

Jesus Christ: ***The Son of God!***

12 Lessons

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2004

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Lesson One

"The Deity of Jesus"

In these studies we will be looking at the topic of ***"Jesus Christ, the Son of God!"*** The studies have been divided into three sections: (1) The Pre-Fleshly State; (2) The Fleshly State; and (3) The Glorified State. In the first section there will be four lessons: (1) ***"The Deity of Jesus;"*** (2) ***"The Pre-Fleshly Names of Jesus;"*** (3) ***"The Promised Coming of Jesus into the World;"*** and (4) ***"Types of Jesus in the Old Testament."*** We now turn our attention to the topic of this first lesson in this important series of studies.....**"The Deity of Jesus!"**

GOD WITH US

Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea over 2000 years ago (Matthew 2:1). Was that the beginning of His existence as a being? If so, He was only a mere man like all other men. But the Bible portrays Jesus as Deity—as God—as equal with the Father (John 10:30). His birth was of a miraculous nature—conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20) and born of a virgin (Matthew 1:23). Jesus not only claimed to be God, but was condemned by the religious leaders for such a claim (John 5:16-18). He used expressions that identified Him as being equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

"THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE!"

If Jesus is Deity, then, his fleshly birth would indicate that God has come down in human form and lived among men (Matthew 1:23)—the very thing that was foretold of Him by the prophets. The biggest problem that the Jewish religious leaders had was accepting His claim of Deity in the light of the strong emphasis upon the "ONENESS" of God in the Old Testament Scriptures (Deuteronomy 6:4). If there is only one God—then, how could Jesus be God also? But two things should have been obvious to them, if they had just stopped to evaluate: (1) Genesis 1:26, etc., uses the plural pronouns "us" and "we" which would indicate a plurality in some sense; and (2) The use of "one" in talking about the marriage of Adam and Eve certainly did not take away from there being two persons (Genesis 2:24). "Oneness" carries with it the concept of unity and harmony, which obviously can be said of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! We use such terms as the following to indicate this oneness of God: Triune God; Tri-unity; and Trinity. Man is portrayed as one, but made up of body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23). By the same reasoning—God is one—but is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF JESUS

The very fact that Jesus claimed to be equal with the Father (John 10:30) would obviously suggest to us that Jesus had a pre-fleshly state of existence. The Bible clearly indicates such. Jesus makes the claim that He had been with the Father and upon His physical death would go back to His Father (John 16:28). The Gospel of John begins with this concept that the Word

(the Son of God) was in the beginning with God (the Father), but was made flesh (Jesus) (John 1:1, 14) and dwelt among us. In reality, before there was a beginning (of man and his world), the Word (Jesus) was or existed! Jesus clearly laid claim to this concept when He said to the Jewish people, *“before Abraham was, I am!”* (John 8:58; 16:28). This was what Jesus was trying to help the Jewish leaders to see when He asked them about a statement of David in the Old Testament (Matthew 22:41-46). Even the Old Testament prophets indicated Jesus’ pre-fleshly existence as they foretold of the coming Messiah (Micah 5:2; Isaiah 9:6).

JESUS, THE REVEALER OF THE FATHER

Not only does the Bible claim Divinity for Jesus, but that He was the perfect revelation of God, the Father, to mankind (John 1:18). And why shouldn’t He be the perfect revelation—He had been with the Father from all eternity (John 16:28)! Jesus’ statement to Philip shows that those who have seen Jesus have also seen the Father (John 14:9). Thus, the invisible God has now become visible in Jesus! Jesus was truly God in the flesh!

JESUS, THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS

“In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth!” (Genesis 1:1) While the creation of all things are attributed unto God (Psalm 33:6; Genesis 1:26; 3:22), it is more specifically attributed to God, the Son! (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16-17; and Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 8:6). The very fact of His being the Creator implies not only His pre-fleshly existence, but His Deity as well. It should be obvious to all that for Jesus to make such claims about Himself as a mere man would make Him neither a good man nor an honest man. Such a person is to be rejected. But we believe that the only rational conclusion that can be drawn is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

A believer in Christ once asked an unbeliever a serious question: *“Can you tell me from where this egg came?”* *“Why, of course, it came from a hen.”* The believer kept pressing the question, *“Then, from where did the hen come?”* The unbeliever was back and forth with his answer not willing to admit the obvious. Finally, the believer pointed out: *“I believe that God created the first hen or egg, from which all succeeding eggs and hens have come. If you cannot explain to me where the first hen or egg came from, how can you expect me to believe that you can explain the existence of the whole world with God.”* The Bible’s simple answer to this all important question is: *“In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth!”* (Genesis 1:1)

HOMEWORK

- 1. What were some things unique about the birth of Jesus?**
 - a) Matthew 1:20**
 - b) Matthew 1:23**
- 2. Did Jesus claim to be equal with God? (John 10:30)**
- 3. How do you explain this concept in the light of the statement, “*Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is ONE God?*” (Deuteronomy 6:4)**
- 4. What are the evidences for believing Jesus pre-existed before His fleshly birth?**
 - a) John 16:28**
 - b) John 1:1, 14**
 - c) Micah 5:2; Isaiah 9:6**
 - d) John 8:58**
 - e) Matthew 22:41-46**
- 5. In what sense has Jesus revealed the Father unto mankind? (John 1:18; 16:28; 14:9)**
- 6. To whom is the creation of all things attributed? (Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16-17)**
- 7. What have you learned about Jesus from this lesson?**

Lesson Two

“The Pre-Fleshly Names of Jesus”

Names have always been significant both to God and man. Our very identity as a person is tied in with our name. We can have evil or good connected with our name as well (Luke 6:22). And so it is with Christ; names and terms were used to identify Him before He was born in the flesh. These terms and names should be held in reverence and respect (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2; John 12:28)...like any name for Deity!

TERMS TO IDENTIFY JESUS

There are many terms used to describe the coming One to save the world. These terms, as well as names, help to emphasize the many-sidedness of the Christ. They help to emphasize that He is both God and man. They show the ways that He will come to serve mankind. They also can help to give a full revelation of the Christ before He comes among men—thus, helping to more easily identify Him when He comes! Following are a few of these terms that give insight to the life and work of Jesus when he came into the world.

- 1) **The Seed.** This not only identifies his ancestry, but it takes on a special significance of He being the one that the Jews were to look for. (Genesis 3:15; 12:1-3; 22:18; 21:12; 28:14; 49:10; 2 Samuel 7:12-14; Psalm 89:3-4; 132:11)
- 2) **Shiloh.** The one who gives rest and peace. Jesus came for this very purpose. Genesis 49:10; Matthew 11:28; John 14:27; 16:33; Colossians 1:21; Ephesians 2:14).
- 3) **Star, Sceptre.** As a star, Jesus is our guide (John 14:6). As a Sceptre, He holds power and reigns as King (Numbers 24:17).
- 4) **A Prophet.** Jesus is not only a prophet, but the greatest of all. He has not only given us the Word of God, but revealed God to us. God has spoken through His Son to mankind today (Deuteronomy 18:15-18; Acts 3:22; 7:37; John 3:2; Hebrews 1:1-2).
- 5) **A Priest.** He has become our sacrificial offering unto God for the forgiveness of our sins. He is also our High Priest that can help us as a mediator between God and man. (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 5:5-6).
- 6) **Ensign.** He is our standard bearer. Isaiah. 11:10
- 7) **Righteousness.** Jesus is our righteousness imputed to us. 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 4:1-6).
- 8) **Plumbline.** He is our rule....all things must be judged by Him as a standard. Amos 7:8
- 9) **A Fountain.** This fountain satisfies all the spiritual needs of God's people. Zechariah 13:1
- 10) **King—Ruler.** He is our Governor, the One who rules over us. Micah 5:2

In addition to these and other terms, Jesus is also identified with some very significant names. Each of these terms help to identified the nature, the life, and work of Jesus when He comes.

