

West Virginia School Of Preaching

VICTORY LECTURES

OCTOBER 23-27, 1995

THEME: JESUS, THE CHRIST



CHURCH OF CHRIST

Fourth Street and Willard Avenue
Moundsville, West Virginia 26041

WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOL OF PREACHING

“VICTORY” LECTURES

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THEME: JESUS, THE CHRIST

Monday, October 23

6:30 - 6:55 PM	Congregational Singing	
7:00 - 7:30 PM	The Beatitudes	John Board
7:30 - 8:15 PM	Jesus Speaks Today.....	Buster Dobbs

Tuesday, October 24

9:00 - 9:50 AM	Lord Teach Us To Pray.....	Randy Matheny
10:00 - 10:50 AM	Jesus Our Example In Suffering	Denton Landon
11:00 - 11:50 AM	Resurrection, Hope of the World.....	Charles Pugh
1:10 - 2:00 PM	Encounters With the Pharisees.....	Dan Kessinger
2:10 - 3:00 PM	The “I Ams” of John.....	Bob Eddy
3:10 - 4:00 PM	The Promise of the Holy Spirit.....	Brent Gallagher
6:30 - 6:55 PM	Congregational Singing	
7:00 - 7:30 PM	Christ In You the Hope of Glory	Brian Adkins
7:30 - 8:15 PM	The Virgin Birth.....	Buster Dobbs

Wednesday, October 25

9:00 - 9:50 AM	The New Birth.....	Nick Deiger
10:00 - 10:50 AM	Jesus the Master Teacher	Bruce Daugherty
11:00 - 11:50 AM	The Fall of Jerusalem.....	Emanuel Daugherty
1:10 - 2:00 PM	Christ and Creation	Richard Melson
2:10 - 3:00 PM	The Purpose of the Cross	Frank Higgenbotham
3:10 - 4:00 PM	The Church and the Kingdom.....	Steve Miller
6:30 - 6:55 PM	Congregational Singing	
7:00 - 7:30 PM	Counting the Cost	Denver Cooper
7:30 - 8:15 PM	Resurrection Proofs.....	Buster Dobbs

Thursday, October 26

9:00 - 9:50 AM	What Jesus Said About Hell	Don Cooper
10:00 - 10:50 AM	Questions Jesus Asked.....	Brad Poe
11:00 - 11:50 AM	The High Priesthood of Christ.....	W. Terry Varner
1:10 - 2:00 PM	The Second Coming.....	Steve Stevens
2:10 - 3:00 PM	Parable of the Sower	J.D. Conley
3:10 - 4:00 PM	Choosing of the Apostles	Doug Petty
6:30 - 6:55 PM	Congregational Singing	
7:00 - 7:30 PM	The Transfiguration	Terry Jones
7:30 - 8:15 PM	Ascension and Kingship	Buster Dobbs

Friday, October 27

9:00 - 9:50 AM	What Jesus Said About Heaven	Eddy Cooper
10:00 - 10:50 AM	Jesus and Money	Burt Jones
11:00 - 11:50 AM	The Lord’s Supper	D. Gene West
1:10 - 2:00 PM	Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage.....	Mark Bass
2:10 - 3:00 PM	Jesus and Worship.....	Tim Nichols
3:10 - 4:00 PM	Miracles of Jesus.....	Will Montgomery
6:30 - 6:55 PM	Congregational Singing	
7:00 - 7:30 PM	The Great Commission	Ken Chumbley
7:30 - 8:15 PM	Jesus Prayer For Unity.....	Buster Dobbs

Preface

The fall of 1994 marked the beginning of the **West Virginia School of Preaching**. The school is under the oversight of the elders at the **Hillview Terrace Church of Christ in Moundsville, West Virginia**. Emanuel Daugherty serves as the director.

All faculty members and persons responsible for the education and training of the men attending **West Virginia School of Preaching** are dedicated to teaching sound doctrine, building up the body of Christ and preaching the gospel to the whole world. It is our aim to "teach faithful men who will teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2).

The fall of 1995 marks another great beginning--the first annual **West Virginia School of Preaching "Victory" Lectureship**. By calling them the "**Victory**" lectures we emphasize the Christian's victory over self, sin, and Satan; victory over the world, death, hell and the grave; victory over all things that hinder our relationship with God and His Son. This victory is accomplished by and through Christ our Savior. The apostle Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me" (Phil 4:13). Thus we present our first lectureship with the theme: **Jesus, the Christ**. The lectures that can be presented on the subject of Christ are limitless. We will have thirty-four lectures by thirty preachers of the gospel.

As our first lectureship book goes out it is hoped that all will be impressed by the doctrinal soundness of each lecture; that there will be many things presented to encourage, edify and exhort saints to accomplish great things for Christ and His church; that truth and only truth will peel forth from the pulpits and classrooms wherever these lectures are used.

Emanuel Daugherty, Director

THE BEATITUDES

John Board

When the world recalls great teachers, often the names Aristotle and Confucius are listed. But when one searches for the greatest teacher of all time, one name stands above all else, Jesus Christ. His teaching was so masterful that even His fiercest enemies were forced to admit He was one with great didactic abilities. At the conclusion of one of His formal sermons "the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as one of their scribes" (ASV Mt. 7:28-29). In John 7:46 the officers reported of Jesus "Never man so spake."

This great teacher employed many different techniques in His teaching (parables, miracles, and debate) but the technique that this lecture will concentrate upon is what might loosely be termed the formal sermon. In Matthew chapters 5-7 the student of God's word will find what is commonly referred to as "The Sermon on the Mount." This is the first and longest formal sermon of Christ that is recorded in the pages of the New Testament. It is at the beginning of this sermon that the Beatitudes are recorded.

In a study of the Beatitudes it is important to point out that that which is formally termed the Beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-12) is by no means all of what could be termed a beatitude, nor is it the only place that the Bible uses the word "blessed." W.W. Dowling in *The Bible Handbook* (College Press, Joplin, Missouri, Reprint of 1887 edition) page 309 lists four additional Beatitudes which are found, two in Luke 12 (verses 37 and 43) and two in Revelation (20:6 and 22:14). In all the Bible there are one hundred statements that begin with the word "blessed;" e.g., Psalm 1:1. Indeed, as some have said, the Bible is a book of beatitudes. For the purpose of this lecture though, concentration will be given to the heart of the beatitudes, those verses most commonly referred to as the Beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-12). The study will be approached as follows: I) an examination of the word "blessed;" II) the Beatitudes stated and discussed; and III) some practical application of the Beatitudes.

I. AN EXAMINATION OF THE WORD "BLESSED"

Often the Beatitudes are referred to as the "rules for happiness." This is because the word translated "blessed" in some translations has also been translated as "happy" in other translations. But it is unfortunate that our English word "happy" does not quite convey the idea of the Greek word *makarios*. *Makarios* was originally used by the Greeks to describe the happy state of their gods as opposed to the state of man. To the early Greeks only their gods were truly the "blessed ones."

Makarios is used in the New Testament to describe the highest possible happiness that man can enjoy in this world, a state of spiritual and moral prosperity. When one is completely committed to the One who is truly blessed [e.g. God, Christ (1 Timothy 1:11; 6:15)] His life is indeed truly blessed and happy.

Consider the words A.T. Robertson writes and quotes in *Word Pictures in the New Testament* Vol. 1, p. 39:

The Greek word here (*makarioi*) is an adjective that means "happy" which in English etymology goes back to hap, chance, good-luck as seen in our words haply, hapless, happily, happiness. "Blessedness is, of course, an infinitely higher and better thing than mere happiness" (Weymouth)... "Shaking itself loose from all thoughts of outward good, it becomes the express symbol of a happiness identified with pure character. Behind it lies the clear cognition of sin as the fountain-head of all misery, and of holiness as the final and effectual cure for every woe." (Vincent). Jesus takes this word "happy" and puts it in this rich environment. It is a pity that we have not kept the word "happy" to the high and holy plane where Jesus placed it.

And consider M.H. Tucker's statement from his lecture on Matthew Chapter 5 in *Great Chapters Of The Bible 1979 ETSOPM LECTURES*:

Before further describing the Christian character a remark is in order about the word "blessed." It is often said that "blessed" is very similar to "happy," and that is true. However, there is enough difference to merit additional comment. Happiness is from the root word "*hap*" which means "chance." It depends greatly on outward circumstances such as material prosperity, good health, many friends and even the weather. Blessedness is a deeper word. It is an inward state which is not altered by outside forces.

The state of being "blessed" should be a goal of each and every follower of Christ.

II. THE BEATITUDES STATED AND DISCUSSED

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

To be poor in spirit is to have a humble spirit and to realize that spiritually speaking, one is a pauper. Those who think too highly of themselves will never be close to God because they do not feel a need for Him. Those who are poor in spirit truly realize the great benefit from placing their entire trust in God and relying fully upon Him (Prov. 3:5-6); They are the ones who can have happiness in this life.

This beatitude is also called the "root" beatitude because the other beatitudes grow from one being poor in spirit. No one will ever inherit the Kingdom of Heaven who does not first realize a great need for and dependence upon God.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

Today someone might ask "How can I live a blessed and happy life if I mourn?" Such a question arises out of an ignorance of the type of mourning required by Christ. Christ is not saying blessed are the pessimist, whiners, or those who mourn over the loss of material possessions. Christ is not even saying blessed are those who mourn or have sorrow because they were caught in a sin or have consequences to face because of that sin.

Christ is saying blessed are those: 1) who mourn over their own sins for that mourning will work repentance (2 Cor. 7:10; Ps. 38:18); 2) who mourn over the sins of others as did Christ (Luke 19:41); and 3) who mourn over the sufferings of others for that will motivate us to act which will be a basis of our Judgement before Christ (Matt. 25:31-46).

Those who mourn will be comforted by a comfort that only God can give. Christian mourner's lives are God-oriented and as such receive comfort from God's grace; Indeed what a blessing.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the Earth"

Jesus says blessed are the meek, not the weak. Too often today men misunderstand meekness. Meekness is not weakness but rather is strength brought under control. The Greeks used this word to describe a stallion brought under control or tamed. Imagine the potential power that was still within that stallion but was then used for good. Christ declared Himself to be meek (Mt. 11:29) and He was a man's man. Biblically speaking one who is meek is one who has channeled his strengths into the service of God. Moses was the meekest man on earth (Numbers 12:3) but was definitely not a weakling. Zephaniah 2:3 states the meek of the earth are those who have kept the ordinances of Jehovah.

The meek will inherit the earth of which God is the owner (Ps. 24:1) when they become children of God (Gal. 3:27) and joint-heirs with the Lord (Rom. 8:17). God supplies their needs (Phil. 4:19) and they therefore enjoy the blessing of earth more than others. Those who have their emotions under control and submit to God will better be able to endure the trials which they will face in this life.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Christ uses the two greatest desires of man hunger and thirst to describe the way one ought to feel about living in the ways of God. Those who want to be happy in this life will have as their greatest desire righteousness (Ps. 42:1). Seeking happiness in living a God-directed life is the only happiness that fulfills.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

Happy are those who can extend mercy or forgiveness to others; God will forgive them and others will also be more likely to forgive them (Mt. 18:21-35).

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Happy are those who are genuine in heart; they are not "play-actors" who pretend to follow God on the outside but are from, the inside-out, Christians. They shall see God in the sense that they shall enter into a fellowship with Him and experience Him more deeply than those who are not pure in heart. The pure in heart will possess an intimacy with God the world does not know.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God."

Happy are those who actively seek ways to bring about peace. God wants us to be peacemakers not piecemakers. The body of Christ has been split many times over those who did not display the spirit of Christ in striving to bring about peace; they rather overjoyed Satan by breaking the congregation of the Lord's body into pieces.

"Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

The Christian life if lived properly will evoke opposition from the world. A light will always have an effect on darkness (Mt. 5:14-16). But even when one faces persecution from the world he can always remember...his will be the Kingdom of Heaven.

II. SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF THE BEATITUDES

The Beatitudes are placed at the beginning of the first and longest recorded sermon of Christ in the Bible. This was done by the design of God. The Beatitudes describe the Christian character one must have in order to practice the Christian conduct that God demands. The progressive nature of the beatitudes shows God's wisdom in guiding His children into true happiness...happiness not based upon the outward circumstances that we face but rather happiness found in the heart based upon the teachings of God's word (Rom. 10:17).

John F. Board - John is the son of John D. & Margaret Board of the Church of Christ in Chester, WV. John was raised in Chester WV, attended Oak Glen High School, West Virginia University, and Freed Hardeman College. John served as an associate evangelist of the Oakwood Road Church of Christ, as evangelist of the Church of Christ in Yreka, California, as a teacher in the Ashland School of Biblical Studies, Ashland, Oregon and is currently the evangelist of the Church of Christ in Bridgeport, WV. John is married to the former Brenna S. Wiley of the Oakwood Road congregation. They have one daughter, Adrielle Kayleigh born June 5, 1995.

JESUS SPEAKS TODAY

H. A. "Buster" Dobbs

I. Introduction.

A. Jesus is Lord of lords and King of kings.

B. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him" (Hebrews 1:1-4).

1. Jesus is "heir of all things."

- a. "I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son: this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for they possession" (Psalms 2:7-8).
- b. "The eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 3:10).
- c. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:18-20).
- d. "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. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11).

2. Jesus is creator of all things. Through him God “made the worlds.”
 - a. Particularly significant is the role in creation assigned to the *logos*, who is incarnate in Jesus (John 1:14) in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel. It is not immediately obvious why a man sent from God, even the Messiah of Israel, should have played such a role. Yet Jesus Christ figures as the mediator in creation not only in John, but also in such NT books as 1 Corinthians (8:6), Colossians (1:15-17), and Hebrews (1:2), although the term *logos* is not used. (Interestingly enough, in 1 Cor. 1:24, Paul calls Christ ‘the wisdom of God,’ using the Greek term *sophia*, mentioned above, that has close connections with *logos*.) This development in the doctrine of Christ becomes immediately intelligible in light of the use of *logos* as God’s creating and revealing mediator in Philo and the role played by ‘wisdom’ in ancient Jewish wisdom literature. Yet an unprecedented step is taken by NT writers, especially the Fourth Evangelist, when it is claimed that the one who has played this role can be identified with a historic figure, Jesus of Nazareth (Achemier, Paul J., Th.D., *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*).
 - b. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:1-3).
3. Jesus is “the brightness” of the Father’s glory.
 - a. Jesus is to Jehovah what the sun’s rays are to the sun.
 - b. “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9).
 - c. “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9).
4. Jesus is the “express image” of Jehovah’s person.
 - a. “I and *my* Father are one” (John 10:30).
 - b. Jesus, Jehovah and the Spirit are of one essence, but different in person and substance.
5. Jesus “upholds all things by the word of his power.”
 - a. If he ceased to exercise his will in the support of the universe, it would immediately sink into annihilation.
 - b. Consider the immensity of the universe and then ponder the staggering thought that Jesus upholds it all simply because it wills that it should be upheld.
6. Jesus was made purification for sins.

- a. “For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4).
- b. “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14).
- c. “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:12-14).
- d. “And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Revelation 1:5).

C. The authority of Jesus.

- 1. The authority of Jesus is absolute.
- 2. The kingdom of heaven exists wherever humans bow before the Lamb who is a Lion and submit to him totally. This is worship in spirit and truth.

II. Jesus Speaks Today.

- A. “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will? (Hebrews 2:1-4).
- B. “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:26-31).
- C. “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him

was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:11-16).

H.A. (Buster) Dobbs - Buster was born and reared in Houston, TX. He was educated in Houston, having studied at the University of Houston and South Texas College of Law. He is married to Martha DeWoody Dobbs whose mother was a Starnes from which family came a number of elders and preachers. Martha's father and grandfather served as elders. Buster and Martha have three children and eight grandchildren.

His father, grandfather and great-grandfather served as elders. His great-great grandfather was a Gospel preacher. His most important training came from godly parents.

He as spend his entire preaching years in Houston, having begun to preach at the age of fourteen. During his teenage years, he preached for the West End, South Houston, and Fairbanks (later West 34th Street) churches in Houston. As a full time preacher, he preached eight years at Lyons and Majestic, seventeen years at Memorial, and the past fifteen years, as, first, preacher, then elder, and then preacher, again, at Fleetwood. At present, he is preaching, on a temporary basis, for the Klein Area church in Houston.

Buster is a debater and writer. He is Editor of the **Firm Foundation** and is giving full time to speaking at lectureships, Gospel meetings, writing and working with congregations that have special needs (problems).

LORD TEACH US TO PRAY

Randall F. Matheny

Text: Luke 11:1-4 (cf. 1 Timothy 2:1-8)

General Purpose: Examine the scripture for instruction regarding prayer.

Specific Purpose: Encourage and equip for constructive, productive activity in prayer.

Thesis Sentence: Prayer is a blessing and privilege that can enrich man's relationship with God, aid in spiritual development, and positively affect the life and associations of the believer.

