John 15:1-8 applies to individuals rather than to denominational groups.

### **Body:**

#### **I. Verses 1-2 provide the introduction to the illustration and the spiritual truth.**

- A. In verse 1, Jesus declared, "I am the true vine."
  1. He compared Himself to a vine as would be found in a vineyard, which vine is the source of life to the branches (John 14:6).
  2. Jesus compared Himself to a true vine as opposed to a false vine (1 John 4:1).
  3. The existence of the true vine suggests the existence of counterfeit or false vines (Matthew 24:23-24).
  4. Anyone, no matter how sincerely, who follows a false vine will miss the eternal goal he or she cherishes (Matthew 7:21-23).
  5. False vines, etc. will be rooted up (Matthew 15:13).
- B. In verse 1, Jesus declared that the Heavenly Father is the Husbandman.
  1. Jesus portrays the Father as a farmer tending a vineyard.
  2. The farmer or husbandman is responsible for the care of the vine and the branches.
  3. The farmer has the power and the authority to nurture or plow under his crop.
  4. It would be ludicrous for the crop to deny the existence of or defy the authority of the farmer to till it.
- C. Verse 2 introduces the phrase, "every branch in me."
  1. "In me" amounts to being in Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27).
  2. The denominational world supposes that the branches are denominational churches, but the context identifies the branches as individual persons (John 15:5-6).
- D. Verse 2 also contains the phrase, "that beareth not fruit he taketh away."
  1. Obviously, *Christianity is a doing religion* (James 4:17; Matthew 7:21)!

## Parables

2. In the *Parable of the Talents*, Jesus Christ called the unfruitful servant wicked, slothful and unprofitable (Matthew 25:26, 30).
  3. Earlier, John the Baptist represented the Pharisees and Sadducees as unfruitful (Matthew 3:7-8).
  4. Dead, fruitless branches will not be found in the vineyard of a good husbandman, and unfruitful Christians will not be in the kingdom of heaven either.
- E. Verse 2 has the phrase, "and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."
1. The farmer or husbandman prunes fruitful branches to produce more fruit.
  2. The farmer, or in this case God, has a right to exercise himself over fruitful branches, too.
  3. Therefore, Christians should not resent God's continued interest in and direction of their lives.
  4. It is not enough to have been fruitful, but a child of God must continue to be fruitful for God to be pleased with him.
  5. When one quits striving to be fruitful, he becomes unfruitful and subject to destruction.
  6. Several New Testament passages emphasize the necessity of continued faithfulness (Revelation 2:10; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Titus 2:14).
- II. Verse 3 portrays the Word as the key factor in being a branch of the true vine.**
- A. Verse 3 contains the phrase, "now ye are clean."
1. "Clean" here carries the meaning of saved, not defiled, not spiritually unclean or filthy.
  2. Christians are clean because they have been washed (1 Corinthians 6:11; Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:5; Titus 3:5).
- B. Notice the phrase in verse 3, "through the word which I have spoken to you."
1. The Word of Jesus Christ has the power to bring about spiritual cleanliness (John 8:32; 17:17; Ephesians 5:26).
  2. The Word of God is the sole weaponry of the child of God with which he resists sinful temptations (Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:10-17; Matthew 4:1-11).
  3. The Word of our Lord is spoken to us today through the Gospel (John 12:48; Romans 1:16).
- III. Verses 4-6 announce that fruitfulness is the conditional basis by which a child of God can continue to receive God's approval.**
- A. In verse 4, Jesus said, "abide in me."
1. Fruitfulness is the condition by which a branch can remain attached

## Parables

to the vine.

2. Remember, unfruitful branches are severed from the vine.
  3. The Word of our Lord when obeyed places one as a branch on the vine, and continued obedience of the Word keeps one attached to the vine.
- B. Verse 4 also reads, “and I in you.”
1. The branch and the vine enjoy a reciprocal or mutual relationship.
  2. Christians enjoy a mutual indwelling based on the Word of Jesus Christ and the Christian’s fruitfulness.
  3. Other verses also teach about a mutual indwelling of Jesus Christ and the children of God (John 17:21-23).
- C. Verse 4 also reads, “as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”
1. The verb “abide” is in the present tense, teaching that the abiding and fruitfulness must be ongoing.
  2. As long as a Christian is fruitful, he enjoys the continual habitation of Jesus Christ in him.
  3. This abiding and indwelling occurs through the Word (John 15:3; 1 John 2:6).
  4. Abiding in Jesus Christ is comparable to a Christian continuing to walk in the light (1 John 1:7; Ephesians 5:8).
  5. Jesus Christ is the only access one has to the Father (John 14:6).
  6. ***Any religion that does not recognize Jesus Christ as the true vine is not Christianity.***
- D. Verse 5 is essentially a repetition of verse 4 for the purpose of emphasis.
1. Also, the personal, singular pronoun “he” indicates that a branch is a person, not a church.
  2. There is no fruit possible outside of being in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3).
- E. Verse 6 adds, “if a man abide not in me.”
1. The appearance of the word “man” in this verse is conclusive evidence that a branch equals an individual Christian.
  2. The word “if” indicates the conditional basis of salvation and the possibility of apostasy leading to eternal loss.
- F. Verse 6 also reads, “he is cast forth as a branch and is withered: and men gather them, and they are burned.”
1. Fruitless Christians are compared to worthless brush that is only fit for burning.
  2. The illustration typifies the eternal destruction of hellfire for unprofitable Christians.
  3. On another occasion, Jesus also used the same illustration (Matthew 7:19).

# Parables

## IV. Verses 7-8 provide the conclusion of the illustration about faithfulness or fruitfulness.

- A. Verse 7 reads, "if ye abide in me," suggesting the conditional basis by which the fruitful will be rewarded.
- B. Verse 7 also reads, "and my words abide in you."
  - 1. The Word of Jesus Christ formerly cleansed the branch.
  - 2. The Word of God maintains and directs the child of God (2 Corinthians 5:7).
  - 3. Being filled with the Word of God fits one for a spiritual reward.
- C. Verse 7 further reads, "ye shall ask what ye will, and it will be done unto you."
  - 1. The apostles alone were the audience in John 14-16, and this applies to them in their apostolic mission (John 14:14; 16:23).
  - 2. However, God does promise to answer the prayers of faithful children of God if the prayers accord with His will (1 John 3:22; Acts 21:14).
  - 3. Unfaithful Christians and non-Christians are not afforded the avenue of prayer with God (John 9:31; Proverbs 15:29).
- D. Verse 8 reads, "herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."
  - 1. A little dab will not do!
  - 2. Faithful Christians will utilize all of their potential and abilities every opportunity they have to serve God.
  - 3. If Christians do not glorify God by their fruits, then no one will glorify God.
- E. Verse 8 concludes with, "so shall ye be my disciples."
  - 1. Fruitfulness is a primary characteristic of the child of God.
  - 2. A collection of Christians in an area, a congregation, should be characterized by the combined fruitfulness of each faithful Christian.

### Conclusion:

- 1. Jesus Christ is the center and lifeblood of Christianity, as is the vine the source of life to the branches.
- 2. Without the Word of God, souls are not cleansed.
- 3. All dead wood will be burned!
- 4. All fruitful branches will be pruned to produce more fruit.

### Invitation:

- 1. No one can be a branch attached to the true vine without being in Jesus Christ.
- 2. Two verses tell how to get into Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27).
- 3. Erring Christians must be restored to again be fruitful branches attached to the true vine (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 3:8).