- 1) **The Word of God.** The Apostle John said that “the Word” was in the beginning with God and was God (John 1:1-2). He not only is God’s spokesman for us today, but He is the wisdom of God (Colossians 2:3) and the revealer of the Father (John 1:18).
- 2) **The Messiah (The Christ).** The word means, “the anointed One” or “the one to come.” He is the One that the Old Testament Prophets spoke so much about in trying to prepare the Jewish Nation to accept Him when he came. This name is used a great deal in the New Testament in particular (Daniel 9:25-26; John 1:41).
- 3) **Jesus.** The word means “savior.” Jesus came to save the world from the just penalty of their sins (Matthew 1:21).
- 4) **Immanuel.** Jesus was God in the flesh—God with us! (Matthew 1:23)
- 5) **Lord.** Men are to confess that Jesus is Lord unto their salvation (Romans 10:9-10). Peter told the Jews on the Day of Pentecost that Jesus had been made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).
- 6) **Redeemer—Savior.** He is the One who buys us back to God. He has saved us from a terrible punishment and made us right with God (Isaiah 59:20). There is salvation in no other name than in Jesus, the Christ (Acts 4:12).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Jesus has been exalted by the Father and has been given a name that is above every name (Ephesians 1:21; Philippians 2:9). At His name, every knee is being called upon to bow—whether in heaven, earth or under the earth—and every tongue is called upon to confess this name to the Glory of the Father (Philippians 2:10-11).

All men are being called upon to believe in His name (Acts 10:43); call upon His name (Acts 9:21); be baptized in His name (Acts 2:38); in order to have life in His name (John 20:31). His people are to speak in His name to all nations of people (Acts 4:18). Jesus’ followers are called upon to ask in His name (John 14:13); to suffer in His name (Acts 5:41); to do all in His name so that we might glorify God (Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 4:16); and to hold fast His name and not deny it (Revelation 2:13; 3:8).

What a Savior.....what a NAME!

HOMEWORK

- 1. Why do you like for people to remember and call you by name?**
- 2. Would you like for people to say derogatory things about your name? Why?**
- 3. What is significant about the many terms used to identify Christ before He came to earth?**
- 4. What is significant about the term “seed” in regards to Christ?**
- 5. Why is Jesus called “the Word of God?”**
- 6. What does it mean to confess Jesus as Lord?**
- 7. How do we show respect for the name of Jesus?**
- 8. Why should we do all that we do in the name of Jesus?**
- 9. How can we have life in the name of Jesus?**
- 10. How do we hold fast to the name of Jesus?**

Lesson Three

“Jesus in Promise and Prophecy”

Men make promises and very often strive to keep them. But, even at the very best we can do—circumstances, our weaknesses, other people’s involvement, changes, etc.—all make it hard for us to carry out good-intentioned promises. But God doesn’t have our problem: when He promises, He can see them through perfectly (1 Kings 8:56). In this lesson we want to look closer at God’s promise of the coming “Messiah” that would be a blessing to all mankind.

THE PROMISED MESSIAH

Man’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden caused him to be driven out and no longer able to enjoy the great privileges of that place (Genesis 3:22-24). But God did not forsake His creation—He gave a great promise in the midst of the punishment for their sinful disobedience. He promised that a descendant of Mother Eve would come and provide the means of freeing mankind from the eternal consequences of their sin (Genesis 3:15). It was centuries later that this promise was repeated again to a man by the name of Abraham. God told him that one of his descendants would be a blessing to all mankind (Genesis 12:3; 22:17-18). The New Testament writer tells us that that descendant was Jesus (Galatians 3:15-18).

THE PROPHETS FORETOLD OF JESUS’ COMING

The prophet’s work was to keep alive in the minds of the Israelite Nation the promise God made to Abraham of the coming of a redeemer for man. Thus, for the next 1500 years (1900-400 BC), one prophet after another would remind them of God’s promise and its coming fulfillment.

- 1) Moses—John 5:46; Deut. 18:5; Acts 3:22; 26:22-23; Luke 24:47
- 2) Samuel—Acts 3:24
- 3) David—Ps. 34:20; 16:8-10; Jn. 19:36; Acts 2:25-28
- 4) Isaiah—Jn. 12:41; Acts 8:32-34; Isa. 53
- 5) Zechariah—Zech. 12:10; 13:7; Matt. 26:31; Jn. 19:37
- 6) All the prophets desired to see Jesus’ Day—Matt. 13:16-17; 1 Peter. 1:10-12

The prophets not only foretold of Jesus’ coming, but also many of the details of His life. The following illustrates just how detail they were.

- 1) His Birth:
 - a) Place—Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1-6
 - b) Manner—Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25
 - c) God in the flesh—Isa. 9:6
 - d) But also Human—Isa. 9:6; Rom. 1:3-4; Jn. 1:1
- 2) His Ancestry:
 - a) Seed of Woman—Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4
 - b) Seed of Abraham—Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18; Gal. 3:8, 16

- c) Seed of David—2 Sam. 7:12-14; Ps. 89:3-4; Jn. 7:42; Matt. 22:41
- 3) His Teaching:
 - a) Speak in Parables—Ps. 78:2; Matt. 13:10-13, 34-35
 - b) Confirm His teaching by Miracles—Isa. 35:3-5; Matt. 11:4-6; Jn. 20:30-31
- 4) His Death:
 - a) A sacrifice for sin—Isa. 53; Acts 8:32-35
 - b) Be betrayed by friend—Ps. 41:9; Jn. 13:18
 - c) Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver—Zech. 11:12; Matt. 26:14
 - d) The money would purchase a potter's field—Zech. 11:13; Matt. 27:3-9
 - e) Be reviled, insulted, spat upon—Isa. 50:6; Matt. 26:67
 - f) Crucified with wicked—Isa. 53:9; Lk. 23:32-33
 - g) Taunted and jeered—Ps. 22:7-8; Matt. 27:39-43
 - h) Forsaken in death—Ps. 22:1; Matt. 27:46
 - i) Given gall and vinegar—Ps. 69:21; Matt. 27:34; Jn. 19:39
 - j) Cast lots for clothes—Ps. 22:18; Matt. 27:35
 - k) No bones broken—Ps. 34:20; Jn. 19:31-36
 - l) Side pierced—Zech. 12:10; Jn. 19:34-37
- 5) His Resurrection:
 - a) Soul not left in Hades.
 - b) Body not see corruption—Ps. 16:8-10; Acts 2:24-29; 13:32-37
- 6) His Ascension:
 - a) Would ascend to heaven—Ps. 68:18; Eph. 4:8-10
 - b) Would pass through the heavenly gates—Ps. 24:7-10; Acts 1:9-11

Various efforts have been made to count how many prophecies were made and fulfilled by Christ. It is obvious to the Bible student that there are many—all showing God's great power to fulfill His promises! When preachers spoke to a Jewish audience or even to Gentile proselytes, they would quote one or more Old Testament prophecies to help convince the people that Jesus truly was the Anointed One that was to come whom God had promised centuries ago. Two examples only can help to illustrate this fact (Acts 2:24-32; 8:29-35). Several good reasons can be suggested why we today can make use of them:

- 1) They can help unbelievers come to believe in Jesus.
- 2) They can help convince people of the DEITY of Jesus.
- 3) They can help people to see the great plan of God for redemption.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

God's promises are sure—dependable—not like man's! (Hebrews 6:13-18; 9:15; 10:23; 2 Peter 3:8-9, 13; 1 John 2:25). Because they are certain, we can know that some day there will be a judgment of all mankind (Hebrews 9:27)—but, more important for the obedient believer in Jesus—we look forward to the reward of the faithful to be given to us (Revelations 2:10).