Introduction:

- A. Prayer is common in virtually all religions and is especially important in the Bible
 - 1. Understanding of prayer corresponds to understanding of God
 - 2. Prayer is dialogue with God
 - 3. Prayer leads to more meaningful communion with God
 - 4. Prayer leads to a greater understanding of God's will
- B. Prayer is a blessing and privilege for the righteous (1 Pet. 3:12; Jas. 5:16; Psm. 34:15; Prov. 15:29)
 - 1. Righteous have instant access to God
 - 2. Willfully disobedient and unrepentant cannot expect to have prayers answered

Body:

- I. The power and effectiveness of prayer -- God is the moving force (Lk. 11:2)
 - A. God intends for his children to rely on him and be concerned about all humankind
 - 1. Lk. 11:2 addresses intimate communication with the Almighty, reverence for him, respect for his will ("...who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. 2:4)
 - 2. 1 Tim. 2:1-2 "First of all" sets a high priority for "supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks"
 - 3. Goal: "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty"
 - B. From the Old Testament -- Israel was a nation established in prayer
 - 1. God heard the cries of his people, was aware of their plight, came down to deliver them (Ex. 3:7-10)
 - 2. Moses maintained constant communion with God (Ex. 3:1-4:17) throughout the wilderness wandering, interceded for Israel's benefit (Ex. 32:11-14)
 - 3. Prayer is prominent in the Psalms
 - a. Psalm 6 -- for healing strength in distress
 - b. Psalm 57 -- seek protection and safety
 - c. Psalm 63 -- praise, express joy in fellowship with God
 - d. Psalm 107 -- thanksgiving for deliverance and vindication

4. Prayer is important in the Prophets -- Moral accountability accompanies genuine, communion with God (Hos. 7:13-14; Amos 4:4-5; Mal. 1:9-11)
 5. Fifteen years was added to Hezekiah's life (2 Kng. 20:1-7)
 6. Jonah prayed and was heard out of the belly of a fish and was heard (Jonah 2)
 7. Daily prayer was important to maintaining contact with God for the Hebrew exiles (Dan. 6:10)
- C. From the New Testament -- Jesus' prayer life encouraged an appreciation for prayer in his disciples (Lk. 11:1-4; cf. Mt. 6:9-13)
1. This prayer emphasizes how to pray, rather than what to pray
 2. Set as a contrast to hypocritical, ritualistic prayer (Mt. 6:5-13)
 - a. Not to impress others (Mt. 6:5)
 - b. No long-winded attempts to manipulate God (Mt. 6:7)
 - c. Jesus prayed long (Lk. 6:12) and repeated himself (Mk. 14:36-42, esp. v. 39), but with entirely different motive
 3. Paul prayed (Ac. 20:36; 21:; 1 Thes. 3:9-10 "night and day...exceedingly")
 4. Replacement of Judas (Ac. 1:24-25)
 5. During persecution, for boldness (Ac. 4:23-31)
 6. In preparation for godly service (Ac. 9:40; 28:8)
- D. Other New Testament emphasis
1. It avails much (Jas. 5:16-18; Eph. 3:20-21)
 2. Must be in accord with the will of God (1 Jn. 5:14-15)
 - a. David (2 Sam. 12:15-23)
 - b. Paul (2 Cor. 12:7-10)
 3. Early church continued steadfastly (Ac. 2:42)
 - a. When Peter was in prison (Ac. 12:1-13)
 - b. Sending evangelists to their work (Ac. 13:1-3)
 4. Every prayer answered: "Yes," or "No," or "Wait."
- II. The need for prayer -- God is the loving benefactor upon whom we rely (Lk. 11:2)
- A. Examples of Jesus' dependence upon the Father -- a regular and intense prayer life
1. At the beginning of his ministry (Lk. 3:21-22)
 2. He spent the entire night in prayer before He chose the twelve apostles (Lk. 6:12-16)
 3. After feeding the 5,000 he went to pray (Mt. 14:22-23)
 4. For benefit of others present (Jn. 11:41-42)
 5. Upon the night of His betrayal (Jn. 17)
 6. Immediately before His arrest (Mt. 26:36-46)
 7. While being crucified, prayed at least three times (Mt. 27:46; Lk. 23:34, 46)
- B. Prayer is to be a part of daily life for the godly (1 Thes. 5:17; Rom. 12:12)
1. To overcome temptations (Mt. 26:41)
 2. Confession of faults (Jas. 5:16)
 3. Forgiveness (Ac. 8:22)
 4. Study/truth seeking (Ac. 10:30-31; Jas. 1:5-8)
 5. Tribulation (Ac. 16:25)
 6. Society (1 Tim. 2:1)
 7. Enemies (Lk. 6:27-28)
 8. Church/brethren (Jas. 5:16)
 9. Leaders (1 Tim. 2:2)
 10. Strength/Boldness (Eph. 6:18-20)

11. Thanksgiving (Col. 4:2)
12. Need (Phil. 4:6)

III. Conditions and attitudes in prayer (Lk. 11:4)

- A. Forgiven and forgiving (Mt. 6:14-15; Mk. 11:25-26)
- B. Faithfully obedient -- positive attitudes and conditions for effective prayer
 1. Humility (Mt. 6:2, 5-8; Lk 18:9-14)
 3. Faith (Mt. 21:22; cf. Mk. 11:24)
 4. Word must be in us, and must be in harmony with word (Jn. 15:7)
 5. Must be in accord with the will of God (1 Jn. 3:22; 5:14-15; Jas. 4:2-3; Mt. 26:39, 42; cf. Lk. 22:42)
 6. Must be in the name of Jesus Christ (Jn. 14:14; 16:23-24; Col. 3:17; 1 Tim. 2:5)
- C. Negative attitudes and conditions inhibit prayer
 1. Hypocritical (Mt. 6:5)
 2. Ritualistic (Mt. 6:7)
 3. Doubtful (Jas. 1:6-8)
 4. Selfishness (Jas. 4:2-3)
 5. Corrupted character (1 Pet. 3:12)

Conclusion:

- A. Prayer makes a difference (Jas. 4:2 -- problems go unresolved because divine help is not asked for)
 1. It is communion and communication between a father and his children
 2. God knows our needs, yet we must ask
 3. He is ready to answer, yet we must persist
- B. The faithful are assured that their requests will be heard (1 Jn. 3:22; 5:15)
- C. Prayer is powerful and effective, and has always been important in God's dealings with his people
 1. Israel's exodus was preceded by their cries having been heard by God
 2. Jesus' life was a consistent life of prayer
 3. The apostles and the early church relied heavily on prayer in every situation, both good and bad
 4. Christians today are to continue instant in prayer/pray without ceasing
- D. To be assured that our prayers will be answered by God:
 1. Biblical conditions and attitudes must be honored
 2. Must not be in a condition of unrepentant rebellion
 3. Must accept that God will answer in accord with his will
- E. Ultimately, a good, consistent prayer life will aid in these ways:
 1. Greater communion with God
 2. Greater understanding of his will
 3. More fruitful and productive service in the church
 4. More confidence, satisfaction, well-being and joy in Christianity

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JESUS OUR EXAMPLE IN SUFFERING

Denton Landon

Introduction

1. I Peter 2:21
2. Example defined: "2. something to be imitated; a pattern or model: *to set a good example*.
3. an instance serving for illustration" (American College Dictionary, p 418).
3. The word example in I Peter 2:21 ". . . is from *hupogrammon*, accusative singular of *hupogrammos*, from the preposition *hupo-*, under, and *gramma*, to write; thus, to write under; to copy, and here figuratively, a pattern or model for imitation. It is a figure suggested by the copy-book method of teaching penmanship" (Guy N. Woods, Peter, John, and Jude, p 78, 79).
4. Note what Peter says Jesus serves as an example in, suffering.
5. Suffering? Why Suffering?
 - a. II Timothy 3:12
 - b. John 15:18-20
 - c. I John 3:13
 - d. Suffering from persecution "goes with the territory."

I. What Was Jesus Example?

- A. I Peter 2:22-24.
 1. Never deserved it for Jesus never sinned
 2. He never practiced deceit or deception, no guile found
 3. Jesus never retaliated when verbally "attacked" but trusted God for righteous judgement
- B. Examples from the gospel records
 1. Accused of being a glutton and winebibber,
 2. Accused with being in league with the Devil,
 3. Charged with blaspheme of God,
 4. He was blindfolded, spit on, beaten, and challenged to prophecy who was doing it
 5. Roman soldiers robed Jesus with purple, gave him a "scepter" and crown, and bowed before in mockery
 6. As he hung dying they continued to mock and ridicule

II. Persecution Will Come For The Christian

A. Early church suffered from the Jews

1. The apostles, Acts 4:1ff; 5:17ff
2. Stephen Acts 6:9-8:1
3. Entire early church in Jerusalem, Acts 8:3,4
4. Paul, Acts 13:45; 14:5, II Corinthians 11:20ff
5. Readers of the Hebrew Epistle, Hebrews 13:3; 10:32ff
6. The Thessalonians, II Thessalonians 1:4ff

B. Suffered from the Gentiles

1. Book of Revelation
2. II Corinthians 11:25
3. II Timothy 4:14
4. II Timothy 2:8,9
5. I Peter 4:1-4

C. Suffered from false brethren

1. II Corinthians 11:226
2. Acts 15:1ff; Galatians 2:11ff
3. II Timothy 4:1-8

III. Results Of Enduring Suffering

A. God is glorified

1. I Peter 4:12-16
- 2.

B. Share in Jesus suffering, share in his glory

1. II Corinthians 1:3-7
2. I Peter 4:13,14
3. Matthew 5:10-12
4. Romans 8:18

C. Perfecting of the individual

1. Hebrews 5:8,9
2. James 1:2-4
3. II Corinthians 4:8-18

D. A source of joy, Matthew 5:10-12

E. Metaphors used for suffering

1. Chastening, Hebrews 12:5ff

2. Refining, I Peter 1:6-7

3. Pruning, John 15:1ff

IV. Types Of Suffering Today

A. Opposition by enemies claiming to follow the Lord

1. Some call us a cult

2. "Campbellites"

3. Other forms of ridicule

4. Accusations of arrogance, pride, exclusiveness

B. Opposition from enemies of current culture

1. Repressive

a Of women:

b. Those with "alternate lifestyles"

c. Singles

d. Children

2. Bigoted

3. Unloving, unkind, uncaring

C. Opposition from within the body

1. Marriage

2. Christians outside the body of Christ

3. Purpose of Scriptures

4. Issues of fellowship

5. Relationship of grace, faith, and law

6. Purpose of baptism

7. What is pleasing to God in worship assemblies

8. These and many more bring slander, contempt, etc.

9. Our reaction should be as Jesus' was, I Peter 2:21ff

Conclusion

1. Jesus suffered unjustly

2. We as christians will suffer unjustly

3. We need to endure patiently, willingly

4. Reward for patience endurance far outweighs the temporary pain

5. We can do by following his example, I Peter 2:21

Denton Landon - Denton was born and raised in Columbus, OH and was baptized by Emanuel Daugherty in March 1980. He married Jo Ann Leach in February 1981 and they have four children: Luke (11), Lydia (8), Matthew (5) and Joshua (2). He graduated from Memphis School of Preaching in 1983 and received a B.A. from Southern Christian University (Formerly Alabama Christian School of Religion) in 1985. He has done located work at Camden, AL (1983-1985), Bryan, OH (1985-1987), East High St., Springfield, OH (1988-1995) and Warner's Chapel, Clemmons, NC (Feb. 1995-present). He has spoken on lectureships, youth rallies and served as counselor or director for three different youth camps.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST - THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

Charles C. Pugh III

INTRODUCTION:

1. A student at the University of Uruguay asked Josh McDowell, "Professor McDowell, why can't you refute Christianity?" McDowell answered, "For a very simple reason. I'm unable to explain away an event in history -- the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (More Than A Carpenter by Josh McDowell, p. 51).
2. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the "Rock of Gibraltar" of Christian evidence and faith.
3. Jesus said, just a few hours before His death, "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19).
 - a. "BECAUSE I LIVE"
 - b. Because of the resurrection of Christ

I. THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE IN GOD.

- A. "Who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God" (1 Peter 1:21).
- B. Many evidences for existence of God.
 1. Teleological (Argument from design) - Where there is design, there must be a designer (Rom. 1:20).
 2. Cosmological (Argument from cause and effect) - Every effect must have an adequate cause (Heb. 3:4).
 3. Moral [Argument from sense of oughtness - moral responsibility in man] (Cf. Rom. 2:15).
 4. Biblical (Argument from the nature of the Bible - A book which could only come from God proves God).
 5. Christological (Argument from Christ) - Cannot explain Christ apart from

God (Cf. John 3:2).

C. Jesus is the greatest evidence there is for God.

II. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT PROVES JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD.

- A. "Declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).
- B. This one event, by itself, proves the deity of Jesus.
 - 1. If this is true everything else the Bible says about Him is obviously true.
 - 2. If this is false, it all is false.

III. SIN CAN BE FORGIVEN.

- A. He "was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).
- B. The resurrection had to occur for sin to be forgiven.
 - 1. If He were dead, He could not save us. How could a dead saviour save?
 - 2. "If Christ be not raised . . . ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17).
 - 3. Because He is alive He can "now appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24).

IV. THERE IS AN UNCHANGEABLE PRIESTHOOD.

- A. Under the law of Moses "there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood" (Heb. 7:23-24).
- B. Thus He is "the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

V. THERE IS REASON FOR HOPE.

- A. 1 Peter 1: 3-4.
- B. The living hope of the faithful Christian is by the resurrection from the dead.
 - 1. If Christ be not risen then "in this life only we have hope in Christ and we

"are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Cor. 15:19).

2. "If Jesus is still in the grave nothing matters. If Jesus is not in the grave nothing else matters."

VI. THERE IS REMEMBRANCE ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.

- A. The disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7).
 1. The bread was that of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 10:16).
 2. They ate the Lord's Supper in memory of Him (1 Cor. 11:24-26).
- B. This day is significant because Christ was risen on the first day of the week (Mark 16:9).

VII. EVERY ACCOUNTABLE PERSON WILL BE JUDGED.

- A. Acts 17:30-31.
- B. Divine assurance that we will be judged by Jesus is given by the fact that He is alive (2 Cor. 5:10).

VIII. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST WAS BUILT BY HIM.

- A. He said (Matt. 16:18).
 1. He would build His church.
 2. Death would not prevent it.
- B. He established it on the day of Pentecost because His soul was not left in (Hell KJV) - Hades, neither did His flesh see corruption (Acts 2:31).

IX. TRIUMPH IS ASSURED.

- A. "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).
- B. The defeat came through Adam ("In Adam all die") but the victory comes through Christ ("In Christ shall be made alive") - 1 Cor. 15:22.

X. INTERCESSION IS AVAILABLE.

- A. "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).
- B. To intercede means to intervene between parties with a view to reconciling differences.
 - 1. We become at enmity with God because of sin (Isa. 59:2).
 - 2. In Jesus we have an Advocate (one who intercedes, pleads our case) with the Father (1 John 2:1-2).
 - 3. 1 Tim. 2:5.

XI. OUR RESURRECTION IS GUARANTEED.

- A. "Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20).
 - 1. First fruits are the first gathered with more to follow.
 - 2. "Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19).

XII. NO PROBLEM IN THIS LIFE IS UNCONQUERABLE IN THE LORD.

- A. 1 Cor. 15:58.
 - 1. "Therefore"
 - 2. Because of His resurrection, and because I too will be raised, nothing has to conquer me ultimately.
 - a. Rom. 8: 31-39.
 - b. Philip. 4:13.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST:
 - a. There is another reason to believe in God.
 - b. There is evidence that proves Jesus is the Son of God.
 - c. Sin can be forgiven.
 - d. There is an unchangeable priesthood.

- e. There is reason for hope.
- f. There is remembrance of Christ every first day of the week.
- g. Every accountable person will be judged.
- h. The church of Christ has been built by Christ.
- i. Triumph is assured.
- j. Intercession is available.
- k. Our resurrection is guaranteed.
- l. No problem in this life is unconquerable in the Lord.

2. **"BECAUSE HE LIVES"**

God sent His son, They called Him Jesus,
 He came to love, heal, and forgive;
 He lived and died to buy my pardon,
 An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.

Because He lives - I can face tomorrow,
 Because He lives - all fear is gone;
 Because I know - He holds the future,
 And life is worth the living - just because He lives.

Charles C. Pugh III - Charles is a native of Wood County, WV. He has studied at Ohio Valley College, Harding University, and Harding Graduate School of Religion with graduate study in Philosophy of Religion and Christian Evidences under Thomas B. Warren. He is married to the former Sharron Beeson of Harrisburg, AR. and they have three children: Mrs. Benjamin (Mendy) Brewster, Charles IV (Chip), and Nicole.

He has spoken on various lectureships, preaches in several gospel meetings yearly, has published articles in various brotherhood publications, and has written numerous weekly articles for area newspapers. He has authored a number of Bible study books and has served as a part-time instructor in Bible at Ohio Valley College.