HOMEWORK

- 1. Why do men not keep their promises?**
- 2. What special promise did God make to Adam and Eve?**
- 3. What special person did God choose to repeat this promise to?**
- 4. Who does the New Testament say is the fulfillment of this promise?**
- 5. Where was Jesus to be born?**
- 6. Was David an ancestor of Jesus?**
- 7. Were Jesus' bones to be broken when He was crucified?**
- 8. For how many pieces of silver did Judas get to betray Jesus?**
- 9. Where did Jesus go upon His death?**
- 10. What value were the Old Testament prophecies about Christ to the Jewish people?**
- 11. What value are they to us today?**
- 12. How can we be sure of the promises of God?**
- 13. Can we really count on receiving eternal life when this life is over?**

Lesson Four

“Jesus in Type”

In the previous lesson we looked at Jesus in Promise and Prophecy. Not only did God promise and foretell of Jesus' coming, but he used various ways and various people to illustrate what Jesus would be like. The terms that are often used to identify this concept are: Types, Examples, Patterns, Figures, and Forms. The word “type” is akin to the words: Parable, Symbol, or Comparison. The word “parable” means to throw along-side-of. It is a way to compare earthly things to heavenly things in order to better understand heavenly things. A “type” is a way of comparing two events or the life or actions of two people to better understand them. Thus, using types or comparisons can be an effective way of teaching. The word “type” is found in Hebrews 11:19 in the NASV of the Bible and in Romans 5:14 in the NKJV of the Bible. The term is often used in identifying peoples and things that are a type of Jesus in one way or another. This lesson will look at several of these briefly. It should be obvious that no person can fully typify Jesus to us, but they can help us to see certain aspects of His life that related to their lives.

“THINGS” THAT TYPIFY JESUS

We want to look at some things or events that are identified with Christ to help illustrate His life and work.

- 1) **Brazen Serpent.** In Numbers 21:1-9, the Israelites were complaining about the place where they were journeying—there was no food or water. God sent serpents among them and caused many to die. The people repented and God had Moses to make a brass serpent and place it on a pole. He then told them to look upon the serpent when they had been bit and they would be healed. This took faith in God to accept this concept. In John 3:14-16, Jesus makes reference to this event and compares himself to the serpent—if you want to be saved you must look in faith upon Him being crucified.
- 2) **Cities of Refuge.** In Numbers 35:1-8, God had the people to set aside certain cities for the Levites to live in, but some of these would become “cities of refuge.” These cities would be the ones that a person could flee to in order to have a fair trial—especially if he had accidentally killed someone. It was a place of safety. Jesus is our place to flee to in order to be safe (Hebrews 6:18-20).
- 3) **Manna.** In Exodus 16:31-36, it states that the Israelites ate “manna” for the forty years of wilderness wanderings. It was manna from heaven that God gave to the people. Jesus pointed out that a man could eat of “manna” and would die, but the person that ate the “true manna from heaven” (Himself) would never die (John 6:45-51, 58).
- 4) **Passover.** In Exodus 12:21-26, the Israelites were being prepared to escape the death of their first born by taking the blood of the “Passover lamb” and put it on their door post. This became an annual observance for the people to remind them that God had spared their first born, but killed all the first born of Egypt. Jesus is portrayed as our

Passover Lamb by which we escape eternal death (1 Corinthians 5:7-8; Hebrews 13:10-13).

- 5) **The Rock.** In Exodus 17:1-7, the people were crying for water. God told Moses to go to a certain place and there to strike the rock before him and water would come forth. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, Jesus is compared to that rock (a spiritual rock) that supplies our souls with what is necessary to have eternal life.
- 6) **Tabernacle and Priesthood.** In Exodus 25:1-9, Israel was given instructions on how to build a "Tabernacle" in which God could dwell in their midst. Later, He gave instructions on how the priests were to officiate in the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was to serve as a shadow of things that were to come...representing the true Tabernacle that God would build (the church) (Hebrews 8:1-5; Hebrews 9:1-12).

These and other incidences can be used to compare to Christ that causes us to better understand the work of Jesus in our lives. But there are also specific people that have been chosen by inspiration to help illustrate the life and/or work of Christ. The following are some specifically mentioned in the New Testament.

- 1) **Adam.** In Romans 5:12-14, Adam is said to be a "type" of Christ. In Adam, all will die; but in Christ, all will be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:20-22). The first Adam became a living soul, but the last Adam (Christ) became a life-giving spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45-47).
- 2) **Melchizedek.** In Genesis 14:17-24, a brief account is given of Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek. Very little is given about him. He was a Priest of the Most High God. He was King of Salem. Evidently a very righteous person. Jesus' priesthood is compared to Melchizedek's rather than to Aaron's....stating that Jesus is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:11-17). He is the means of our access to God!
- 3) **Moses.** In Deuteronomy 18:15-20, God tells Moses that He will raise up another prophet like him, but superior to him. That prophet, according to Acts 3:22-24, is Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-3).
- 4) **Isaac.** In Genesis 22:9-19 is the story of how God told Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, as an offering to God—but at the last second stopped him from actually carrying it out. The Hebrew writer uses this incident to help us to see how that God was willing to offer His only begotten Son for the sins of the world (11:17-19; John 3:16).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It should be obvious that the coming of Jesus and His work of Redemption was so important that God used several ways of helping men to understand and accept Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. For only God could promise, foretell, and typify the coming of Jesus and His work before he actually came into our world. By so doing, it could help men to identify the Deity of Jesus—that is, God with us!

HOMEWORK

- 1. What are some other terms that identify with “type?”**
- 2. Does the Bible actually use the word “type” in reference to Jesus?**
- 3. In comparing the six different “things” that typify Jesus and/or His work, which one did you feel helped you the most to appreciate Jesus?**
- 4. How could looking upon a brass serpent cause a man to be healed of a snake bite?**
- 5. How could being immersed in water cause a man to be forgiven of all past sins?**
- 6. What part of the Tabernacle typifies the church and which part typifies heaven?**
- 7. What is significant about Adam and Jesus being “the first?”**
- 8. How was Jesus to be a prophet like Moses?**
- 9. Could you have been like Isaac—willing to submit to being offered as a sacrifice to God?**
- 10. Do “types” help you better understand Jesus?**

Lesson Five

“Jesus: the God-Man”

Man has much to learn, not only from his youth, but even to the time of his death! There are so many things we do not know. One person has observed that the older he became and the more he learned, the more he realized that he did not know. We need to realize our need to be taught of God (Isaiah 2:3) and that His ways are not necessarily the ways we may want to walk (Isaiah 42:24; 55:8). But even when we are willing to be taught of God, there are things that we may not fully know. This is probably the reason why Moses stated: *“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”* (Deuteronomy 29:29). Even when some things are revealed, we may not be able to fully grasp them, but we accept them on faith because God said so. One of those things is “the triune being of God” (Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit). And another closely related to this is that Jesus was both God and Man. Scholarly men have wrestled with this concept from the time of Christ’s coming to earth. It is certainly a matter of accepting by faith what we cannot possibly rationally explain with our limited knowledge—that is, how could Deity become a man and still be Deity?

JESUS’ BIRTH

As has previously been pointed out in past lessons, the Prophets foretold of the coming birth of the Messiah. It stated that He would be born of a virgin and would be called Deity (Mighty God, Eternal Father) (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7). The New Testament Gospels begin their works by revealing the actual happening of what the Prophet had foretold: (1) He was born of a virgin (one who had never known a man); (2) He would be conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18, 20, 23, 25); (3) He would be God in the flesh. John’s Gospel approaches these things a little different. He states the Eternal (Deity) Nature of “the word” and how that “word” was not only God, but was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1-2, 14).

REASONS FOR DEITY BECOMING FLESH

Why was it necessary for God to come down in the form of a man—to be born as a human, live as a human, and die as a human? What indications do we have that will help us to appreciate this great event?

- 1) **Deity came into the world to reveal Himself more fully to man.** Certainly, the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork (Psalm 19:1). The inspired Apostle Paul declared that man could know God and know His power and Divine nature (Romans 1:19-20). But, the coming of Jesus was God’s way of showing more fully His nature to mankind (John 1:18; 14:8-9).
- 2) **Deity came into the world to serve as a perfect example for men.** Jesus challenged people to be perfect as God is perfect (Matthew 5:48); and then, he lived a perfect life,

sinless, to show man how to be perfect (1 Peter 2:21-22; 2 Corinthians 5:21). He even challenged men to show him where He had sinned (John 8:46). Jesus' very life of sinlessness convicts mankind for its sinfulness (John 16:8). He obeyed His Father's Will perfectly (Hebrews 5:8-9).

- 3) **Deity came into the world to deliver man from the curse of sin.** Since all men have sinned (Romans 3:23), then, all men are under the curse of sin—which is death! (Galatians 3:10). Man is under the bondage of sin and unable to deliver himself from its hold (John 8:34). Jesus came to be man's Savior, Redeemer, or Deliverer (Matthew 1:21; John 10:10; 12:47).

But why was such a necessity on God's part? Jesus was born in human flesh to save—what is the connection? Jesus became the perfect sacrifice for man's sins. He lived the Law perfectly, therefore was not under the curse of death. But, He chose to die in our stead—shed His blood—so that we might be set free from the just penalty of our sins (Romans 6:23).

One of the most beautiful concepts that man must come to understand is the reason for Jesus' death! God's law states, "*You sin! You die!*" (Romans 6:23). So, how could God save sinful man and not be a liar—uphold His Law? Simply.....Jesus, as a perfect man, could take our place, pay our penalty, and the Law of God would be satisfied and upheld. God would then be just in forgiving sinful man because the demand of the Law has been met in Jesus' death (Romans 3:23-26).

- 4) **Deity came into the world to become man's perfect High Priest.** He lived as a man and was tempted as we are, but did not sin. He knows our weaknesses and can be understanding of such (Hebrews 4:14-16; 2:14-18). He is the perfect mediator between God and man because He is both!
- 5) **Deity came to conquer death and give man assurance of immortality.** Jesus died and went into the place of the dead and came forth victorious! (Revelation 1:17-18). Death has kept man in its grip until Jesus was resurrection. His resurrection is our assurances of a resurrection unto eternal life (Hebrews 4:14-15; Romans 1:1-7; 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 54-57).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Other reasons could be given for Jesus becoming flesh, but these should be sufficient to help us understand God's great sacrifice for us in His Son. Because Jesus did what He did, the Father has highly exalted Him and given Him a name above all other names, and has subjected all things under His feet (Ephesians 1:19-22). Jesus is now reigning at the right hand of the Father awaiting patiently for His Redeemed Bride to join Him in His "many mansions." (John 14:1-4).

HOMEWORK

- 1. Do you believe that Deity literally came down in the form of a human being?**
- 2. How could Deity become man in every sense of the word and not lose His Deity nature?**
- 3. Was Mary told that the child born to her would be “the Son of God?”**
- 4. What does becoming flesh have to do with Jesus being able to save us?**
- 5. How do you reconcile the Holiness and Justice of God with His Love and Mercy?**
- 6. How has Christ conquered death?**
- 7. Does death have power over us now?**
- 8. How did Jesus more fully reveal the Father to us?**
- 9. Why can't man deliver himself from the hold of sin?**
- 10. When does the mortal put on immortality?**

Lesson Six

“In the Footsteps of Jesus”

We have little insight about Jesus' life from a short time after His birth until he started on His public ministry among the people. Because of the threat of Herod, Joseph was told to take his family to Egypt. They stayed until after the death of Herod. Jesus was raised in Nazareth as the son of a carpenter. The only other indication we have of His activity was when He was twelve years old. He went to Jerusalem for one of the feast days and before leaving was found in the Temple discussing the Scriptures with the religious leaders. A summary statement is given of the rest of His activities until He was about thirty years old—**“and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”** (Luke 2:52). It was also said of Him that He left us an example on how we should live (1 Peter 2:21). In this lesson we will look briefly at an overview of His life during His public ministry among the people.

FOLLOWING IN THE WATERS OF BAPTISM

When the time came for Jesus to begin His work among the people, the first thing that he did was go to John the Baptist and asked to be baptized of him (Mark 1:9-11). He walked about eighty miles in order to be baptized by him. John was calling on the Jewish people to repent, to confess their sins, and then to be baptized for the remission of those sins (Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:4-5). While Jesus had no sins to confess, He still insisted on John baptizing Him so that He could **“fulfill all righteousness.”** (Matthew 3:15). If Jesus saw the importance of being baptized like God commanded (and didn't need to have His sins forgiven), then we should really see the importance of such to our lives—because we are sinners and need God's forgiveness. Immersion in water (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12) is an act of faith that God requires of mankind before He extends forgiveness to them (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). To refuse to be baptized (immersed in water) is to disobey Christ's command, is a refusal to follow His example, and shows our lack of love for Him (John 14:15).

FOLLOWING IN THE WILDERNESS OF TEMPTATION

After His baptism, the Spirit led Him into the wilderness where He was tempted of Satan for 40 days (Matthew 4:1-11). It was important that Jesus be tempted **“in all points like as we are, but without sin...”** (Hebrew 4:15). Temptation often comes at the height of our life's experiences. Jesus had just been baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and the Father audibly spoke His approval of Him (Mark 1:9-12). And then, He immediately was put into a supreme test of His loyalty to the Father. He successfully resisted every temptation by skillfully applying the Word of God. We are challenged today to **“submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”** (James 4:7). For those who follow Jesus will find themselves often in the wilderness of Temptation. But we can take heart, for we have a high priest who has suffered, been tempted in all points like us, and is able to help us through each ordeal..... **“God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, but with the temptation make a way of escape.”** (1 Corinthians 10:13).