Charles preached his first sermon in July, 1967 at Little Hocking, OH. and has served congregations in Ohio, Mississippi, Tennessee, and West Virginia. He is beginning his ninth year as minister of the Bridge Street Church of Christ in New Martinsville, WV.

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE PHARISEES

Dan Kessinger

When one reads the New Testament, he is constantly impressed with the opposition to Jesus by the influential contemporary Jews. One does not read of "Pharisees" and "Sadducees" in the Old Testament text, and one wonders of their origin and philosophy.

During the intertestamental period of Greek domination, the culture of the Greeks had a long lasting effect on all Jews, not just the Hellenistic. For one, the Jews were divided, becoming two distinct camps: the Orthodox or Hasidic (eventually the Pharisees), and the Hellenistic, who believed faithfulness to God depended less on culture and more on the Torah. Greek thought in logic and "love of wisdom" (philosophy) entered more into the thought and exposition of the law among contemporary rabbis. For instance the nascent Sadducee Antigonus seems to have been influenced by the Stoic philosophy as he rejected the afterlife, insisting good should be pursued without consideration of reward.

It was from the synagogue that the rabbinic system became a real force among the Jews of Palestine. In the midst of a world-wide crisis, the teachers in Palestine emphasized the law. In time, these teachers, their interpretations, their commentaries, and their traditions became a secondary source of authority for living. The synagogue also became the refuge for the more conservative sect of the Jews, as the High Priesthood became the tool of the Sadducees. From Jason onward the office was an appointed position under control of whatever government happened to control Palestine.

The Hasidim were the "conservatives" in the intertestamental period, supporting Mattathias and Judas in their popular reforms. As time passed, they and the political reformers seem to part ways, as the Hasidim were content with religious freedom. Among the various sects in Judah, division was widening. Later, the Hasidim involved themselves in more controversy involving the various religious/political leaders of Judea. If one constant was to be found it was a hatred of things foreign.

Out of the Hasidim arose a group in opposition to John and his priesthood: the Pharisees. They began to increasingly teach a strict adherence to the written law, to its implications, and to the traditions of the elders. The aristocracy of Judah became the Sadducees. They were supportive of the Hasmonaean Dynasty, and controlled the council, the High Priesthood, and accepted only portions of scripture as authoritative. The Pharisees eventually gained a place in the governing council of the land, securing in it a majority over the Sadducees.

It was onto this confusing, divided, and dangerous stage that our Lord stepped. In his controversies with the Pharisees, we find the Law illuminated as it always should have been. Against the dark cloak of tradition, the lamp of truth shines the more brilliantly.

I. The Borders of God's Law

A. The Pharisees were not perfect law keepers

(7) {Ye} hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, (8) This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with {their} lips; but their heart is far from me. (9) But in vain they do worship me, teaching {for} doctrines the commandments of men. (Mt. 15:9)

1. Indeed their hearts were in error
2. Their law keeping was also flawed
3. Usually the two are connected

B. "Line Drawing" alone was not error

1. God had encouraged such knowledge (Nu. 15:32-36)
2. The spirit of Christ obliges us to avoid borders

C. There is a real standard

(2) Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. (3) But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? (Mt. 15:2-3)

1. The Law and proper interpretation are the standard
2. The Pharisees had improperly delineated

D. It is constant and consistent

1. The Pharisees were in error because of **hypocrisy**

MAT 23:4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay {them} on men's shoulders; but they {themselves} will not move them with one of their fingers. (KJV)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead {men's} bones, and of all uncleanness. (Mt. 23:27)

2. They made strange partnerships against Jesus

MAR 3:6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. (KJV)

II. The Center of God's Law

A. He requires purity of Heart

1. The Pharisees practiced "outward only" religion

(5) But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, (6) And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, (Mt. 23:5-6)

2. God's Law had always required "heart service"

B. Jesus Identified the Centrality of the Law

(36) Master, which {is} the great commandment in the law? (37) Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second {is} like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (40) On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Mt. 22:36-40)

C. He also honored the "lesser laws"

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier {matters} of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (Mt. 23:23)

D. Mercy found prominence in Jesus' teaching (Jno. 8:3-11)

III. The Purpose of God's Law

A. To lift the fallen

1. The Pharisees cared little for the blind man (Jno. 9)
2. But Jesus loved sinners (Mt. 9:11-14)

Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw {it}, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman {this is} that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. (Lk. 7:39)

B. To Guide his children (Lk. 15: 1-2)

C. "For our good"

(12) And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, (13) To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? (Deut. 10:12-13)

1. The Law was for man

MAR 2:27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: (KJV)

2. It was lawful to do good on the Sabbath (Mk. 3:1-6)

D. To provide for the penitent (Lk. 18:10-11)

IV. The Consequence of Rebellion

A. Hard heartedness

(45) Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? (46) The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. (47) Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? (Jno. 7:45-47)

They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. (Jno. 9:34)

B. Hell

MAT 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. (Mt. 23:15)

C. Sin against Holy Spirit (Mt. 12: 31-32)

D. Blindness

1. Blind leaders of the blind (Mt. 23:16)
2. Blind to evidence (Jno. 8:13-20)

Dan Kessinger - Dan was born in Michigan in 1963 and has lived in West Virginia since 1973. His father, Bob Kessinger, is a gospel preacher. He graduated from Walton High School in Roane County and received an A.S and B.S. in Biblical Science from Ohio Valley College. He began preaching in 1982 and his first located work was at Belle, WV the same year. He served as located preacher at Proctor, WV (1986-1994) and at Dewey Ave., St. Marys, WV (1994-present). He has spoken on two lectureships, preached in several gospel meetings, contributed to religious publications, conducted local TV and radio programs and has been working at WYCYC since 1984. He is married to the former Mary Amy West and they have one son, D.J.

THE "I AM'S" OF JOHN

Robert D. (Bob) Eddy

I am highly honored and consider it a genuine pleasure to have been invited to speak on this First Annual West Virginia School of Preaching "Victory" Lectureship. I am totally supportive of this school, and have promoted it since its conception. A deep sense of appreciation goes out to its director, brother Emanuel Daugherty, to the faculty, to the elders of the Hillview Terrace Church of Christ, and all others who support this great ministry in a financial way. I bid you God's speed.

INTRODUCTION:

The theme of this lectureship is: "Jesus, the Christ", a great subject indeed. I have been assigned the subject: The "I AM'S" of Jesus".

The phrase "I Am" is found 678 times in the Old and New Testaments. No less than 58 times in the book of John. I will confine my remarks to the times it is used by Christ in the book of John to identify Him as the Son of God (John 10:36). They are:

I am the bread of life - 6:48

I am the light of the world - 8:12

I am the door of the sheep - 10:7

I am the good shepherd - 10:11

I am the resurrection, and the life - 11:25

I am the way, the truth, and the life- 14:6

I am the true vine - 15:1

Our lesson begins in the book of Exodus 3:10. God told Moses "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. In verse 13 Moses asked of God: "... Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" In verse 14 God gives him the name. "And God said...Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto." Therefore, God promised to be Moses' companion in this mission (verse 12) and to supply him, and the children of Israel with their every need.

The Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. Therefore, the "I Am's" of John will illustrate how Jesus will supply our every need as the Jehovah of the Old Testament supplied the Israelites with their every need.

1. I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE. (John 6:48)

Shortly after Jesus fed the 5,000 recorded in John 6:11, the multitude followed Him seeking more food. They were not interested in His message, nor the application. Jesus would not be satisfied until they learned the lesson and learned it well. He then declared: "I am the bread of life" (John 6:48).

In verse 49 Jesus said: "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead", for that bread was not intended to give everlasting life. But this bread that I offer you, it too cometh down from heaven, and if a man eat thereof, he will not die (verse 51).

Today, Jesus is the bread of life. We are blessed with the opportunity to eat thereof. His bread is spiritual and eternal. We would do well to heed the words of Christ in John 6:35: "...I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never die."

2. I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. (John 8:12)

When the Israelites traveled from Egypt to Canaan, darkness could have been their greatest enemy. Light was needed to guide them hastily out of Egypt to escape Pharaoh and his army. Therefore, "...the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud...and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night." (Ex.13:21).

In John 8:22, Jesus said: "...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." As the Israelites needed light to guide them to safety, light was needed to direct the Pharisees in Jesus' day. In John 12:35 he said: "...he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth."

Today, as we travel from this earth to heaven, spiritual darkness is our greatest enemy. Light is needed to guide us safely to that haven of rest. The Psalmist David wrote: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalms 119:105) John wrote: "...if ye walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sins." (1 John 1:7).

3. I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP. (John 10:7)

This parable is based on what is said to be the practice of the shepherds in the east. The different flocks of sheep are gathered at night into one common fold, the door is closed, the porter keeps the door and in the morning the shepherd comes, the porter opens the door to him, he calls his sheep by name, and the sheep know their shepherd's voice, and follow him. (John 10:1-4).

This parable shows how the sheep may enter into the fold of God and find the care needed to protect them from thieves and robbers. Jesus himself is the door into the fold. We enter into the fold of God by entering in or through Christ. Baptism is the completing act that puts us through the door into Christ or the church. (Matt. 28:19; Gal. 3:27; John 3:3).

4. I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD. (John 10:11)

In the Old Testament, the relationship between God and His people is often symbolized as that of a shepherd and his flock. The flock is always regarded as belonging to God though the care of it may be temporarily entrusted to others. Some of those guardians of the flock, such as Moses and the genuine prophets, tended the sheep with care, and in this respect are forerunners of Christ Himself.

In John 10:1, Jesus said: "...He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold (KJV)...is a thief and a robber." Sheepfolds of the East are large enclosures opened to the sky and walled to protect the sheep. Sometimes robbers, leopards, etc., climbed over not sparing the flock.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He knows his flock (Vs. 14) and he came from heaven to earth to give his life to save those who would trust and follow him. (Verse 11).

5. I AM THE RESURRECTION, AND THE LIFE. (John 11:25)

Since the death of Abel (Gen. 4:8_ man has cried: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55). Four thousand years passed and we find Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus. Martha and Mary had somewhat rebuked him with these words: "...Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died". (Vs. 21). Jesus said unto her: "Thy brother shall rise again". (Vs. 23). This promise was fulfilled in verse 44. "He that was dead came forth, ...Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

There is a resurrection awaiting all of us. Paul wrote "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ". (1 Cor. 15:57). Jesus declared; "...I came that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

6. I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. (John 14:6)

In Exodus 4, verses 29 through 31, we find the Israelites placing their complete trust in Moses and Aaron to lead them out of Egyptian bondage. If the same question had been directed to Moses by the Israelites that was directed to Jesus by Thomas in John 14:6 ("...how can we know the way?), his answer would also have been, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man can reach the land of Canaan but by me".

Among the most difficult challenges facing the early disciples of Christ was to conceive how he could be their guide from earth to heaven, or how he could tie together two worlds. He told Thomas, I am the way to heaven, I am absolute truth, and I am life everlasting.

Today, Jesus is our hope. Paul wrote: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as other which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." (1 Thess. 4:13-14)

7. I AM THE TRUE VINE. John 15:1)

From the very beginning of time, procreation was a part of God's eternal plan. "...God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish (fill) the earth." (Gen. 1:28)

At the beginning of Christ's ministry, he taught his disciples to produce fruits. In John 15:8 he declares; "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

It is imperative that we understand that Christ is the true vine, and we are the branches. If he abides in us, and we in him, we will bring forth much fruit. For without him we can do nothing. (John 15:8).

CONCLUSION:

As Christ fulfilled the needs of those living in the first Century, he will fill our every need today. He is the bread of life, the light of the world, the door to the sheepfold, the resurrection and life, the way, the truth, the life, and the true vine. Never let us forget the words of Jesus in John 10:10: "...I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly".

FOOTNOTES

1. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, The Gospel According to St. John.
2. *Gospel Advocate Commentaries*, The Gospel of John.
3. *Barnes' Notes*, Commentary on John.

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CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Brent Gallagher

We begin our discussion by realizing that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit comprise the Godhead. The attributes of deity--eternality, omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence—not only apply to the Father and Son but also to the Holy Spirit (Heb. 9:14; 1 Cor. 2:10, 11; Mic. 3:8; Ps. 139:7). The Holy Spirit is not just a "force" or "power" but is a distinct member of the Godhead.

There are various ways the Holy Spirit cooperated with and complemented Jesus during His earthly ministry. The Spirit predicted different aspects of Jesus' life and times through the Old Testament prophets. The Spirit was involved in the Virgin Birth, the temptation and baptism of Jesus, and the working of miracles by Jesus' hands. Concerning Christ, John tells us that "*God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him*" (John 3:34). This lecture is concerned with one specific aspect of the Spirit's work in Jesus' ministry--the promises made in John 14-16 by Christ to the apostles to send them the Comforter.

The word "Comforter" (*parakletos*) is used four times by John to describe the Spirit. Those references are:

John 14:16

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;"

John 14:26

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 15:26

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

John 16:7

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

"Comforter" means one who is called to another's side to help. Other translations of this word are "Counselor," "Advocate," and "Helper." From Jesus' speech in John 14-16, it is clear that the apostles were expected to carry on Jesus' ministry after He ascended to Heaven, but they would not be alone in their work. The Holy Spirit would be their aide in furthering the Lord's cause.

There are at least nine things found in John 14-16 the Comforter was to do through the apostles. Those nine items are:

1. Teach all things (John 14:26)
2. Bring all things to remembrance (John 14:26)
3. Testify of Christ (John 15:26)
4. Reprove world of sin (John 16:8)
5. Reprove world of righteousness (John 16:8)
6. Reprove world of judgment (John 16:8)
7. Guide into all truth (John 16:13)
8. Show things to come (John 16:13)
9. Glorify Christ (John 16:14)

As the Holy Spirit aided the apostles He was not revealing His own will, but the will of the Father. Christ states in John 16:13 that the Spirit ". . .*shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.*"

When did the Comforter arrive and begin aiding the apostles in their work? Shortly before His ascension to Heaven, Jesus met with His apostles and reminded them of John the Baptist's promise of Holy Spirit baptism. He told the apostles to remain in Jerusalem and await the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 1:4, 5). In Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit came upon the apostles and they began speaking in tongues and preaching the gospel message (Acts 2:1-40).

The promise of the Comforter to help and guide the apostles was fulfilled as the gospel was taken to the first century world. The Spirit enabled the apostles to perform signs which confirmed their message (2 Cor. 12:12). The sermons preached and letters written by the apostles were not of human origin but Spirit given (1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17). The miraculous element of the Spirit was not limited to the apostles. Those on whom the apostles laid hands could also obtain spiritual gifts (Acts 8:18). Once the apostles died and the New Testament was completed, miraculous spiritual gifts ceased (1 Cor. 13:9-13; Eph. 4:11-13).

It is important to remember the promise to be "guided into all truth" by the Comforter was given to the *apostles*. The Holy Spirit did work directly on the apostles and those who had spiritual gifts in the first century. Today, though, one is "guided into all truth" not by a direct revelation of the Spirit but through a reading of the Spirit-produced word. The written word tells us all we need to know about Jesus, truth, sin, righteousness, judgment and the future (2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17). The written word claims to be complete--God's final revelation to mankind (Heb. 1:1, 2; Jude 3).

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CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY

Brian C. Adkins

INTRODUCTION

1. The city of Colossae.
 - a. City of Phrygia located in the Lycus valley on the Lycus river.
 - b. 100 miles east of Ephesus and 12 miles southeast of Laodicea and Hierapolis.
 - c. Large, prosperous city in its beginnings. By the time Paul writes, Colossae is a small town and really insignificant.
 - d. Inhabitants of Colossae worshipped Bacchus (god of wine) and Cybele (mother of gods).
 - 1) The worship offered was a mixture of drunkenness and lewd orgies.
 - 2) The priests would become delirious as they reeled about and whirled around, often mutilating themselves and dancing to loud horns and cymbals.
 - 3) By these rites, they claimed an intimate fellowship with the gods.
2. The Colossian Heresy.
 - a. Mixture of Greek, Oriental and Jewish religions.
 - b. Overriding belief that the flesh was extremely sinful.
 - c. God is holy and matter is evil.
 - 1) God would have no direct contact with the universe.
 - 2) Gave rise to idea that God created a being who in turn created beings known as "AEONS" or angelic beings who eventually created human beings. Christ was merely one of these "AEONS".
 - 3) Worship of angels was common and had influenced the church. Note: 2:18.
 - d. Paul deals with the various problems.
 - 1) The supremacy of Christ established - 1:9-18.
 - 2) All are reconciled in Christ only - 1:19-23.
 - 3) Service and Hope are in Christ - 1:24-29.
 - 4) Not Philosophy, but Christ - 2:1-10.
 - 5) Not Judaism, but Christ - 2:11-23.
 - 6) Not fleshly indulgences but Christ - 3:1-11.
 - 7) Not the old man but the new man - 3:12-17.
3. A basic outline of Colossians.
 - a. Chapter 1 - The Preeminence of Christ Declared.
 - b. Chapter 2 - The Preeminence of Christ Defended.
 - c. Chapter 3,4 - The Preeminence of Christ Demonstrated.
4. Key word in Colossians - "Christ" mentioned 35 times.
5. Key verse - Col. 1:18.
6. Assignment: Col. 1:27c. "Christ in you, the hope of glory."
7. Aim of lesson: Salvation in three tenses, Past, Present, Future.
 - a. Jas. 1:21 "...receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls."