FOLLOWING INTO THE HOUSE OF WORSHIP

We are impressed with Jesus at the age of twelve desiring to be in the house of worship. His heart was set on doing the will of His Father. His heart was definitely set on things above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:1-3). According to Luke 4:16, it was Jesus' regular routine to go to the synagogue each Sabbath. When He went up to Jerusalem, His interest and activities seemed to have revolved around the Temple. Upon two occasions, he felt compelled to cleanse the Temple of the defilements of men and reminded them: ***"It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer', but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"*** (Matthew 21:12-13). Following Jesus will lead regularly to the place of worship. (Hebrews 10:25; Psalm 122:1).

FOLLOWING IN THE FIELDS OF SERVICE

One of the brief statements summarizing Jesus' public ministry is found in Acts 10:2—***"He went about doing good."*** When His disciples were arguing over who would be the greatest in the "new kingdom," Jesus rebuked them for their worldly outlook. Those who were to follow Jesus must have a different outlook—one of service! He challenged them with the statement—***"whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant."*** (Matthew 20:26) Then, He used Himself as an example by saying: ***"the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*** (Matthew 20:28) Those who would be disciples of Jesus then must become servants of others. In the words of the inspired Apostle Paul: ***"I will very gladly spend and be spent for you..."*** (2 Corinthians 12:11).

FOLLOWING IN THE MOUNTAIN OF PRAYER

In spite of possessing vast powers and wisdom, Jesus felt the need to spend much time in prayer—some times all night long (Luke 6:12). His humanity, possibly, was "showing!" His identifying with humans should help us to see even our greater need of prayer in our lives (1 Timothy 2:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). We are urged to not stop praying, but continue to express our dependence upon God in our lives.

FOLLOWING IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus experienced great despair because of what lay ahead for Him. He was approaching some of the loneliest moments of His earthly existence where all forsook Him, and even the Father turned His face from Jesus for a period of time on the cross. This was indicated when Jesus cried out, ***"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"*** (Matthew 27:46). Jesus suffered both physically and mentally on the cross, so that we could be set free from the just penalty of our sins. Thus, He has become not only our example of patiently suffering for righteousness, but He also gives us the assurance that He understands when we face our grievous problems in life. So, we can truly say with the Psalmist, ***"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."*** (Psalm 23)

FOLLOWING IN HIS FOOTSTEPS IS BOTH CHALLENGING AND ASSURING!

HOMEWORK

- 1. What do we know about the early life of Jesus from the Gospels?**
- 2. Why did Jesus need to be baptized?**
- 3. What is the reason why we need to be baptized?**
- 4. To what extent was Jesus tempted?**
- 5. What admonition does James give about dealing with temptation?**
- 6. What assurance do we have that we can deal with our temptations?**
- 7. What kind of attitudes and actions did Jesus detest that were shown by the people that used the Temple for a place of business?**
- 8. To be great in the church, what should we do?**
- 9. Why did Jesus need to pray to the Father?**
- 10. What made Jesus' death so bad?**

Lesson Seven

"The Demanding Jesus"

Towards the end of Jesus' public ministry, many of His disciples turned and walked no more with Him. Why? Why would anyone in their right mind turn from the only One who could give them eternal life? (John 6:59-69). The answer given was brief and to the point: ***"This is a hard saying who can understand?"*** Jesus wanted followers who trusted in Him so His demands were simple but firm. The purpose of this lesson is to look at these demands and evaluate our own willingness to follow Him. For discipleship to Jesus is not determined by our wishes, but His! He sets the standards to be met for those who want to answer His call. The very concept of being a disciple is one who is willing to be taught and willing then to put those things into practice in one's life.

DEMANDS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Several different expressions are used to communicate Jesus' demands for being His follower. Some of the more obvious are found in Matthew and Luke's gospels. The following will give a general idea of what would be involved.

- 1) **Take up one's cross.** (Matthew 16:24) Whatever burdens or hardships that may be placed on us because we are a disciple of Jesus, we must willingly bear!
- 2) **Deny one's self.** (Matthew 16:24) A person will either do his will, or the will of someone else, or the will of God. He makes the choice. Jesus is calling for us to do the will of the Father in heaven if we want to follow Him.
- 3) **Lose one's life.** (Matthew 16:25) To try to keep one's life for himself is to lose it, but to give up one's life for righteousness, he will gain it.
- 4) **Hate parents and family.** (Luke 14:25-26) The concept of hate in this place carries with it the idea of loving them less than God. If we love them more than God, then when a choice has to be made between listening to them or God, we will choose our family over God!

Jesus' demands are not arbitrary, but practical. A choice has to be made who will be first in our lives—God or other things or other people! (Matthew 6:24). It just isn't possible to serve two masters! If we are not willing to renounce all, we cannot be a true follower of Jesus.

THREATS TO DISCIPLESHIP

We often use the terms "discipleship" and "true discipleship" to try to indicate that men can appear to be or think of themselves as disciples, but they really are not. Many are not ready or willing to meet the demands of "true discipleship" but still want the blessings of being a

disciple of Jesus. Some of the threats to true discipleship can be seen in the following illustrations.

- 1) **John 10:27-28.** There are many voices calling for our attention and following. Many times these voices made an appeal to our selfish interest that can cause us not to be a “true” disciple of Jesus. But the “true” disciple hears the voice of Jesus and follows!
- 2) **Luke 22:54.** Peter followed afar off. There was that hesitancy to be fully identified as a disciple of Jesus. Many today want to be a disciple, but had rather follow “afar off” like Peter.
- 3) **John 6:2, 26-27.** Many were following Jesus because of the miracles they saw Him performed and some because of benefiting from those miracles. But such was only a superficial motivation that would not be sufficient for them to truly meet the demands of true discipleship.

WHY BECOME A DISCIPLE OF JESUS?

With the demands of discipleship being so high, why would any one want to become a true disciple of Jesus? What should motivate a person to make such a sacrifice to become His follower?

- 1) **Because only Jesus knows the Father intimately.** (John 10:30) He alone can fully and truthfully reveal the Father unto mankind (John 1:18).
- 2) **Because Jesus is the Father’s spokesman for us today.** (Hebrew 1:1-2; 2:1-3; Deuteronomy 18:15-18; Acts 3:23; Matthew 17:5). To accept the words of Christ is to accept the words of the Father. And whoever will not hear the words of Christ will be cut off—has no hope for life eternal with the Father. It will be Jesus’ words that judge men in the last day (John 12:48).
- 3) **Because Jesus is the perfect example to follow.** (1 Peter 2:21). There is no better. He can challenge mankind to their very best and highest.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Possibly the greatest reason for wanting to follow Christ is the Rewards that He offers. If we have left fathers or mothers, family, friends, or possessions to follow Him, He promises us a hundredfold in this life and eternal life afterwards (Matthew 19:29). He has promised us that if we will lose our lives for Him here, that we will gain our lives for all eternity (Matthew 16:25-26). But those not fully committed need not expect the rewards that Jesus offers (Luke 9:57-62).

HOMEWORK

- 1. Who has the right to set the standards of “true” discipleship to Jesus?**
- 2. What is a real disciple?**
- 3. How would you sum up the demands of being a disciple of Jesus?**
- 4. Why is family such a crucial issue to discipleship to Jesus?**
- 5. What are some of the things that could cause us to turn from discipleship to Jesus?**
- 6. What are some reasons for wanting to be Jesus’ disciple?**
- 7. Why is it necessary to make a choice of masters?**
- 8. How does one lose his life for Jesus’ sake?**
- 9. How is a person “crucified” with Christ?**
- 10. What stands in your way of being a true disciple of Jesus?**

Lesson Eight

"The Attractiveness of Jesus"

What makes Christianity attractive? Or, more to the point, what makes Jesus attractive to human kind? There is obviously a difference in the response of people to the preaching of the gospel—some accept, others reject. Some are deeply attracted to Jesus while others turn from Him in indifference. Why the differences? There are many factors involved in trying to answer this question, and it is not the purpose of this lesson to deal with the reasons why people are not attracted to Jesus—but the very opposite! Just what is the drawing power of Jesus? We believe there are several factors that could be a part of the over-all answer to the attractiveness of Jesus.

THE MIRACLES

As people witnessed the miracles performed by Jesus on themselves or others, it caused them to follow Him so they could evaluate further what kind of interest they would show in Jesus (John 6:2). The selfish, self-centeredness of mankind became a big factor concerning miracles....that is, what can I get out of this?(John 6:26) But there were others that were absolutely sure of Jesus' great power and that He had to be from God. Miracles could not only confirm that His message was from God, but serve as proof of His very Deity (John 20:30-31). Why wouldn't people be attracted to One whom they looked upon as God?

HIS TEACHINGS

Jesus is considered the Master teacher. Nicodemus was convinced that Jesus was a teacher come from God (John 3:2). The people's general reaction to Jesus' teaching was ***"no man ever spoke like this man!"*** (John 7:46) or ***"the people were astonished at his teachings, for he taught them as one having authority"*** (Matthew 7:28-29). Luke's gospel states that the people were ***"attentive to him."*** (Luke 19:48). Great crowds of people followed Jesus continually during His public ministry—even up to the time of his arrest. His teachings challenged them, but also gave them great hope.

HIS SINLESS LIFE

A big factor in people listening and even believing a teacher is when they know his life and it is consistent with what he teaches. Jesus not only challenged people deeply in His teachings, but He never taught what He did not model before them. Jesus never did wrong, never broke God's Law, and never needed forgiveness. He even publicly challenged the religious leaders to point out His sin (John 8:46). When brought before Pilate to be tried, Pilate said he found no fault in the man (Matthew 27:24). Judas, who betrayed Jesus, later stated, ***"I have betrayed innocent blood."*** (Matthew 27:4). The Centurion that had watched Jesus all through His death ordeal felt compelled to exclaim, ***"Truly this was the Son of God."*** (Matthew 27:54). The Apostle Peter stated that Jesus ***"committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth."*** (1 Peter 2:22). People should naturally be attracted by One who is perfect in his life.

HIS DEATH, BURIAL, RESURRECTION

But the real attraction of Jesus centers in His death, burial, and resurrection from the dead. Jesus' statement in John 12:32 strongly indicates this: ***"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."*** The tragedy of how He died is not the attraction, for thousands upon thousands had been crucified up to this time. The attraction is that He died in my place and took my punishment upon Himself, so that I could be set free. He paid dearly for my redemption from the penalty of my sins. Jesus is not lifted up before a lost world as a mere man that died unjustly at the hands of the Romans, but as One who loved me enough to leave heaven, come to earth, live as a man perfectly, and then offer Himself as the perfect atonement for my sins. The preaching of Christ crucified is the power to draw men and women to Jesus to receive the salvation He offers.

However, Jesus' death apart from His resurrection is meaningless! Without the assurance of a resurrection unto life, what is the point of His death??? ***"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable."*** (1 Corinthians 15:19). The gospel message does not stop with the death and burial of Christ, but completes the message by preaching Jesus was raised (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Man, as a living being, does not cease to exist upon physical death, but will continue in existence either in a place of reward or a place of punishment (John 5:28-29).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Jesus said that if He were lifted up from the earth, He would draw all men unto Himself. And the way Jesus is lifted up is:

- 1) Through living a godly life after Him;
- 2) Through pointing to the miracles of Jesus, to His teachings, and to His sinless life;
- 3) And through preaching the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus to give men hope.

Not everyone will be attracted to Jesus for various reasons, but many will be if we lift Him up before a lost world. How well are we lifting Him up?

HOMEWORK

- 1. Why do you think some people are not attracted to Jesus?**

- 2. Would miracles attract you to the person that was performing them? If so, why?**

- 3. Are you drawn more to a boring, uninteresting teacher or one that does a superb job of teaching? Why?**

- 4. Do you resent a person that is more righteous than you, or do you respect him?**

- 5. What was the impact of Jesus' perfect life on those about him?**

- 6. What is so important about the death of Jesus that draws mankind to him?**

- 7. Of what value is Jesus' death to mankind if He was not raised from the dead?**

- 8. Why is mankind drawn to thinking about what happens after death?**

- 9. How can we help to lift Christ up to the world about us?**

- 10. How well are we doing the job?**

Lesson Nine

“The Marks of the Lord Jesus”

Some in the early church were not teaching correctly and trying to lead new Christians to turn away from what Paul had taught them. One of the sad things Paul pointed out about these teachers was—they had not had to endure persecution as Paul had. In fact they were purposefully trying to avoid such by their wrong teaching. Paul concludes with this statement: ***“From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”*** (Galatians 6:17).

Everyone is a marked person in some sense. We are known by our speech or the way we walk, or the gestures we use, etc. But even more so is the prisoner marked by the special clothes he has to wear, or the special clothes that a soldier wears that identifies what branch of service he is in. But there seems to be a sense in which we are marked by what enslaves us. For example:

- 1) There is the man whose bloated face and red eyes tell us that he is a slave to strong drink.
- 2) There is a man whose restlessness of spirit and hard face tells us he is a slave to sensuality.
- 3) There is a man whose unprincipled business tactics tell us that he is dominated by covetousness.

Can the same be said of the Christian—that he bears the marks of His master? When one wears the name of Jesus and lives the proper life that is in harmony with the life of Christ, does he not show the marks of Christ in his life? One of the best testimonies given to the Apostles just after the church had its beginning was: ***“They realized that they had been with Jesus.”*** (Acts 4:13). The “marks” of Christ can be the ways Jesus has affected our lives for the better. Such marks can be better shown, not by just our speech only, but by a life—by what we do (1 John 3:18).

MARKS OF SCOURGING

The primary use of the term “marks of the Lord Jesus” in Galatians 6:17 is probably in reference to Paul’s beatings he had received because he was a follower of Jesus. Those beatings would have left permanent marks upon his back. These he received not because of wrong doing, but unjustly for right doing. But the reason why the outward marks were there was because of the marks of Jesus in his changed life. These marks were living testimony to whom Paul gave service.

How can we know that we bear the marks of Jesus? Three basic things will help to show this fact:

- 1) Willing and loving obedience to the will of God (Matthew 12:50).
- 2) Loving and serving our fellow Christians (John 13:34-35).
- 3) Willingness to suffer and sacrifice to follow Christ (Luke 9:23; John 15:18).

Jesus has not invited us to a picnic, but to a pilgrimage—not to a frolic, but to a fight—not to an excursion, but to an execution (death to self, to sin, and to the world).