- 1) James is writing to Christians and tells them how to be saved!
- 2) Salvation comes to us in three tenses. We are:
 - i) Saved (past tense) from the PENALTY of sin.
 - ii) Saved (present tense) from the POWER of sin.
 - iii) Saved (future tense) from the POSSIBILITY of sin.
- b. Paul presents to us salvation in three tenses in Col. 1:27.
 - 1) Salvation from the PENALTY of sin - "Christ in you".
 - 2) Salvation from the POWER of sin - "the Hope".
 - 3) Salvation from the POSSIBILITY of sin - "of Glory".

I. "CHRIST IN YOU" - (Salvation in Past tense from the PENALTY of sin.)

1. "In Christ" or "In Him" is found 20 times in Colossians.
2. How does one get into Christ?
 - a. By obeying the Gospel of Christ.
 - 1) Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3-5; Jn. 3:3-5; I Cor. 12:13.
 - 2) To be "in Christ" is to be saved. Mk. 16:16; Acts. 2:38; Acts. 22:16.
 - b. Hear - Believe - Repent - Confess - Baptism - Faithful.
3. As one enters Christ they are saved from the PENALTY of sin.
 - a. "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23.
 - b. *Rom. 6:7, 17-18, 22-23; Jas. 1:15; Heb. 2:9; II Tim. 2:10.*
 - c. Christ is the great LIBERATOR! Jn. 8:32, 36; Jn. 5:24; Rev. 20:6.
4. To be "in Christ" is to have "Christ in You".
 - a. Col. 1:27 - 1:28. Synonymous terms. Note: Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:17.
 - b. "In Christ" or "In Him" found 103 times in the New Testament.
 - c. To have Christ in us is to have the Father in us and the Holy Spirit in us.
 - 1) They all dwell in the Christian in the same manner.
 - 2) Jn. 17:20-21; II Jn. 9; Eph. 5:18.
 - 3) The Godhead dwells in the Christian to the extent that God's will influences, motivates and guides the Christian.
5. Can people see Christ in you??
 - a. Mk. 2:1. If Christ is in you, then that will be "noised abroad".
 - b. Mk. 7:24. If Christ is there, then He is seen. If He is not seen, then He is not there!
 - 1) You cannot hide Christ. Home, office, school.
 - 2) Mt. 5:13. ILL. A child's definition of salt.
 - 3) Acts. 9:2. How would Saul identify Christians? Something noticeable about a Christian.
 - 4) Christ is not valued AT ALL unless He is valued ABOVE ALL.
 - 5) Acts. 4:13.

II. "THE HOPE" - (Salvation in the Present tense from the POWER of sin.)

1. Hope is realized in two realms.
 - a. Temporal realm. Rom. 4:18; Jer. 29:10-11.
 - b. Eternal realm. II Cor. 4:18; Eph. 4:4.
2. Faith guides, Hope stimulates and cultivates patience. Acts. 24:15; Rom. 8:24-25; I Thess. 1:3.

3. We should be constantly aware of the blessed hope we have in Christ.
4. Sin has no control over our lives as the hope we have in Christ affects us.
5. With such a blessed hope, sin can have no power to manipulate our lives.
6. Rom. 15:4; Col. 1:5, 23; I Tim. 1:1; Titus. 1:2; 2:13; 3:7; Heb. 3:6; 6:11, 18-19; I Pet. 1:3; I Jn. 3:3.
7. Imagine not having any hope.
 - a. Facing serious surgery and told there is no hope.
 - b. Soldier told that there is no hope of seeing tomorrow.
 - c. Many who commit suicide have convinced themselves that they are without hope.
8. If Christ is NOT in you then you are without HOPE. Eph. 2:12.
9. In Christ and Christ in you brings a happy hope that death cannot steal. I Thess. 4:13.

III. **"OF GLORY"** - (Salvation in the Future tense from the POSSIBILITY of sin.)

1. Sin will not and cannot enter into glory.
 - a. Jn. 8:21; Rev. 21:27; 22:14-15.
 - b. The lake of fire awaits them. Rev. 21:8.
2. Heaven is truly a place of eternal glory.
 - a. Rom. 8:18; 9:23.
 - b. II Cor. 4:17 - Eternal glory.
3. There we will be with the Lord.
 - a. Col. 3:4; Phip. 1:23; I Tim. 3:16.
 - b. II Tim. 2:10; I Pet. 5:1, 4, 10.
4. "When with the Savior we enter the gloryland, won't it be wonderful there?
Ended the troubles and cares of the storyland, won't it be wonderful there?"

CONCLUSION

1. Notice please that without Christ being in us, there is no hope of glory!
2. Christ must mean everything to us.
 - a. He must be the Source of our lives.
 - b. He must be the Course of our lives.
 - c. He must be the Force of our lives.
3. To Paul, Christ meant everything.
4. Christ must be the center and circumference of our lives.
5. It is our prayer that Christ is in you, the hope of glory.

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THE VIRGIN BIRTH

H. A. "Buster" Dobbs

I. Introduction.

A. Necessity of a virgin birth.

1. By decision of deity a member of the Godhead appeared in the form of a man.
 - a. Jesus gave up being "equal with God" to come in human form.
 - b. Jesus is now and has always been "in the form of God."
 - c. When he was in the "form of man," he did not abandon his God form.
 - d. Jesus was fully God while also being fully human.
 - e. His divine and human natures are both stressed in the New Testament.
 - f. Still, it was necessary for the God/man to limit some of his God attributes to be "made in all things like unto his brethren."
 - g. His God nature did not change, but he limited his knowledge, power and presence during his days on earth as a human.
 - h. God has the power to limit himself or he is not God, that is, is not all-powerful.
2. An Almighty being could not be procreated by natural means in the very nature of his deity. In heaven they neither marry nor are they given in marriage.
 - a. A miracle was therefore required in the case of the coming of Jesus into the world as a man.
 - b. "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure" (Hebrews 10:5).
 - c. "Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*" (Hebrews 10:8-10).
 - (1) This explains the saving power of the sacrifice on Calvary.
 - (2) The Creator died for the creatures' sins.
 - (3) The blood of animals could never accomplish what the blood of God/man was able to do.

B. God decided on a virgin birth as the means to bring an embodied deity into the world.

II. The Virgin Birth.

A. Virgin birth in prophecy.

1. This is such an important matter one would expect it to be mentioned often in prophecy.
2. However, only once did the Old Testament foretell of a virgin birth (unless you count the “seed of woman” prophecy of Genesis 3:15 to reference virgin birth.)
3. The one place in the Old Testament where the words “virgin birth” are used is Isaiah’s prophecy to King Ahaz.
4. “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

B. Background of the virgin birth prophecy.

1. Ahaz was king in Judah (Isaiah 7:1).
2. Rezin was king of Syria and Pekah was king of Israel (Isaiah 7:1).
3. The kings of Syria and Israel made threatening moves toward the king of Judah (Isaiah 7:6).
4. Ahaz was terrified (Isaiah 7:2-4).
5. God sent Isaiah to assure Ahaz that the evil plans of Rezin and Pekah to destroy Judah would fail (Isaiah 7:7-9).
6. Ahaz, apparently, intended to rely on Assyria and Egypt to rescue him (Isaiah 7:18-19).
7. God warned that Assyria and Egypt would be a bane to Judah as well as the destroyers of Syria and Israel (Isaiah 7:20).

C. The Sign.

1. Ahaz told to ask for a sign of God to show that Syria and Israel would not destroy Judah (Isaiah 7:10).
2. Ahaz declined, possibly because he had no confidence in Isaiah but trusted in the power of Assyria and Egypt (Isaiah 7:12).
 - a. Ahaz pretended that his respect for and fear of God caused him to refuse

- Isaiah's invitation to ask for a sign.
 - b. The implication of the context is that he did not believe Isaiah.
- 3. Isaiah responded to Ahaz's refusal to ask for a sign by saying that a sign would be given even if it was not requested (Isaiah 7:14).
 - a. The prophecy was that a virgin would conceive and bear a son whose name would be Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14).
 - b. Within the time it would take for the virgin's son to know good from evil, Syria and Israel would be destroyed.
 - c. The sign to Ahaz and Judah was the unexpected destruction of the kingdoms of Pekah and Rezin within a short time.
 - d. The birth of Jesus about 600 years after Isaiah promised a sign to Ahaz would not be a sign to him, since he would be long dead. The sign therefore cannot refer to the virgin birth of Jesus.
- 4. The prophecy is repeated in Isaiah 8:1-8 under a different figure, which becomes a commentary on the Isaiah seven prophecy.

D. Fulfillment of the Virgin birth prophecy.

1. Prophecy often has an immediate and a long term fulfillment.
 - a. The immediate fulfillment of the virgin birth prophecy was the destruction of Syria and Israel within a short period.
 - b. The long term fulfillment was the birth of Jesus, the son of Mary of Nazareth.
2. Matthew reveals the long term fulfillment of the famous prophecy.
 - a. "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS" (Matthew 1:20-25).
 - b. Matthew tells us the angel said to Joseph that the birth of Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, seeing this is the only OT prophecy that specifically mentions that "a virgin shall be with child."
3. The meaning of the word "virgin" as used by Isaiah and Matthew.

- a. It is unnecessary to spend time discussing the definition of either the Hebrew or the Greek word translated “virgin” in Isaiah and Matthew because Luke gives the meaning of the word.
- b. An angel said to Mary, “Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS” (Luke 1:30-31).
- c. Mary answered, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” (Luke 1:34).
 - (1) The virgin of Isaiah 7:14 was, according to this, a woman who had never known a man. Never mind arguments about the meaning of Hebrew and Greek words. The angel announced the fulfillment of the Isaiah prophecy and Mary gives the definition of the word. These inspired statements give us with a clear understanding of what Isaiah and Matthew meant by the word “virgin.”
 - (2) A virgin -- a young woman who had never known a man -- was the vehicle, but God prepared the body (Hebrews 10:5).
 - (3) He who made the body of Adam from the dust prepared a body for the coming of the Lord.

E. Explanation delayed.

- 1. If the claim of virgin birth had been made immediately, it is unlikely that it would have been accepted.
 - a. Matthew and Luke wrote three or four decades after the birth of Jesus. The claim of virgin birth therefore was not made at the time of the birth.
 - b. The people who knew Jesus personally assumed that he was Joseph’s son.
 - (1) “Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?” (Matthew 13:55).
 - (2) “And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph” (Luke 3:23).
 - c. If Mary had immediately claimed to have conceived a child supernaturally, she would have been ridiculed and her claim rejected, just as a claim of virgin birth today would be scorned. No one would believe it.
 - (1) The people of Nazareth and all Israel considered Jesus to be the natural born son of Joseph.
 - (2) This assumption was allowed to prevent his rejection and especially his exclusion from the sacred confines of the temple in Jerusalem (See Deuteronomy 23:2).
 - (3) If the enemies of Jesus had suspected that he was not the natural born son

of Joseph, they would have used this to deny him entrance into the assembly of Jehovah.

2. The revelation of virgin birth was delayed for several years.
 - a. In the meantime, Jesus gave his superb teaching (doctrines that could not have come from a human source and must therefore be from heaven), confirmed the message by miracles, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven.
 - b. The gospel of the kingdom was preached in all the world and more than half of the world's population was converted to Jesus, and then Matthew and Luke gave the stunning information that Jesus of Nazareth was born of a woman who had never known a man.
 - c. The time was right and the revelation was given. The timing of the declaration of virgin birth for Jesus was perfect.
 - d. Jehovah placed safeguards around the details of the birth of Jesus, but in the fullness of time gave the complete information.

Note: See biography at end of first lecture, "Jesus Speaks Today".

JESUS CHRIST AND THE NEW BIRTH

(John 3:1-21)

Nicholas E. Deiger

I. THEME: The New Birth and its effect on a person.

- A. The term "NEW BIRTH" or "BEING BORN AGAIN" is misused, misunderstood and misapplied today as well in days past.
- B. Most people are looking at ways to "LOOK RIGHT" without "CRIMPING" their life styles.
- C. Many of the well know singers say that they are "BORN AGAIN CHRISTIANS."
- D. Yet when one looks at their life style and the words of the music they sing, they fall short of the standard that God has set forth.
- E. **QUESTION:** Can I be "AN ALMOST CHRISTIAN, IF I AM BORN AGAIN?"
- F. In this lesson we want to discuss the New Birth under the following topics.
 - 1. The What
 - 2. The How
 - 3. The When
 - 4. The Why
- G. By doing this one should understand what God's Word teaches on the matter.

II. THE NEW BIRTH

A. THE WHAT: John 3:3-5

- 1. To understand our topic we need to define some terms.
 - a. "NEW"
 - 1) If I told you I have a "NEW COAT" of paint on my truck, we could understand this.
 - 2) Or a new house, suit, shoes, etc.
 - 3) The same idea is given for the word "NEW" in our lesson.
 - a) Webster - Recently come into existence or use, different than before.
 - b) Vine - different as in respect to time - character.
 - i. Ephesians 2:5 "THE NEW MAN" - new in differing character.
 - ii. Colossians 3:10 Stress the fact of the believer's new experience-recently begun and still proceeding.

b. **"BIRTH"**

1) Webster -- a coming forth of an offspring, a beginning, an origin

2) Vine -- a begetting, producing, bring forth, be delivered

a) Matthew 1:18 "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise
(after this manner)"

b) John 9:1 a man blind from birth.

c. Nicodemus comes to Jesus with a question about the Kingdom of God and how one enters.

1) How do I know this? Look at Jesus' reply.

2) NOTICE:

a) Jesus said in verse three- "**ONE MUST BE BORN AGAIN**".

b) Nicodemus ask how can a man be born again in a natural way.

c) Jesus' answer to him was not another **PHYSICAL** birth but a **SPIRITUAL** one.

d) There is not an entrance into the Kingdom of God without a "**NEW BIRTH**" or we might say a "**SPIRITUAL BIRTH**".

2. As in a physical birth there must be a conception and a bringing forth, this is only accomplished by following God's law of procreation, which has been since creation.

3. The Spiritual birth also follows God's plan which was set forth on the day of Pentecost.

a. There must be the planting of the seed in the heart of man. Luke 8.

1) In verse 5 it says: "*A sower went out to sow his seed.*"

2) In verse 11 it says: "*The seed is the word of God.*"

b. There must be a germination period and a coming forth.

1) Verses 5 and 12 teaches that some fell on the wayside and the devil came and took it away.

2) Verses 6 and 13 some fell on rocks and it did not have enough soil to mature.

3) Verses 7 and 14 said some falls among the thorns and it was soon choked out -- by cares of world.

4) When this seed falls on good ground it will produce faith. In **ROMANS 10:17**: *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

a) This would be that ground which was prepared properly prepared to receive the word.

b) That which the word could penetrate and put down a good root structure.

c) That which brings forth fruit.

c. There is a statement made in **GENESIS 1:11**: *Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so."*

1) When one plants pure corn seed it will raise corn.

2). When one sows the "**PURE WORD OF GOD**" one will be "**Born Again**" as the Bible teaches.

B. THE HOW:

1. It is not a physical birth from the mother's womb.

2. Under the Old law one became a Child of God by physical birth.

3. Under the New Law it is a birth by the Water and the Spirit.

4. Of Water --

a. What is the water?

1) Some teach it is the water in natural birth but, this is not true.

2) It is that which is found in rivers, lakes, ponds, wells and baptisteries.

3) For that matter it is found in almost every house.

4) It is that which we drink, bath in, wash clothes or dishes and that we cook with.

5) There is nothing miraculous about the water herein mentioned.

b. What is the Spirit?

1) To follow what the Holy Spirit lead the Apostle into teaching and writing.

2) In John 16:13 Jesus said that the Spirit would lead them into all truth.

3) It is then to follow the Truth of God's Word on the matter of salvation.

c. How is it applied?

- 1) John 3:22 John baptized in Aenon--because there was much water there.
- 2) Matthew 3:13 John baptized in the River Jordan.
- 3) Matthew 3:16 Said that Jesus"...went straightway up out of the water..."
- 4) Now let us turn our attention to the baptism of the Eunuch in Acts 8.
 - a) Eunuch reading his Bible.
 - b) Philip joins the Eunuch in the chariot and preaches Jesus unto him. v.35--Planted the seed.
 - c) The Eunuch's heart (soil) was prepared to receive the Word
 - i. Reading Bible
 - ii. Asking questions as to that which he did not know
 - d) There is a willingness to obey -- verse 36 "...see here is water what hinders me from being baptized?"
 - e) How much water, a jug full?
 - f) No enough for Philip and the Eunuch to go down into the come up out of. verse 38.
 - g) Enough for Philip to bury the Eunuch in Romans 6:1-5
- 5) It is called a washing in Acts 22:16
- 6) Peter said in 1 Peter 3:21. It is the answer of a good conscience toward God. Obedience to the Inspired Word of God.

C. THE WHEN:

1. When does the New Birth take place?
2. There are some conditions set forth before the New Birth takes place.
3. Each of these are set forth clearly in God's Word.
 - a. Hear (understand) the Word of God -- Romans 10:17
 - b. Believe, Have faith in God --
 - 1) Hebrews 11:6 - Impossible to please God without faith.
 - 2) John 8:24 - Believe not in Christ die in sins.
 - c. Confess the name of Christ being the Son of God.
 - 1) Romans 10:9,10 - Before men with mouth
 - 2) Matthew 10:32,33 - Confess before men Christ will confess before Father.
 - 3) Example of Eunuch Acts 8:37

- d. Repent - a complete change in direction of life.
 - 1) Acts 17:30 - Commanded by God.
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 7:10 - Godly sorrow works repentance
 - 3) Luke 3:3,5 - Without repentance perish
 - e. These all precede baptism-neglect one and will not experience the new birth
 - f. Baptism - the complete immersion in water as we have already looked at.
4. Notice some things that take place in baptism;
 - a. Galatians 3:27 - Put on Christ
 - b. Romans 6:4 - Raised to walk in newness of life.
 - c. 2 Corinthians 5:17 - In Christ a new creature - old things passed away all things become new.
 5. Baptism is the last condition that God gives to change from an alien sinner to a child of God. 2 Corinthians 6:17,18.

D. THE WHY:

1. Why does one need to experience the New Birth
 - a. One cannot have the "Spiritual Blessings of Ephesians 1:3
 - 1) Having past sins washed away
 - 2) Having the blood of Christ continually cleansing us as we repent
 - 3) Being a Child of God that Fellowship with Him
 - 4) That mansion that has been prepared John 14:1-4
 - 5) That Crown of Life 2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 2:10
 - 6) That home with God without sickness, pain, tears, sorrow and evil people.
 - b. One cannot go to heaven. John 3
 - 1) Unless one is born again not see Kingdom of God. John 3:3
 - 2) Unless born of water and Spirit not enter Kingdom of God. John 3:5.
 - c. Without the New Birth one will die in their sins and Jesus said in John 8:24: "There I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."
2. WHY! WHY NOT!
 - a. Just think of all that will be missed
 - b. Just think of all your loved ones who have passed on, those who were faithful to God -- never see them
 - c. Just think of being a joint heir with Christ

d. Just think how terrible hell will be

3. Why experience the "**NEW BIRTH**" -- the benefits outweigh what some might count as losses in a life without Christ.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Without obedience -- no New Birth

B. To have the New Birth one must be born of the water and of the Spirit

C. Without -- all is lost.

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JESUS THE MASTER TEACHER

Bruce Daugherty

Text: **Matthew 7:24-29**

Purpose Statement: After hearing the lesson, the learner will be encouraged to obey the word of Christ and to follow His example as a teacher.

Intro. It is no surprise that Jesus was the Master Teacher. Teaching is a work associated with the entire Godhead. Teaching was associated with the anointing of the Holy Spirit on Bezalel and Oholiab (**Ex. 35:34**). God Himself is described as a teacher. He taught Moses (**Ex. 4:15**). The prophets promised a teacher to come (**Isa. 30:20; 54:13; Jer. 31:33**). The nations were to be taught by God (**Isa. 2:3**). No wonder Jesus assumed the title of teacher and performed much of His ministry as a teacher.¹

Teaching was a prominent feature of the ministry of Jesus (**Matt. 4:23**).

A great deal of the Gospels consists in teaching material:

the Sermon on the Mount,
the Parables,
the Lesson on the Mount of Olives, etc.

The reaction of the people to Jesus' teaching show that He was the Master Teacher:

they were astonished - **Matt. 7:28-29, 13:54**.
they marveled - **John 7:15, 32, 44-46**.

Let's examine what is meant by teaching and notice how Jesus was the Master Teacher.

I. What is Teaching?

A. New Testament Words for Teaching:²

- (didasko) to teach; to instruct.
- (didake) teaching, doctrine, instructions.
- (didaskalos) teacher, rabbi.
- (didaskalia) teaching, doctrine.
- (manthano) to learn, to find out, discover; to learn by experience.
- (mathetes) a disciple, learner, student.

B. New Testament synonyms for teaching:³

- (paideia) training, correcting, discipline, chastisement (**Eph. 6:4; Heb. 12:5-11**).

- (paidagogos) a slave attendant who conducted children to and from school (**Gal. 3:24**). Our English term pedagogue, is derived from this word.
- (ektrepho) to nourish, rear, bring up children (**Eph. 6:4; 5:29**).
- (dierneneo) to translate, explain, interpret (**Lk. 24:47; 1 Cor. 14:5**).
- (prophetes) a prophet, in the sense of proclaiming and interpreting a divinely revealed message (**Matt. 11:9; 1 Cor. 12:28**).
- (poimen) to shepherd; protect, lead, love (**Eph. 4:11; John 10:16**).
- (paratithimi) to set forth or place beside or before, point out; demonstrate, entrust (**Matt. 13:24; 1 Tim. 1:18**).
- (zetesis) to question, examine, deliberate, discuss, or debate (**Acts 15:2,7; John 16:19**).

C. Based upon these Bible words and synonyms for teaching, a definition of teaching is: The communicative process by which a teacher leads students to obedience and maturity in Christ by proclaiming, examining, demonstrating, explaining, modeling, nourishing and training the eternal truths of God's word.

II Why Jesus is the Master Teacher

- A. Jesus is the Master Teacher Because He Knew What was in Man - **John 2:23-24**
1. Why secular systems fail: they hold to incorrect views concerning the nature of man. Behaviorism and Determinism and any theory of psychology or education built upon a naturalistic view of man is inadequate.
 2. Man's Nature:
 - Physical
 - Spiritual
- B. Jesus is the Master Teacher Because He Taught People not Lessons
1. Jesus noticed the individual:
 - Nicodemus
 - The Samaritan woman
 - Zaccheus
 - Peter
 2. Teachers, do we see the needs of individuals?
 - 14 yr. old
 - Newlyweds
 - Young parents
 - Those in mid-life crisis
 - Elderly

- C. Jesus is the Master Teacher Because of His Faith in the Word of God
1. Jesus placed great emphasis on the Scriptures:
 "It is written" - **Matt. 4:4**
 "Ye do err, not knowing the Scripture" - **Matt. 22:29, 31**
 Scripture testified of Christ - **John 5:39**
 Teachers in Israel didn't know the Scriptures - **John 3:10,12**
 2. Teachers, we need to emphasize the Scriptures:
 The Bible is inspired - **2 Tim. 3:16-17**
 The Bible is useful - **Acts 20:32**
 The Bible tells us of Jesus - **John 5:39; John 8:31; 47**
- D. Jesus is the Master Teacher Because He Taught People in their Everyday Situations
1. Religion was not separated from daily life for Jesus:
 He taught the common people in parables and stories drawn from daily life.
 He demonstrated the impact of scripture on daily life - **Mark 7:1-13**
 He taught in contrast to the Pharisees - **Luke 11:46,52; Matt. 23: 3-4**
 2. Teachers, are we teaching for life?
 Christianity concerns the whole of life - **Matt. 22:37-40.**
 Christ should make a difference in our everyday living - **Luke 10: 25-37.**
- E. Jesus is the Master Teacher Because He Taught to Reform Men According to the Will of God
1. The importance of the will in the teaching of Jesus:
Matt. 5:48; 7:21-23; 19:16-22; 22:37-40.
 The relationship between intellect and the will:
 Intellect deals with knowledge, information, facts.
 Will deals with direction, motivation, and change for life.
 2. Teachers, are we calling for a submission of the will of man to the will of God?
 Giving information that leads to a response; a decision.
 There is a need to lead Bible studies and classes which are directed to the decision making process.
- F. Jesus is the Master Teacher because He Modeled what He Taught
1. Jesus is our model in everything, including obedience:
John 13:17; Heb. 5:8-9
 2. The goal of our teaching is obedience:
Matt. 7:24-27; Rom. 2:17-21, 25

Conclusion: None of the Apostles or disciples ever used the title "Teacher" after Christ ascended. This was out of respect for what Jesus taught in **Matthew 23:8**. But it was also out of recognition that just as Christ is the only salvation (**Acts 4:12**), Jesus is also the only Teacher.

In a time in which much worldly emphasis is given to worldly titles of "doctor" and "scholar," may we ever be disciples of Jesus, the Master Teacher.

1. Harris, Archer, Waltke, editors, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980) pp. 403-404.
2. Kittel and Bromiley, editors, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 2 and 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1965) pp. 135-165; pp. 390-461.
3. Bill Patterson, *Growing Christian Teacher*, Unit 1 (Dallas: Gospel Teachers Publications, 1980) p. 25. I am indebted for much of the material in this lesson from the "Growing Christian Teacher" course by Dr. Patterson. The education program and the training of teachers in the local congregation can be built up by having Dr. Patterson for a workshop. He can be reached through Southern Christian University, Montgomery, AL tel. 1-800-351-4040.

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The Fall of Jerusalem
Matthew 24
Emanuel B. Daugherty

Introduction:

A. There are many misunderstood and misapplied Scriptures.

1. Verses: John 3:16 (Faith only), Romans 6:14 (Saved wholly by grace, under no law whatsoever).
2. Whole chapters: Genesis 1 (Theistic Evolution, Gap Theory).
3. Whole books: *Jude (Acts of Apostates*, by S.Maxwell Coder doesn't believe saints can be apostate).

B. Today want to discuss one of these misunderstood, misapplied and thus perverted chapters: Matthew 24.

1. Denominational preachers by the score quote the early verses of this chapter concerning the "wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes," etc. and make these signs applicable to the events of this century predicting the Second Coming of Christ.
2. Based on these so-called "signs" the premillennialists have attempted to predict the date of Christ's return in spite of the fact that Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (v.36).
3. Those holding to the Max King doctrine see no division of thought in Matthew 24 and 25 and apply all of the discussion to the Fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and none to the Second Coming of Christ.
4. Skeptics argue that Matthew 24 is a failed prophecy; that Jesus erroneously expected his second coming to be very soon, and that it would make little difference if it were left out of the New Testament! (G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Future*, p.ix.).
5. To those of a reasonable mind it will be clearly shown that Jesus is foretelling the Destruction of Jerusalem and his Second Coming and it is a faulty exegesis of this chapter to not acknowledge the verse division distinguishing these two events.

I. THE SETTING

A. **Parallel passages are found in Mark 13 and Luke 21.** These chapters need to be read in conjunction with Matthew 24 for a complete understanding of this great discourse.

B. **The context of this chapter is important.** It is the final week of Jesus' life on earth. It is filled with confrontations with the Jewish hierarchy. It is the culmination of prophecies and warnings to the spiritual leaders of the Jewish nation.

1. In chapter 21 Jesus warned in the parable of the wicked husbandman:

"The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (v.43).

2. Chapter 22 contains the final debate with the Herodians, Sadducees and Pharisees.

3. Chapter 23 is filled with woes and severe condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees likening them to their unbelieving forefathers who killed the prophets, and as they would also do to Christ and the apostles (vv.34-35).

a. In the crucifixion of Jesus they would "fill up the measure of their fathers" (v.32).

b. For their rebellion against God and his Son, Jesus makes this somber statement: "Behold your house is left unto you desolate" (v.38).

c. The questions of the disciples evidently were prompted by t his statement in verse 38.

C. **Some keys to interpretation.**

1. "These things." The immediate context of the events associated with the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple are bracketed by the words "**these things**" (Matt 23:36; 24:2,3,6,8,33,34).

2. "This generation." (23:36, 24:34). With these two words Jesus states explicitly who is to receive the woes and wrath--THIS GENERATION! His contemporaries! In the life span of the people then living! (See Matt 12:39,41,42). The *Schofield Bible* has a footnote claiming the word "generation" means "race of people." This, of course, in an effort to apply the events of the Fall of Jerusalem to his premillennial scheme.

3. "Those days." (24:19,22,29). Jesus was speaking of a specific period of time

which pertained to the people of Judaea that would experience the trouble and sorrow that would be a part of the devastation of their land. In contrast Jesus states in regard to his final coming "Of that day and hour knoweth not man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (24:36).

4. The certainty of "these things." Marcellus Kik (*Matthew Twentyfour: An Exposition*) states that **verse 34 is the "Time-Text" and verse 36 is the "Transition-Text."** I would add that **verse 35 is the "Promise-Text"** for Jesus declares the certainty of these events, that all other things, including heaven and earth, may pass away, but his words concerning Judaea, Jerusalem and the temple would not fail to come to pass. History records the fulfillment of that prophecy!

II. THE QUESTIONS OF THE DISCIPLES (24:1-2)

A. No doubt it seemed incredible that the Lord could be talking about the temple being desolate! (23:38).

1. Josephus records that some of the stones of the temple measured 50' long, 24' wide, and 16' high [cubit=18"] (*Antiquities*, xv.11.3; Russell Boatman *What the Bible Says About End Time*, p.139).

2. Jesus replied "See ye not all these thing? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be cast down."

B. As they journeyed from the temple area to the Mount of Olives the thoughts of the disciples were troubled, and upon reaching their destination they privately asked Jesus "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

1. From Matthew's account it seems as if they are asking three questions. But in all probability they are asking but one question with three facets.

2. To the twelve such destruction as predicted by Jesus could only mean the end of the world. The place and importance of Jerusalem and the temple was so fixed in the Jewish mind that it was inconceivable that anything short of the end of the world could destroy them.

3. But Jesus answer describes **two events** not just one. He describes **two comings**, and **two ends of two worlds** (Roy Deaver, Fort Worth Lectures, *Premillennialism, True or False*, p.107).

a. "When shall these things be, and the sign of thy coming" refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple that would occur in A.D. 70. This subject is discussed in verses 4-35.

b. The answer to the question about "the end of the world" is covered in the section of 24:36 through chapter 25.

4. That this is a correct understanding of the disciples questions and Jesus' answer will be developed in this lesson.

III. THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES (24:4-35)

A. **General signs.** "Take heed that no man deceive you" (v.4). Jesus sets out to prepare the disciples for the calamity that is to befall the nation of Judah. They would be subjected to a diversity of things, but they should weigh them carefully and not be deceived.

1. False Christs (5,23). Josephus describes a number of leaders who arose, leading factions after them as "deceivers and impostors, under the pretense of divine inspiration fostering revolutionary changes, they persuaded the multitude to act like madmen, and led them out into the desert under the belief that God would give them tokens of deliverance" (*War II. xiii. 4,5; 258,259; cf. Acts 5:34-39; 21:38*).

2. Wars and rumors of wars were another false sign (v.6), and very pointedly he said, "Don't be troubled...the end is not yet." Through the ages men have been duped by wars and rumors of wars as being a portent of the end of time. But Jesus is saying these are not to be relied on as signs to be heeded in that regard.

3. Famines, earthquakes and pestilences (v.7) would come upon the people of that generation, but "all these are the beginning of sorrows" (v.8).

4. Persecutions (9-13), making the love of many to grow cold, would cause havoc among the Christians leading to betrayal and falling away, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Several New Testament books document persecutions that came upon the early church between the time of the crucifixion and the fall of Jerusalem (Hebrews, 1 Peter, Acts, etc).

5. The last sign: "And this gospel shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then the end shall come" (v.14). The apostle

Paul confirms this was accomplished (Colossians 1:23).

IV. THE SIGN TO FLEE AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION (24:15-28).

A. Following the admonition to be aware of these general signs, Jesus gives a **specific warning** to the disciples: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand;) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:" (vv15-16)..

1. They are to flee in haste not returning to their houses to get provisions (vv.17-18).
2. There would be special difficulty for those with infant children, or if it should come in the winter or on a Sabbath Day (vv.19-20).

B. **The Abomination of Desolation.** Luke helps us to know what this phrase means: "When ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (Luke 21:20).

1. Jesus' reference to Daniel pertains to the idolatrous practices of Antiochus Epiphanes IV when after a defeat in Egypt he returned to Jerusalem and desecrated the temple, slaughtering a sow on the altar (Daniel 11:31; cf 1 Maccabees 1:43ff; Josephus, *Antiquities* XII.v.4 [253]). A similar abomination was prophesied upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70 when the "people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined...and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate (Dan 9:26-27). Remember the Lord's words that prompted this discourse--"Behold your house is left unto you desolate!" (Matt 23:38).

3. Josephus relates that the Jews had asked the Legate Vitellius not to march his army through the land because of the insignias honoring their heathen gods (*Antiquities* XVIII.v3.[121]).

4. Thus, when the disciples saw the city of Jerusalem being surrounded by the armies of Rome with their idolatrous banners and images they would

take that as their signal to flee. Ancient historians record that they fled to Pella, a city of Perea (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol 1, pp.402-404).