The Revelation Letter talks about those who have the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17) and those who have the mark of God (Revelation 14:1). In both instances, the marking is a way of identifying to whom one belongs. But the significant thing about the concept of marking is to identify the ones who would be persecuted. Those who had the mark of God would be the brunt of the beast's persecution. He would not persecute those who have his mark. The choice had to be made as to which mark we wanted—the beast's or God's!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Someone has observed—*“If the church is not stirring up trouble with the world and suffering reproach, then it needs to make a close examination of its very life and teaching.”* Or, in the terminology of this lesson—whose mark are we wearing? The Apostle Paul reminded Timothy: *“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”*(2 Timothy 3:12).

Have we considered lately if we have allowed Jesus to mark us as His own? What scars do we wear to witness to our efforts to serve Him? What characteristics of His life do we show to the world, through our obedience to Him?

HOMEWORK

- 1. Why do some teachers in the church soften down or change their beliefs and teachings?**
- 2. What is the purpose for “marking” a thing or a person?**
- 3. How can we be marked spiritually by Christ?**
- 4. Would you consider it a compliment if people could recognize that you belong to Jesus?**
- 5. What kind of “marks” was Paul talking about in Galatians 6:17?**
- 6. How does the Revelation Letter use the concept of “marking?”**
- 7. How could persecution leave marks that would identify us with Christ?**
- 8. If we are not suffering persecution for Christ, is that a sign that we are not really His?**
- 9. Does the world around us know to whom we belong?**
- 10. What outward scars do we have showing we belong to Christ?**

Lesson Ten

“Jesus at the Father's Right Hand”

We have looked briefly at Jesus in His pre-fleshly state, His fleshly state, and now we will have two lessons that look at His glorified state. Jesus was:

- 1) Conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18-20);
- 2) Born of the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1:23);
- 3) Grew up as a human being (Luke 2:52);
- 4) Lived a sinless life (1 Peter 2:22);
- 5) Then, offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins (Philippians 2:8).

As a results of the above, God raised Jesus up from the grave and set Him on His Own Right Hand:

- 1) Exalting Him highly;
- 2) Given Him a name which is above all other names;
- 3) So that all should bow before Him;
- 4) And that all should confess that Jesus is Christ and Lord to the glory of God. (Philippians 2:9-11)

The purpose of these lessons is to see how His glorified state is described to us and what He is doing for us at this time.

HIS ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN

After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus appeared to His disciples on several occasions over a period of forty days speaking to them about the kingdom of God (Acts 2:6-11). Then, He ascended up from them into heaven to be seated at the right hand of the majesty on high (Acts 2:32-33). The Apostle Peter states that such was foretold of Him by the prophets. Daniel expressed it this way, *“I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”* (Daniel 7:13-14).

GIVEN A KINGDOM

This kingdom was set up and Jesus was made king over His kingdom (Luke 23:3; Acts 2:33-35; 8:12; Colossians 1:13-14). Jesus even told the people during His public ministry that many of them standing before Him would not die until they saw the kingdom of God come with power (Mark 9:1). His kingdom was not an earthly kingdom, but a spiritual one (John 18:36-37). The Jewish people were expecting an earthly kingdom, but Jesus did not come, nor does He plan to come to set up an earthly kingdom. His kingdom is not eating and drinking, but righteousness,

and joy, and peace (Romans 14:17). It is called the kingdom of heaven because it is of heaven, not of this earth. Jesus is reigning on His Throne in heaven, not on the earth. Jesus came so that God could reign in the hearts and lives of men—not in a political or material manner. The kingdom of Christ is His church (Matthew 16:18-19; Luke 22:29-30). When Christ returns for His own, then he will give up His reign and deliver the kingdom up to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:23-27).

TO BECOME OUR HIGH PRIEST

Another reason for Jesus' ascension was to be set up as mankind's high priest. Jesus did not assume this position, but was appointed to be such by the Father, Himself (Hebrews 5:5-6). He could not be a priest after the order of Aaron because he was not of the priestly lineage (Levi). But the Father could appoint Him a priest after the likeness of Melchizedek (Hebrew 7:20-21). He has become our High Priest to continue His service to His children.

- 1) **He is a merciful and faithful High Priest** (Hebrews 2:17);
- 2) **He makes intercession for us** (Hebrews 2:17);
- 3) **He aids us who suffer and are tempted, for He endured the same** (Hebrews 2:18);
- 4) **He sympathizes with our weaknesses** (Hebrews 4:15);
- 5) **He makes intercession for us before the throne of God** (Romans 8:34).

As a priest, Christ knows and understands us. He feels for us and desires to help us at all times. He is constantly pleading for mercy on our behalf. He never tires of making intercession for us before the face of God.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Jesus' kingship and priesthood are in sharp contrast. His priesthood shows and emphasizes His compassion for us. His kingship emphasizes His headship or Authority over us. But in both realms He is acting for our good—on our behalf, so that we might be saved eternally. All authority has been given to Jesus in Heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). We need to be wise and submit to that authority (Matthew 7:24-29) for our eternal welfare.

When we obey the gospel and are thus born again (John 3:3-5), we come into the kingdom of Christ and He becomes our King, our Lord, and Ruler. We give recognition to His great position by faithful Christian living.

HOMEWORK

- 1. What is the significance of Jesus being at the Right Hand of God?**
- 2. Why will people bow before Jesus?**
- 3. Who foretold of Jesus' ascension up to the "Ancient of Days?"**
- 4. What was the stated purpose or outcome of that ascension?**
- 5. What is a kingdom?**
- 6. Did Jesus come to set up His kingdom on earth?**
- 7. What kind of a kingdom did Jesus set up?**
- 8. When will Jesus give up His reign as King?**
- 9. What is so significant about Jesus being a priest?**
- 10. How does one come into the kingdom of God?**

Lesson Eleven

“Jesus: The Judge of All Mankind”

It is sometimes hard for people who do not know the teaching of Scripture to see the many-sided Nature of Deity. They want to see God as a God of Love and Mercy, but not a God who judges and condemns people to eternal punishment. And of all persons they would not expect to be the judge would be Him who gave His life to redeem fallen mankind. However, for those who are willing to accept the teaching of Scripture, there is no choice but to believe in *“Jesus: The Judge of All Mankind!”* There are major events to take place before the Judgment. We will briefly look at these and then see about the final judgment.

THE COMING OF JESUS

Three statements summarize the Bible: (1) Someone is coming; (2) Someone has come; (3) and Someone is coming again! When Jesus ascended, the Angels told the Apostles that as you have seen Him ascend in the clouds to heaven, so would his return be (Acts 1:6-11). There are no signs of His return that can let us know that it is imminent. Inspiration says He will come as a thief in the night—unexpected! (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3). But when he comes, everyone will know it! His coming will be with a great shout and with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16). The Apostle John states that when He comes, every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him (Revelation 1:7).

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

When Jesus comes, there will be a resurrection of the dead—but also the changing of those still alive (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52). Those who have died and their souls gone into the Hadean realm will be re-united with a resurrected body. It will be changed in make-up—different from this earthly, fleshly body (1 Corinthians 15:42-49). It will be a body prepared for eternity. This resurrection from the dead is referred by the Inspired Apostle Paul as a victory over death that Jesus has made possible (1 Corinthians 15:56-57). But the Inspired Apostle John stated that the resurrection of the dead will be different for some than for others. It will be a resurrection unto condemnation for some, but a resurrection unto life for others (John 5:28-29).