C. Great Tribulation.

1. This is not referring to a yet future period of seven years to be experienced by those who are left on the earth after the "Rapture" as in the doctrine of Premillennialism.
2. Rather it refers to the unprecedented suffering befalling those who must suffer the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman legions.
3. Josephus reports that 1,100,000 were slain and 90,000 were taken captive to Rome (*War* Preface [4]; V.x.5 [442]; VI.ix.4 [429]; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* III.5).

D. Repeated Warning!

1. Again Jesus says "Don't be fooled!" by false prophets even when it appears that they have God's power backing them.
2. Seeming signs and wonders can be worked by the devil as well as by the power of God (2 Thes 2:9-10; 2 Cor 11:13-15; Acts 8:9).
3. The real coming of the Son of Man is contrasted to that of the false messiahs. He will come as a lightning flash and be observed by all (v.27).
4. The city of Jerusalem would be as a dead carcass surrounded by the Roman legions, ie., eagles (v.28).

V. SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS (24:29-31)

A. Immediately after the tribulation of those days.

1. This sets the time frame for this section:
 - a. "**Immediately**" - (eutheos) "straightway, forthwith, directly." There is no room for a time lapse of nearly 2,000 years in this word! (cf. the kingdom of heaven is *at hand*).
 - b. Immediately, **when?** "**After the tribulation**". What tribulation? The tribulation of "**those days**". The **great tribulation** (vv.21-22) that came on the citizens of Judaea and Jerusalem. The great tribulation connected with A.D. 70!
 - c. These verses have nothing to do with the second coming of Christ,

but with *the aftermath of Jerusalem's fall*.

d. But someone says "Well the description sure sounds like the second coming of Christ!"

2. But what it "sounds like" and what it really is may be two different things! The apocalyptic language used by the Lord is common in the O.T to describe the fall of kingdoms, kings and those in high places politically and spiritually. See Isaiah 13, the downfall of the king of Babylon; Isaiah 34:7-8, the fall of Edom; Ezekiel 32:7-8, the lamentation over Egypt.

3. Peter, an infallible interpreter, says that Joel 2:28-32 is fulfilled in the events beginning at Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21). Two things are described:

- a. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit ushering in the N.T. age.
- b. The apocalyptic language describing the end of the Jewish economy marked by the coming of the "notable day of the Lord."

B. The sign of the Son of Man.

1. The fall of Jerusalem would be accompanied by "the appearance of the Son of man in heaven." This would not be the literal presence of Christ but his *coming in judgement* upon Jerusalem and the Jewish nation. .

2. The sign would be on earth in connection to the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem. But it would signify conclusively that Christ is reigning in heaven.(See *Premillennialism, True or False*, Matthew 24, pp.110-111).

VI. THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE (24:32-35)

A. Parable and its meaning. Just as the tender branches and leaves of the fig tree are a sign of summer, so also do "these things" describe the nearness of the Lord in judgement upon "this generation."

B. This generation. How could anything be stated more clearly? "THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS, TILL ALL THESE THINGS BE FULFILLED.

1. This is the line of demarcation for the dividing of Matthew 24! The Lord and the inspired writer Matthew says so!

2. Furthermore it is emphasized by the fact that heaven and earth would pass away, but his words (in the context, the destruction of Jerusalem) SHALL NOT PASS AWAY! It would come to pass! It would not fail to take

place! There would be no alteration of God's plans!

VII. THE END OF THE WORLD (24:36-51)

A. "But of that day and hour."

1. "Those days" described prior to this verse were days filled with signs: false Christs, false prophets, wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, pestilence, tribulation like they had never seen before, saints being betrayed and delivered up to persecution and death, the love of many growing cold, spiritual leaders in high places falling as stars from heaven, the abomination of desolation prophesied by Daniel the prophet being fulfilled before their eyes.

2. They were "to flee to the mountains" (v.16), There would be no need of fleeing when the end of the world comes!

3. Whether one had a coat (v.18), whether one was with child (v.19), the season of the year or the day of the week (v.20)--these things would be immaterial if they pertain to the final coming of the Lord and the end of the world.

B. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man..."As regards to the fall of Jerusalem there were **signs**, things to observe, to look for, warnings to heed! But the day of the Lord's coming at the end of the world will have **no signs** accompanying it!

1. In this section the general command is to "watch" (42,44,50, 25:13).

2. In the previous section of Scripture things were **abnormal** (famines, earthquakes, etc. out of proportion to the times). In this section things are going on as they **normally** would--eating and drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, men working in the fields, women grinding at the mill--"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (v.42).

Conclusion:

A. Brethren and friends let us be careful students of the Scriptures lest we be deceived by false teachers who pervert, misuse and abuse this great prophetic chapter.

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CHRIST AND CREATION

Richard D. Melson, Sr.

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Any proper study of Jesus the Christ must include a discussion of His pre-existence.
- B. The only information we have about the pre-existent nature of Jesus is found in the Bible-
the inspired word of God.
- C. If we deny the pre-existent nature of Jesus we deny Him and reject that which He offers -
"eternal life".

II. Thesis

Jesus is the center of creation, for without Him there would be no creation and to reject this is to reject that which will give you life.

III. DISCUSSION

A. Christ and Creation: He is Creator

- 1. Christ- the Eternal Logos- is the active agent in the creation.
 - a) Gen. 1:1; John 1:3;
 - b) 1 Cor. 8:6
- 2. Christ is present in the beginning..
 - a) Gen. 1:26 cf. John 8:58
- 3. John declares that Jesus was the creator
 - a) Rev. 4:11a
 - b) Worthy of worship because He is deity. He created the world
and all that is in it.

B. Christ and Creation: He is The Object of Creation

1. Jesus is not just a part of God's eternal plan, but He is the summation of all the purpose of God.

a) Eph. 1:9-11

b) Eph. 3:10-11

2. It is because of Him that all things "consist".

a) Christ is the "glue". Col. 1:17

b) Heb. 1:3

C. Christ and Creation: He Is Pre-eminent

1. He is *prototokos* because He is the Creator.

a) Col. 1:15-16

b) Rev. 3:14

2. He is before all things -Col. 1:17.

a) Protokos - firstborn - promacy, pre-eminence, priority not only in time but also in importance. cf. Deut.21:15-17; Ex.4:22; Psalm 89:27

3. He is the Image of God

a) Col. 1:15

b) 1 Tim. 6:15-17 cf. John 1:18

IV. Conclusion

A. The material universe was created by Deity.

B. Jesus of Nazareth is deity.

C. Therefore Jesus of Nazareth being deity, created the material universe.

D. God has provided the evidence to support these propositions.

E. If we will only believe and obey, we'll benefit from the work of Jesus as "re-creator" Col. 1:19-23; Heb.5:9.

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THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS

1 Corinthians 1:17-21

Frank Higginbotham

- Introduction:**
1. Many times the term 'the cross of Christ' is used to represent the whole Christian system. It is used this way in our text. We must glory only in the cross. Galatians 6:12; Galatians 6:14.
 2. Some people because of their conduct were called 'enemies of the cross of Christ'. Philippians 3:18.
 3. We need to understand the purpose of the cross. Why did Christ die on the cross. What did that death accomplish? Matthew 27:35-50.

I. THE CROSS OF CHRIST WAS NECESSARY FOR OUR REDEMPTION.

- A. Man had offended God by his sin. Genesis 3:1-6. By this transgression of Adam, sin entered into the world. Romans 5:12. Sin separated man from God. Isaiah 59:1-2. All accountable men are guilty of sin before God. Romans 3:10; Romans 3:23.
- B. Man could not provide a perfect sacrifice for his sins and thus he was lost unless God intervened. John 3:16; Romans 5:8. God loved us enough to send His own Son as a perfect sacrifice for sins. 1 Peter 2:22.
- C. Christ bore our iniquities as He died on the cross for us. Isaiah predicted this. Isaiah 53:4-6. Christ became the sin sacrifice for us so that we might be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:21.
- D. We must contact the blood which brings about cleansing for past sins. This is done when we are baptized into the death of Christ. Romans 6:1-18. Saul was told to arise and be baptized in order to wash away his sins. Acts 22:16.

II. THE OLD LAW WAS REMOVED WHEN CHRIST DIED ON THE CROSS.

- A. The purpose of giving the Old Testament law was to keep sin in check until Christ provided His New Law. Galatians 3:16-19.
- B. It was God's intention from the beginning to remove the Old Law after it had served its purpose. Jeremiah predicted that God would remove the Law. Jeremiah 31:31. The Hebrew writer uses this prophecy and applies it to the removal of the Old Testament law and the giving of the New Testament law of Christ. Hebrews 8:8-13.
- C. It was on the cross that Christ removed the Old Law. He nailed it to his cross. Colossians 2:14-16. Many other passages teach the removal of the Law. Galatians 3:24; Galatians 5:1; Gal. 5:4.

III. THE NEW LAW WENT INTO EFFECT WITH THE DEATH OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS.

- A. The Old Testament and the New Testament are compared to wills that are made. Those wills can be changed as long as the person lives. When he dies, there is no further change of the will. The New Testament went into effect when the 'testator' (Christ) died. Hebrews 9:15-17. This is the reason that the 'thief on the cross' is not an example of salvation for us today. This account occurred before Christ died. The law we live under went into force with the death of Christ on the cross. An example of salvation for us today would be the conversion of the Eunuch (Acts 8) or the Jailer (Acts 16).

- B. The New Testament is a better covenant. Hebrews 8:6. The Old was perfect in that it did what God intended it to do. The New was intended to do more for us.
- C. God took away the first covenant in order to establish the second covenant. It is by this second covenant that we are able to obtain salvation. Hebrews 10:9,10.

IV. THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS WAS TO REMOVE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JEW AND GENTILE.

- A. Under the Old law the Jew was given special treatment. They were God's chosen people. The Gentile was on the outside. The Law was directed to the Jew. Deuteronomy 5:3.
- B. Salvation is now open to both Jew and Gentile. Mark 16:15,16. Peter declared salvation to all on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:39. The promise was to the Jew present, to their children and to those who were afar off. (the Gentile). However, it took a vision to later convince Peter that he was to go to Gentiles (the house of Cornelius). Acts 10:9-18. When he came he declared that God is no respecter of persons but will accept any who fear Him and will work righteousness. Acts 10:34-35. The gospel is for all. Romans 1:16.
- C. Peace is made by the cross of Christ. Ephesians 2:12-16. God brings both Jew and Gentile together in one body. The body is the church. He did not build two churches, one for the Jew and another for the Gentile. He brings both together in one body and this was accomplished by the cross.

V. THE CHURCH WAS PURCHASED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST SHED ON THE CROSS.

- A. The church was in the mind of God in eternity. Ephesians 3:10-11. The prophets told of the coming of the kingdom. Micah 4:1-3; Isaiah 2:2,3; Daniel 2:44. Jesus told of its coming during his preaching. Mark 9:1. It finally came into existence on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2. All of this planning was useless without the purchase price (the blood of Christ). Paul told the Ephesian elders to take heed to the church which Christ purchased with His blood. Acts 20:28.
- B. In view of all that God has done to establish the church and in view of the purchase price, we should love the Lord and His church with all of our hearts. Matthew 6:33. We must put the kingdom first in our lives.

CONCLUSION: When we understand the purpose of the cross of Christ, we have a greater appreciation of the great scheme of redemption. To the Jews this seemed to be a stumbling block, to the Gentile it seemed to be foolishness, but to those of us who are saved, it is the power of God to salvation. 1 Corinthians 1:23,24.

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JESUS, THE CHRIST THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

Steve Miller

INTRODUCTION:

1. The church/kingdom of Jesus Christ was deliberately purposed in the mind of God before time began.
 - a. Eph. 3:3-11.
 - b. 1 Pet. 1:18-20.
 - c. Acts 20:28.
2. Is it possible, that God knew Jesus would die, but that he did not plan that the church would be purchased as a result?
 - a. Many claim that the church of Christ was an afterthought, or an accident.
 - b. Premillennialists teach that “the kingdom of Matt. 3:2 was prophesied, but the Jews rejected Christ and the kingdom, and in its place Christ established the church. The kingdom was postponed until His second coming. This means that the Old Testament did not prophesy the church of the New Testament. To put it another way, the gospel age, which is the church age since the church was created by the gospel (Acts 20:28), was not prophesied.” (James Bales, *Prophecy And Premillennialism*. p. 92)
 - c. Notice some of the identifying marks of the false doctrine of Premillennialism regarding the church and the kingdom:
 1. One who teaches the failure of the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ coming to earth to establish the Messianic kingdom.
 2. One who makes a distinction between the kingdom the prophets saw and the church that Christ established on Pentecost.
 3. One who draws lines between the church of Christ and the kingdom of God by stating the former is now here, but the latter is yet future.
 - d. Premillennialism plainly denies the biblical fact that Jesus fulfilled God’s will.
 - e. Brother Bales has correctly reasoned, “This author is convinced, however, that Jesus did what He came to do. He came to fulfill the law and the prophets, and He did. (Matt. 5:17-18) If the kingdom was prophesied, but not established, and if the church was not prophesied, but was established, Christ did not do what He came to do, i.e. to fulfill the law and the prophets.” (*Ibid*, p. 17)
3. As God planned the death of Christ for the redemption of men, so he planned the church which is the number of the redeemed.
4. The kingdom of Christ is spiritual, not earthly.
 - a. While many of his disciples hoped for an “earthly kingdom,” Jesus had no intention of establishing such a kingdom.
 1. John 6:15
 2. Acts 1:6.
 - b. The Jews of Jesus day misunderstood the teaching of Christ regarding the “nature” of the kingdom.
 1. The kingdom is spiritual - Lk. 17:20-21.
 2. United body of believers - 1 Cor. 12:12-20.
 3. The church is the people of God - 1 Pet. 2:9.
 - c. John 18:36.
5. What is the church/kingdom of Christ?
6. What does the Bible say?

I. CHURCH AND KINGDOM: DEFINITION OF TERMS.

- A. The word church refers to the relationship which the divine institution sustains to the world - "called out ones."
1. M.C. Kurfees defined the word "church," - "Composed of 'ek,' meaning 'out,' and 'kaleo,' 'to call,' it literally meant a called-out assembly." (F.D. Srygley, *Biographies and Sermons*, p. 383)
 2. In the Bible, the following designations are found:
 - a. "church" or "churches" - Matt. 16:18; 2 Cor. 8:1; Rev. 1:4; 2:1, 8, 12.
 - b. "church of God" or "churches of God" - 1 Cor. 1:1; 11:16; 1 Tim. 3:15.
 - c. "churches of Christ" - Rom. 16:16.
 - d. "church of the Lord" - Acts 20:28, ASV.
 - e. "the church" - Acts 2:47.
 - f. "church of the firstborn" - Heb. 12:23.
 3. Marshall Clement Kurfees reminds us of the confusion that exists in the world regarding the word "church."
 - a. "There is probably no religious term more commonly used, and concerning which a greater amount of confusion exists among men, than the term "church." On account of misleading impressions made by denominationalism, but few persons always use it in the right sense, almost everybody using it sometimes in the wrong sense. Why is this? The Bible freely uses the term. It occurs more than one hundred times in the New Testament, and is used with such clearness and simplicity that there is no room for misunderstanding among those who have proper respect for divine authority." (*Ibid*, p. 382)
- B. The word "kingdom" refers to the power, sovereignty or rule of God in the lives of those who are his people.
1. "The word 'kingdom' appears in about six different contexts in the New Testament.
 2. The word 'kingdom' appears 157 times in the New Testament, and the word 'kingdoms' is found three times.
 - a. First, the word 'kingdom' is used in reference to a secular, earthly, political rule. Matt. 4:8.
 - b. Second, it is used in reference to the kingdom of Israel. God was the king of Israel, and Israel was His kingdom. Matt. 8:12.
 - c. Third, it is used simply in reference to the power or rule of God. Matt. 12:28.
 - d. Fourth, it is used in reference to the church, the special rule of God on earth today. Matt. 16:18; John 3:5.
 - e. Fifth, it is used in reference to heaven as the eternal kingdom of God. Lk. 13:28.
 - f. Sixth, it is used of Satan's realm of dominion. Matt. 12:26. (Eddie Cloer. *What Is "The Church"?* pp. 187-188)
 3. The New Testament presents the following designations.
 - a. "kingdom" - Acts 1:6; 1 Cor. 15:24; Heb. 12:28.
 - b. "kingdom of God" - Mk. 9:1.
 - c. "kingdom of heaven" - Matt. 16:19.
 - d. "kingdom of the son of his love" - Col. 1:13-14, ASV.
 - e. "kingdom of Christ and of God" - Eph. 5:5.
- C. "The trouble with too many is that they do not understand the meaning of the term "kingdom" and the term "church." Kingdom describes the government; church, the people called out. God called out his people; this called out group is the church. This is what the word "church" means; a called out people to serve God; called out, of course, by the gospel. Now this "called out group" was not left without a government, hence the government that rules them is this "kingdom of Christ on

David's throne." They are the same people, at the same time and both were included in the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament." (E.R. Harper. *Living Issues*. p. 64)

II. THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM ARE ONE AND THE SAME INSTITUTION.

- A. Identifying marks for the church and the kingdom are given by God.
1. Some in the church today speak derogatorily against "identifying marks of the true church."
 2. Examples: Royce Money ("The Distinctiveness Of The New Testament Church." *Biblical Interpretation*. pp. 124-137) Jeff Walling ("The Community Church...of Christ." 51st Pepperdine Lectures, 1994), Carroll Osburn ("The Identifying Marks of the Church." *The Peaceable Kingdom*, pp. 123-138) .
 3. The Bible gives specific descriptions of the church/kingdom, so man will know the church of Christ, definitely.
 4. Benjamin Franklin; Gospel preacher, was correct when he gave the following propositions, all of which can be easily recognized.
 - a. A body, or community, not built on the foundation which God laid, is not the community which the Lord calls "my church."
 - b. A community not founded and established in the right place, is not the church of Christ.
 - c. A community not founded at the right time is not the kingdom of Christ.
 - d. No church can be the true church not founded by the proper persons, Christ and the apostles.
 - e. A kingdom with any other law than the one given by the Head of the church, is not the kingdom of Christ. (*Pioneer Sermons And Addresses*. pp. 260-261)
- B. The Bible teaches the kingdom and church are one and the same institution.

KINGDOM	IDENTIFYING MARK	CHURCH
Matt. 13:19	Seed	Acts 18:8.
Isa. 2:2	Date	Acts 2:16-21.
Mic. 4:1-2	Place	Lk. 24:47.
Dan. 2:44	Boundary	Mk. 16:15.
John 18:36	Owner	Matt. 16:18.
1 Tim. 6:15	Ruler	Eph. 5:23.
Isa. 2:3	Law	Acts 2:38-47.
Matt. 16:19	Keys	Matt. 16:18.
John 3:5	Pardon	Acts 2:38.
Col. 1:13	Membership	Col. 1:2.
Matt. 26:29	Worship	1 Cor. 11:20-27.
Isa. 2:2-3	Glory	Eph. 3:21.
Matt. 25:31-34	Reward	1 Cor. 15:58.
1 Cor. 15:24	Deliverance	1 Thess. 4:16-17.

C. **Matthew 16:18-19.**

1. A study of Christ and His kingdom/church would not be complete without a thorough examination of this text.
2. Jesus teaches that the church of Christ and the kingdom of God are the same institution.
3. This passage teaches the **foundation** of the church/kingdom - "Upon this rock."

- a. It teaches the **certainty** of it - "I will Build my church."
- b. It teaches the **intimacy** of it - "I will build my church."
- c. It teaches the **invincibility** of it - "The gates of Hades shall not overpower it."
- d. It teaches the **authority** of it - "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." (John F. MacArthur Jr. *Ashamed Of The Gospel.* pp. 173-181)

III. THE CHURCH AND KINGDOM IN PROPHECY.

- A. 2 Sam. 7:12-17; 1 Chron. 17:11-15.
- B. Dan. 2:31-45.
- C. Isa. 2:2-3.
- D. Joel 2:28-29.
- E. Mic. 4:1-2.
- F. Zech. 6:12-13; 13:1.
- G. Ezek. 34:11, 22-23.
- H. Amos 9:11-12.

IV. THE CHURCH AND KINGDOM IN PREPARATION.

- A. Reliable, inspired men spoke of it as yet to come.
 - 1. John the Baptist - Matt 3:1-2.
 - 2. Jesus Christ - Matt 4:17;
 - 3. The Twelve - Matt. 10:7.
 - 4. The Seventy - Lk. 10:9.
 - 5. It could not have existed in time of Moses - Matt 11:11.
- B. Some in Jesus' time were still looking and waiting for the kingdom.
 - 1. The thief on the cross - Lk. 23:42 - **before Christ died.**
 - 2. Joseph of Arimathea - - Mk. 15:43 - **after Jesus died**
 - 3. The Disciples . Acts 1:6. (**after resurrection of Jesus and before his ascension**) -
- C. The final stage of preparation for the kingdom - Lk. 24:44-53.
- D. Come with power - Mk. 9:1.

V. THE CHURCH AND KINGDOM ESTABLISHED.

- A. When exactly, was the kingdom/church established?
 - 1. Jesus spoke of it as future - Matt 16:19; Acts 2:47 as present:
 - 2. Established when Holy Spirit came down - Lk. 24:49; Mk. 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4.
 - 3. Established when the "last days" began - Isa. 2:2; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16-21.
 - 4. Church established during Roman rule - Dan. 2:44.
 - 5. Was to come in apostles lifetime - Matt. 16:28.
- B. How was the church established?
 - 1. By the preaching of the gospel - Acts 2:22-36.
 - 2. By sinners rendering obedience to gospel - Acts 2:37-41.
 - 3. By God adding the forgiven obedient ones to the church - Acts 2:47.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. The church of Christ and the Kingdom of God are one and the same institution.
- 2. The Old Testament prophets prove the coming and establishment of the church on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ.
- 3. Every scripture speaking of the kingdom before Acts 2 speaks of it as being in the FUTURE. Every scripture speaking of the kingdom AFTER Acts 2 speaks of it as

being in EXISTENCE.

4. Membership in the kingdom of Christ/church of Christ is essential to salvation!

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M.C. Kurfees. *Biographies And Sermons*, F.D. Srygley (ed.), (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1898), pp. 382-394.

John F. MacArthur Jr. *Ashamed Of The Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993), pp. 173-181. MacArthur is the "pastor teacher" of the Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, CA. Obviously, he does not view the New Testament Church as the Bible presents it. Regarding Matthew 16:18-19, one can take his main points and develop to show the divine importance of the church.

Steve Miller - Steve is a native of Garrettsville, OH and is presently preaching for the Church of Christ in Cameron, WV. Steve has published articles in *Biblical Notes*, *Contending For the Faith*, *Defender*, *Firm Foundation*, *First Century Christian*, *Therefore Stand*, *West Virginia Christian* and *World Evangelist*. He and his wife, Deanna, have three children Brittany, Chelsea, and Isaiah.

COUNTING THE COST

(Luke 14:25-35)

Denver E. Cooper

Introduction:

1. Counting the Cost of What?
 - a. Anything worth while costs something.
 - b. Most today are looking to "free load".
 - c. David wanted to pay his own way. (2 Sam. 24:24)
 - d. In most matters we weigh the pros and cons. (John 6:60)
2. Jesus Wants Everyone to Follow Him. Matt. 11:28-30; Matt. 16:24.
 - a. Out of a sincere heart.
 - b. Because of who he is. John 8:32
 - c. Because of what he is. 2 Peter 2:20.
 - d. Jesus makes plain the conditions of discipleship.
 - e. Details in modern business deals are often deceptive and incomplete.
3. There Is A Cost to All Participants in the Plan of Salvation.

II. IT COST GOD!

1. Eternal purpose. Eph. 2:11,12.
2. Grief caused by creations corruption. Gen. 6:12.
3. Longsuffering. 2 Pet. 3:9,15; Rom. 2:3,4.
4. He gave HIS ONLY SON. John 3:16
 - a. God's great Love is scorned by most.
 - 1). 1 John 4:10
 - 2). We must return this great Love!

III. IT COST CHRIST:

1. His equality with God. Phil. 2:5-9.
2. Sacrifice unequalled.
 - a. Popularity
 - b. Prestige
 - c. Physical hardships
 - d. A shameful, horrible death of a felon.

IV. IT COSTS EVERYONE TO BE A DISCIPLE

1. To be a disciple one must be pardoned from SIN.
2. Pardon from sin demands certain conditions be met.

- a. Believe. John 8:32
 - b . Repent. Luke 13:3,5.
 - c. Confess. Rom. 10:10.
 - d. Be baptized. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38.
 - e. No one can please God without faith. Heb. 11:6.
3. Give up relatives to follow Christ...
- a. Some have been forced to leave home.
 - b. Some have died doing God's will.
 - 1) Not just forsake them, but oppose anything evil they do. Deut. 13:6-11.
 - 2) Asa destroyed his mother's idol. 1 Kings. 15:13.
 - 3) Deny self. (Lose sight of one's self and his interests.) Mt.16:24; Phil.3:7-11
 - 4) Be prepared to carry your cross!
 - a) (Someone said, "take up your cross daily seems quaint to a generation which is only mildly shocked by advertisement of a gold putter.)
 - b) More is involved than just normal burdens, (Illness, loss of income, personal possessions)
 - i). These are suffered by sinners, too,
 - ii) Voluntary endurance for others. Gal. 6:12.
4. Choose a Master. Mt. 6:24
- a. CHRIST OR MAMMON
 - 1) Men worship mammon because they fear they cannot live without her favors.
 - 2) Mt. 6:33.
 - a) Obligation, Object, Order, Promise.
(added - additional - "to boot".)
 - 3) Our gods include human science, athletic prowess.
 - 4) Our goddesses include; Pleasure, Physical conformation, Sex, etc.
 - 5) There is a cost for quality character.
 - a) Proper treatment of others. Mt. 7:12.
 - b) Humility. Prov. 16:18; Mt. 18:4.
 - c. Service. Mt. 20:27
(greatness doesn't come by having material things, the highest position, etc.)
 - 6) Growing spiritually.
 - a) 1 Pet. 2:2.

- b) Freeing oneself of spiritual disease. (SIN)
- c) Study. 2 Tim. 2:15; Ps. 1.
- d) Sacrifice personal wishes for that which pleases God in worship.
- e) Danger of doing more or less than that which is acceptable to God.
Acts 10:34.

V. IS IT WORTH IT?

1. After we've "kicked the tires", examined the structure or weighed future rewards, we must decide.
2. "I've lost my friends, my position, my job!"
3. HEAVEN COSTS !!!
 - a. Living Christ. 1 Pet. 1:21.
 - b. Abiding in Christ. John 15:6.
 - c. Dying in Christ. Rev. 14:13.

CONCLUSION:

1. ONE CANNOT HAVE EVERYTHING.
 - a. One can have the WORLD - Lose HEAVEN OR
 - b. One can have HEAVEN - Lose the WORLD!

Denver E. Cooper - Denver was born in Cairo, WV, April 2, 1923, reared in Parkersburg and graduated from Parkersburg High School in 1941. He was baptized in 1937 by bro. Charlie Taylor who encouraged him to attend Freed-Hardeman College which he entered in August 1941 and preached his first full-length sermon in September 1941. He married Florence E. Smith of Sistersville, WV in March 1945 and they celebrated 50 years together March 1995. To this union was born 8 children and they adopted one daughter. His located work include Ironton, OH (1943); Harrisville, WV (1944); Chester, WV (1945-1948); Philippi, WV (1948-1950); West Street, Weirton, WV (1950-1954); Toronto, OH (1954-1958); Ravenswood, WV (1958-1962); Dewey Ave., St. Marys, WV (1962-1966); Weirton Heights, Weirton, WV (1966-1978); Timberville, VA (1978-1983) and Hillview Terrace, Moundsville, WV (1983-present). He has been a Bible instructor in **West Virginia School of Preaching** beginning in 1994.

RESURRECTION PROOFS

H. A. "Buster" Dobbs

I. Introduction.

A. The resurrection of Jesus is decisive.

1. Jesus either rose from the dead or he did not.

a. If he rose from the dead, he is all he claimed to be.

(1) "Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:3-4).

(2) The resurrection proves or disproves his claims.

b. If he did not "present himself to be alive by many infallible proofs" after he was dead, then he is an imposter.

2. The Christian system turns on the question of the resurrection.

B. The resurrection of Jesus can be tested.

1. If it passes the test, it is true.

2. If it does not pass the test, it is false.

II. Claims For and Against the Resurrection of Jesus From the dead.

A. Items of agreement.

1. Jesus lived.

a. A few misguided souls claim that no such person as Jesus ever lived, but the vast majority of credible witnesses say he did live.

(1) The gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, are the most credible witnesses of Jesus' life.

(2) Philo and Josephus are the second most credible witnesses of Jesus life.

(3) All history records the fact that Jesus lived at about the time ascribed to him in the Bible. No first century historian denies that he lived.

b. The evidence that Jesus lived is overwhelming and undeniable.

2. Jesus was crucified.
 - a. The fact of the death of Jesus is well attested by both secular and sacred writers.
 - b. The claim of his crucifixion was made by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John within 40 years of the event and during the lifetime of many who would have had firsthand (eyewitness) knowledge of his execution by Roman authorities, but at Jewish insistence.
 - c. No person of the time disputed the reported crucifixion.

3. The body of Jesus was buried.
 - a. Information about the burial was given by friends of Jesus as they wrote his biography.
 - b. The burial is confirmed by writers in the second century. Many of these writers were personally acquainted with the apostles and would have had the report of eyewitnesses to the burial.
 - c. Again, this was not disputed.

4. On the morning of the third day the body was missing.
 - a. The friends of Jesus said that he rose from the dead.
 - b. The enemies of Jesus said the body was stolen.
 - (1) The witnesses of the theft of the body were the Roman soldiers on guard at the tomb where the body was placed after the crucifixion.
 - (2) The soldiers claim to have been asleep when the body of stolen.
 - (3) If true, how could they have known what happened to the body?
 - (4) Such testimony would be laughed out of any court, including the court of public opinion.

B. Position of the friends of Jesus.

1. Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Corinthians 15:1-8).

2. The witnesses could not have been mistaken
 - a. They knew him well before his death.
 - (1) They ate and drank with him, walked and talked with him prior to his death.
 - (2) The disciples were slow to believe in the resurrection.
 - b. They were intimately associated with him after his resurrection.
 - (1) They ate and drank with him, walked and talked with him, and examined his crucifixion wounds after the alleged resurrection.
 - (2) Their slowness to believe he was risen denies a conspiracy to deceive.
 - c. If the witnesses lied, they knew they lied. They could not have been mistaken as to the resurrection.
3. The witnesses did not bear false witness to the world about the resurrection of Jesus.
 - a. Hundreds of people were involved as witnesses (above 500 at once on one occasion). Not one witness recanted.
 - b. Their testimony was not impeached by their contemporaries.
 - (1) They did not wait many years before claiming a resurrection.
 - (2) They began immediately to say that Jesus was risen from he dead.
 - (3) The claim of the resurrection was first made in Jerusalem, the place of the crucifixion and it was made to the very people who could have repudiated the claim if it had been false.
 - c. Every earthly interest they had was jeopardized by their claim of a resurrection.
 - d. They were persecuted for their claim, but sealed their testimony of the resurrection with their blood.
 - (1) "Are they Hebrews? so *am* I. Are they Israelites? so *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so *am* I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and

thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness” (2 Corinthians 11:23-31).
(2) Similar sufferings to those of Paul were endured by all the apostles.

- e. Countless thousands boldly and confidently endured indescribable agony, torture, and death because of their belief that Jesus rose from the dead.
4. Would a sane person endure such things for something he knew to be wrong?
- a. Millions have died for a false cause, but few have died for a cause they knew to be false.
 - b. When so large a number suffer so completely and so grandly, it must be conceded they were possessed of a powerful conviction. They believed fully in the truth of the resurrection of Jesus, otherwise so many would not have paid so great a price for their testimony.
 - c. If they lied, they knew they lied; but they could not have lied in view of the price they paid for their claim that Jesus rose from the dead.
 - d. We are compelled to the conclusion that Jesus, after he was dead, “showed himself to be alive” again “by many infallible proofs.”
- C. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the best and most fully established fact in all of history.
- 1. “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; *even* Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 1:1-4).
 - 2. “But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 3:13-18).

Note: See biography at end of first lecture, "Jesus Speaks Today".

WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT HELL

Donald R. Cooper

Introduction:

A. Not a pleasant subject to think about.

1. Perhaps that is the reason why there is less preaching on the subject now than in the past.
2. Unpleasant as it may be, souls must be warned about the reality of hell and the duration of punishment.

B. Many do not believe in Hell.

1. Universalists do not. Comforting as it might seem, we should not rely on their false teachings on the subject.
2. Modernists, Unitarians and many other denominationalists do not.
3. Many professed Christians, by their actions, often leave the impression that they are not sure about the subject.
4. However, just because we reject the plain teaching of the scriptures, or choose to ignore the clear warnings, does not change the truth about the matter.
5. Not only does Christ teach us the way to heaven (John 6:68), but He also warns us of hell (Matthew 10:28).

I. Is There A Place of Punishment After Death? Jesus Says Yes!

A. Let us learn from the rich man (Luke 16:19-31).

1. He had been abundantly blessed in this life.
2. His wealth did not spare him from death.
3. Awakened in Hades and lifting his eyes found himself in torments (vs. 23).

B. Let us also learn from the negligent ones described by Jesus in Matthew 25:41-46

1. They had the same opportunity as the "blessed" of verse 34, but refused to serve.
2. Thus, they were sent away, cursed, into everlasting fire (Hell) to spend eternity with the devil and his angels (vs 41).
3. There they would suffer everlasting punishment, no excuses accepted, no reprieve allowed.