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WORLD

At Jesus' coming there will be a great conflagration—the burning up of the heavens and earth! The Inspired Apostle Peter spells it out in very clear terminology. The heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. All will be destroyed by fire and will be no more (2 Peter 3:10-12). If the present heavens and earth are to be destroyed, then, where will the redeemed people be for all

eternity? The answer is given by Peter....there will be a new “heavens and earth” wherein dwells righteousness (2 Peter 3:13). This place is also referred to as “heaven,” “the eternal kingdom of heaven,” “Paradise.” (2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 2:7; Matthew 19:21).

THE JUDGMENT

The Inspired writer of Hebrews tells us that after death for all men, there will be a Day of Judgment (Hebrews 9:27). The Inspired Apostle Paul states that “ALL” will appear before the Judgment seat of Christ in order to be recompensed good or bad according to our works (2 Corinthians 5:10). Jesus’ first coming into the world was not to pass judgment on mankind, but to offer Himself as man’s deliverer, redeemer, or savior (John 3:17). However, when He returns the 2nd time, it will be to bring all men into judgment in order to give an accounting of our deeds before Him who sits on the throne. God evidently has fixed a day in which He will judge the world by Jesus. And He has given mankind that assurance by raising Jesus from the dead (Acts 17:31). His judgment will be just and righteous in that Day (2 Timothy 4:8).

REWARD OR PUNISHMENT

The purpose of judgment is to finalize whether a person will be eternally saved or eternally lost! The resurrection of all men is unto judgment—but John adds—either resurrection unto condemnation or resurrection unto life. It is judgment unto reward or punishment! ***“These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*** (Matthew 25:46) When Jesus returns, He will not only be glorified in those who believed in Him, but it will be to punish those who did not know God, nor obey His gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). Judgment can be a glorious day for the faithful believer, but a horrible day for those who have rejected the will of God in their lives. As Paul states, men need to be persuaded to be ready for that Day or experience the wrath of God (2 Corinthians 5:11; Romans 1:18).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Apostle’s exhortation to the church at Thessalonica is very appropriate for us as well! Realize that the Lord is coming as a thief in the night. Realize that we are not of the darkness, but of the day, sons of light. Therefore, let us not sleep but be alert and sober. Let us put on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of the hope of salvation. Let us realize that we are not destined for wrath, but for salvation—so, be ready for His coming (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11). Or, as Paul says to the Philippians, ***“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”*** (Philippians 2:12). ***“For if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner.”*** (1 Peter 4:18)

HOMEWORK

- 1. Why do some people only want to see the loving side of Deity?**
- 2. What three phrases summarize the Bible?**
- 3. What are some events that will take place when Jesus returns?**
- 4. Are there signs of Jesus' 2nd coming?**
- 5. How will mankind know when Jesus comes?**
- 6. Who will be raised from the dead?**
- 7. Why will they be raised?**
- 8. What will happen to the present heavens and earth?**
- 9. Who will be brought into judgment?**
- 10. What determines whether we will be saved or lost at judgment?**
- 11. In view of these events, how should we conduct our lives?**

Lesson Twelve

“I Have Found a Friend in Jesus”

Friendship with other people is not only desirable, but important to our mental and physical well-being. So much of the troubles that people have are because they feel that no one cares—they are all alone! This is the reason why family is so important, so needed—to satisfy this need of belonging—to feel that someone does care. Even the church can help supply this sense of caring for others.

But there is One that can supply this friendship and caring better than any other person—Jesus, the Son of God. We sing a song: *“I have found a friend in Jesus, He’s everything to me.”* The song in its entirety is so appropriate in showing how Jesus fulfills our need of friendship. While friends on earth are important in our lives, friendship with Jesus is of the utmost importance. There is a right kind and a wrong kind of friendship. James warns us about being friends with the world, which will cut off our friendship with God (James 4:4). Friendship with the wrong companions can help draw us away from God (1 Corinthians 15:33). The right kind of friendship is with the One and ones that help to keep us on the right way to heaven.

Jesus is offering to be our friend, but at the same time it is not a one-way street. We must want that friendship. We must want it bad enough to do what it takes to be His friend. And He makes that quite clear: *“You are My friends if you do what I command you.”* (John 15:14). Friendship with Jesus is not without a cost on our part. Abraham has shown us the way by trusting in God and being obedient to His will—*“and he was called the friend of God.”* (James 2:23). What an example and what a privilege we humans have that we can be called the friend of God! While Jesus was a friend to all peoples; yet, Inspiration chose to point out in particular that Jesus was accused of being a friend to tax collectors and sinners (Luke 7:34). True friends often stick closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24). And a friend will love you at all times, not just when everything is going fine (Proverbs 17:17). And when we need to hear some hard sayings, it is the friend that steps forward (Proverbs 27:6).

SHOWING FRIEND

To be true friendship, it must be shown sooner or later when the real testing time comes. The Inspired Apostle John showed this clearly in discussing the theme of Love. We must not only love in word, but in deed and in truth (1 John 3:13-18). So, it would seem to be with friendship—it is not just something we say or talk about, but it is shown by concrete actions. If we were to pick one passage that would show God’s friendship in action, what better one could we pick than the beloved 23rd Psalm!

- 1) **The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.** Why will I not want? Because she leads me to the “green valleys” or the spiritually uplifting and upbuilding places. Everything that is beneficial for my physical and spiritual being, He has or will provide for their needs (Matthew 6:33). He cares for His people.

- 2) **He restores my soul.** He supplies for my spiritual well-being! He leads and guides me in the right paths that lead to everlasting life. When I make a mistake, He has faith in me and my ultimate worth and is willing to restore me to my original position with Him.
- 3) **I will fear no evil.** Why? Because he is with me—his rod protects me from harm and his staff gives me comfort when I am facing the darkness of the night....in the valley of the shadow of death (Hebrews 13:5-65). He does not back out on his promises. He is never too busy for my problems. He has a sincere interest for my good (Romans 8:28). What security and peace of mind when we have a friend like this.
- 4) **My cup overflows.** Every thing that is needful is richly provided. My cup literally overflows with His goodness and mercy to me. It is not just life, but abundant life that He gives to my soul (John 10:10). My wonder-filled eyes look upward to express the love and gratitude to the friend of my life, all the days of my life!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Let's not forget that friendship requires two parties—both must want the friendship. God wants ours and has made it possible through a great sacrifice on His part. Now, the question comes to us, *“Do we really and truly want the friendship of God?”* If so, we will do all within our power to show it—not just in word—but in deed and in truth! Wouldn't you like for it to be said of you by God—*“you are my friend!”* He wants to say it, but has to wait for our response to His invitation. Have you made your decision yet to be a friend to God?

HOMEWORK

- 1. Why does friendships help us mentally and physically?**
- 2. What part does the family and the church play in meeting our needs?**
- 3. What is the problem with making the wrong kind of friends?**
- 4. How do we show our friendship with Jesus?**
- 5. Was Jesus a friend to tax collectors and sinners?**
- 6. Who was called the friend of God?**
- 7. What three things will a friend do?**
- 8. How does the 23rd Psalm illustrate friendship?**
- 9. Why does friendship require two parties?**
- 10. Are we the friend of God?**