II. Jesus Describes Hell

A. A place of consciousness (Luke 16:23).

1. The rich man was aware of his surrounding (Ibid.).
2. He suffered from the heat (vs. 24)

3. He was able to remember his former life (vs 25) and was painfully aware of his brethren and desired to send them warning (vs 28).
- B. A place of pain (Matthew 25:30).
1. When people suffer great and severe pain they weep and grit their teeth.
- C. A place of fire (Matthew 25:41).
1. "Furnace of fire" (matthew 13:42).
 2. "Lake of fire" (Revelation 20:10).
 3. Unquenchable (Mark 9:44,45).
- D. A place of darkness (Matthew 25:30).
1. Peter also describes it in this manner (2 Peter 2:4).
 2. Jude also (Jude 13).
 3. Hell is a place of "black" darkness.
 4. It is a place of "outer" darkness. This would suggest that hell is a place far removed from the source of light, which is God (James 1:5; 1 John 1:5).
- E. A place of no rest (Revelation 14:11).
1. Even in this life, when troubles and trials come, we are granted periods of rest and relaxation. Not so in hell.
- F. A place of no hope (Luke 16:26).
1. No "light at the end of the tunnel".

III. How Long Will Hell Last?

- A. "Forever and ever" (Revelation 14:10,11).
- B. Everlastingly (Matthew 25:46).
 1. Isn't it strange that we speak so fondly of "everlasting" life, but are so inclined to reject the idea of "everlasting" punishment?

IV. Who Will Be In Hell?

- A. All who disobey God.
 1. Those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
 2. Those who become unfaithful to the Lord (2 Peter 2:14-22).
 3. Hell will be made up of the most repulsive people imaginable (Revelation 21:8; Ephesians 5:1-7).
 4. Also, those who profess to love God but do not their brethren (1 John 3:14,15).
 5. The Devil and his angels (Matthew 25:14).

V. Jesus Provides A Way of Escape

- A. "I am the way, the truth, and the life...." (John 14:6).
 1. He warns that we should have due respect for Satan (Matthew 10:28).

2. To be accepted by Christ at the judgment, one must do the will of His Father in heaven (Matthew 7:21).
3. To do otherwise is to be rejected, turned away by Christ (vss. 22,23).

Conclusion

A. We have been sufficiently warned about Hell by Christ, His apostles and other holy writers.

1. "If the righteous scarcely be saved..." (1 Peter 4:18).
2. "A fearful thing...." (Hebrews 10:31).
3. "Knowing the terror of the Lord...." (2 Corinthians 5:11).

B. If we are lost eternally, whom shall we blame?

Donald R. Cooper - Don was born and reared in Parkersburg, WV, the second son of Jesse R. and Sarah Cooper and attended Freed-Hardeman University. He has been preaching the gospel for forty three years. Don and his wife, Jan, were married March 7, 1954 and have four children and five grandchildren. They began full time evangelism in Washington, PA. March 14, 1954 and have served churches full time in MD, OH and WV including the Hillview Terrace church in Moundsville, home of **West Virginia School of Preaching**, (7/73-6/78). They are presently in their eleventh year with the church at Wadsworth, OH. Don has preached in gospel meetings, lectureships, radio and television and written for periodicals, etc. He served as an instructor at Central Ohio School for Preachers and Teacher in Columbus, OH. He was one of the founders of Northwestern Ohio Christian Youth Camp and directed camp one week each year for several years. He also served in an advisory capacity to Mid-Western Children's Home during its early existence and has been actively involved in many brotherhood endeavors.

QUESTIONS JESUS ASKED

Brad Poe

While explaining his ministry to the Colossians, Paul reminded them that God "willed to make known" to them the mystery (Col. 1:27, NASB). God did not reveal the mystery because He was required to do so by the constraints of justice or because the Colossians had earned the right to see it. He revealed it out of His merciful will.

God only communicates with us because He wants to not because we deserve to hear Him.

Nothing can be said about "Questions Jesus Asked" that brings more to bear upon us than the obvious: Jesus asked questions. God communicated with man.

The Rhetorical Question

Ordinarily, Jesus asked a question for its effect and not in expectation of an answer. Seven out of every ten questions asked by Jesus were rhetorical. When Jesus asked a question, He was not trying to obtain information but make a point.

Consider the implications of these questions:

"If the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" (Matt. 5:13)

"Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?" (Matt. 9:15)

"If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall his kingdom stand?" (Matt. 12:26)

Usually, Jesus asked questions---not to learn---but to teach

A Question Fitly Asked

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver", the proverb says (25:11). There is more to talking than knowing what to say. One must know when to say it. Consider how these three questions "fit" the circumstances/

"But Whom Say Ye That I Am?"

Caesarea Phillipi is about as far north as Jesus ever travelled. The Pharisees and their scribes were trying to bully Him. He had just reached the high water mark in His popularity during the Galilean ministry. And many disciples were deserting Him.

Up to this point, Jesus worked to provoke the question of His identity with miracles. After Caesarea, the substance of His ministry shifted from miracles to teaching. Jesus mentioned His eventual suffering before Caesarea (cf. Matt. 9:15; 10:38; et.al.) but His references to the passion were obscure and indirect. At Caesarea, Jesus "was stating the matter plainly" (Mark. 8:32, NASB). And after Caesarea, Jesus spent less time with the crowds in public and more time with His disciples in private.

Clearly, the Spirit presents Caesarea as a turning point in Jesus' ministry.

During the retreat at Caesarea, Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?". His intent was not to consult with His "pollsters" regarding public opinion. But to set up the next question aimed at solidifying His identity in the minds of the twelve: "But whom say ye that I am?" (Matt. 16:15).

Usually, Peter's impulsiveness got him in trouble. This time it got him a blessing. He replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt.16:16).

"Will Ye Also Go Away?"

First the crowd wanted Him to heal their sick. Then, they wanted to crown Him king. Now, they want breakfast (John 6:1,2; 15/ 22-25).

Jesus fed the 5,000 miraculously for the purpose of producing a hunger in them for Him. But it only produced a hunger for more barley bread. Jesus warns them about their puny spiritual appetite: "Labor not for the meat which perisheth; but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." (John 6:27).

Jesus could have fed them breakfast or let them crown Him king. But Jesus did not tailor His mission to the "felt-need" expectations of the crowds. God had already dictated His agenda.

After the "Bread Of Life" discourse, many disciples left (John 6:66). But Jesus did not apologize for, or adjust His teaching. Rather, He turned to the 12 and asked, "Will ye also go away?". To which Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:68).

"Where Are Those Thing Accusers?"

People were always bringing others to Jesus. But this woman was different. She was not brought to be helped but to be hurt. "Caught in the very act of adultery", the scribes and Pharisees charged. "What shall we do with her, Jesus?".

If Jesus said to stone her, He would offend Rome. If He said not to stone her He would offend Moses. So Jesus replied, from a stooped position, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." (John 8:7).

The men left one by one but the woman stayed. It was not her choice to go there. It was her choice to stay. She was dragged there by the tough hands of a mob but she was kept there by the tender hand of God.

Straightening up, Jesus asked, "Woman, where are those thine accusers; hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (John 8:10,11).

"The Question Jesus Asked the Most"

Entrapment was the aim of the crowd of Sadducees who presented Jesus with their concocted question: "Therefore in the resurrection whose wife will she be of the seven?" (Mark 12:23).

Two rhetorical questions carry the weight of Jesus' response: "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?" and "Have ye not read in the book of Moses...?" (Mark 12:24,26).

On seven other different occasions, Jesus asked similar questions to expose the Jewish religious rulers' ignorance of the Scriptures (Matt. 12:3,4; 11:5,19; 21:42; Mark 11:17; John 3:10; 10:34-36).

Some mistakenly conclude that Jesus took the religious rulers to task for being too exacting in their approach to Scripture. But Jesus never chastised them for doctrinal precision. He chastised their lack of doctrinal precision. They were "legalists", not because they loved and defended the truth (they didn't) but because they sought to supplant the truth with their own traditions (Matt. 15:6).

Relying upon the written Word, Jesus marked out precise points of doctrine regarding the nature of God and the resurrection on this occasion. He used the "book of Moses" to distinguish between the correct teaching on the subject revealed by the Scriptures and the incorrect teaching held by the Sadducees. With this question, "Have ye not read?" (which He repeated often), Jesus championed the careful reading and correct handling of the written Word.

Conclusion

Like the life He lived, the questions Jesus asked help us to come to grips with the frivolity and pettiness that too often characterizes our own lifestyle and conversation.

Brad Poe - Brad is a native of Jackson, Ohio. In 1989, he graduated from Ohio Valley College with a B.A. in Bible. Currently, he is the minister for Northridge Church of Christ in Dayton, Ohio. His wife's name is Rebecca and he has two daughters, Sydney and Lauren.

THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS

W. Terry Varner

INTRODUCTION:

1. Persecution caused some Jewish Christians to apostatize.
2. Persecution produced anguish.
 - a. "Why should we not return to Judaism?"
 - b. Paul's reply: "We have **Christ, The Great High Priest.**"

I. CHRIST, THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST

A. Christ is "a great high priest" (Heb. 4:14) who functions "over the house of God" (Heb. 10:21; I Tim. 3:15).

1. "Great" (*megan*) emphasizes superiority, greatness.
2. Jesus "made purification of sins" (Heb. 1:3).

B. His greatness set forth:

1. *Jesus' Relation To Man (Heb. 2:17-18).*

- a. He was a "partaker of flesh and blood" (Heb. 2:14).
- b. He was "made like unto His brethren" (Heb. 2:17).
- c. He was tempted by sin "in all things" and yielded to none (Heb. 4:15-16).
- d. He is "a merciful and faithful high priest" (Heb. 2:17).
- e. He discharges His role:
 - (1) Faithfully to God (Heb. 3:2, 6).
 - (2) Faithfully for man (Heb. 2:17; 10:23; I John 2:2).
- f. He is "able" (Heb. 2:18) to help us in life.

2. *Jesus' Relation To Moses (Heb. 3:1-6).*

- a. Jesus is superior to Moses as:
 - (1) "The Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (Heb. 3:1).
 - (2) "A Son over His house, whose house we are" (Heb. 3:6).
 - (3) Jesus was more glorious than Moses (Heb. 3:2).

CONCLUSION

Tear a page in Hebrews, and it drips with the blood of Jesus the High Priest. Jesus identifies Himself with man, redeemed man as a man and represents man to God as our High Priest. What a High Priest for believers! Let us never reject Him, nor turn from Him! Let us thank God for Him!

W. Terry Varner - Terry received his education at Abilene Christian University; Waynesburg College; West Liberty State Teachers College; West Virginia State College; National Christian University; and Alabama Graduate School of Religion. He began preaching in 1961 at Shadyside, OH and has preached for churches in Dunbar, WV and North Canton and Dayton, OH, prior to moving to Marietta in 1978. He is currently in his seventeenth year at Harmar Hill congregation in Marietta, OH.

He has spoken on numerous lectureships throughout the brotherhood and participates in teacher training schools on a regular basis. He has authored four books and writes regularly for *Firm Foundation and Therefore Stand*, of which he is owner and editor. He speaks on a daily radio program in Marietta, which is the oldest continuous radio program of brethren in Ohio.

Terry is married to the former Lillie Garrison and they have four children and five grandchildren.

"THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST"

Steve Stevens

When one studies about the coming of Jesus it sparks controversy and curiosity. When men debated the first coming of Jesus as the Messiah most missed the mark by a mile because they looked for an earthly, military kingdom that would dispel Roman rule and restore Israel to world prominence.

A great deal of the religious world repeats history by looking for His second coming to be for the purpose of refurbishing this old material world and ruling over it for a thousand years from the city of Jerusalem. My, that has a familiar ring to it.

On the one extreme there are those who argue that the second coming of Jesus is already history having occurred in 70 A.D. On the other end are those "doom and gloom" preachers who see in every event of the daily 6:00 o'clock news the sure signs Jesus will touch down at any moment.

Add to all this the "end of the millennium" mentality that heightens concerns over the return of Christ at the end of every 1000 years (only 4 years and 2 months to go from this date) and you have the ingredients for utter confusion, desperation, and resignation in trying to understand the second coming of Christ. Let us study some age old questions about the return of our Lord.

I. "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Peter 3:4).

A. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time (emphasis mine, SS) without sin unto salvation." (Hebrews 9:28).

1. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, (emphasis mine, SS)

and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.(John 14:3)

2. Jesus approaches the subject of his second coming in the four narratives of

the Gospel on several occasions. Most of those are given within a few days of his death.

3. Jesus promised to return and given the fact His word is always true, He will!

B. Jesus' return is necessary to deal with other associated events.

1. Resurrection of the dead and transformation of the living. (John 5:28,29; 2 Timothy 4:1).
2. Recompense of every person for their works whether evil or good. (John 5:22; Acts 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
3. Ruin of this old physical world. (2 Peter 3:3-12)
4. If Jesus is not coming again then:
 - a. Every grave is forever sealed.
 - b. Man is consigned to a mortal, temporal existence. This life is as good as it gets.
 - c. Spiritual and eternal matters are irrelevant and utter foolishness.

C. However, His coming is assured by the inspired writings of the New Testament.

1. Matthew accents watchfulness and readiness at the 2nd coming of Jesus. (Matthew 24:42 - 25:46).
2. Mark stresses the unknowableness of the time and the suddenness of his return. (Mark 13:32-37).
3. Luke in his gospel account emphasizes stewardship in the light of Jesus' coming again. (Luke 19:13-27).
4. John affirms living in righteousness and purity because Jesus will return. (1 John 2:8 - 3:3).
5. Peter accentuates endurance and steadfastness through trials and sufferings in preparation for the second coming. (1 Peter 1:7,13; 4:13; 2 Peter 3:3-12).
6. Paul, in the letters to Thessalonica, attaches the aspect of comfort to our Lord returning for us. (1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:17).
7. James stresses the importance of patience in waiting for Jesus to come again. (James 5: 7,8).
8. Jude presses the point of accountability to the Lord upon his return. (Jude 1: 14,15).

D. The second coming of Christ is certain!

1. It is as certain as His ascension into heaven. (Acts 1:11; John 14:3).
 - a. "This same Jesus ... in like manner."
 - b. Same character, quality, and standard.
2. It is as certain as the judgment.
 - a. Final judgment and the second coming are linked together. (Matthew 25: 31 - 46; 2 Thessalonians 1:6 - 10).
 - b. Final judgment is as sure as death. (Hebrews 9:27).
 - c. Therefore, the second coming is as certain as death.

II. "What manner of persons ought ye to be...?" (2 Peter 3: 11,12).

- A. We cannot live any kind of life we please if we truly believe Jesus is coming again.
- B. The Tuesday of the last week before His crucifixion was a long and demanding day. Questions and answers, questions and no answers, and parables.
 1. "By what authority?"; Parable of the Two Sons; Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen; Parable of the Wedding Garment; "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?"; "In the resurrection, whose wife shall she be?"; "Which is the great commandment in the law?"; "If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" "Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites..."; "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."
 2. On the Mt. of Olives late that Tuesday our Lord answered the disciples' questions about the destruction of Jerusalem, and the sign of his coming and of the end of the world. (Matthew 24:3).
 - a. No man knoweth the day or hour when the Son of Man is coming. (v.36).
 - b. Our Lord then speaks three familiar parables. Each one is aimed at teaching us about the kind of people we should be in view of the Lord's return.

1. **Perception** (Watchful) (Matthew 24: 45 - 51) Parable of the Faithful and Wise Servant.
2. **Preparation** (Readiness) (Matthew 25:1 - 13) Parable of the Ten Virgins.
3. **Production** (Serving and Working) (Matthew 25: 14-30) Parable of the Talents

CONCLUSION:

1. History will not simply run its course, but under the guidance of God this universe will come to an end that fulfills His purpose.
2. Justice will be dispensed. Evil will be punished and faithfulness will be blessed.
3. Every soul should make it imperative to obey the will of God.
4. Every Christian should watch for and work in anticipation of the certain return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Even so, Come Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:20). Amen.

Steve Stevens - Steve was born on November 26, 1954, in Barrackville, WV. He preached his first Gospel Sermon at the age of nine in Daybrook, WV. He began teaching a mid-week Bible Class regularly at the age of eleven at the Dewey Avenue Church of Christ in St. Marys, WV. He was baptized by his father, Earl Stevens, on January 22, 1967, at the age of twelve. At age fifteen he was preaching on a regular basis with the congregations at Sancho, Long Valley, New Freeport, and Pine Grove (Hebron, WV). He was able to keep these appointments because his mother drove him until he was old enough to drive himself. He has worked with the Lord's church in West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky. He is presently located with the Church of Christ in Hundred, WV and is in his fifteenth year there. He is married to the former Karen Barnhart of New Freeport, PA and God has blessed them with four children -- Rebecca, Melissa, Jonathan, and Stephanie.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER

John Darrell (J.D.) Conley

INTRODUCTION:

I. Text: Matt. 13:1-23

II. Regarding the text:

This parable of our Lord serves a two-fold purpose.

A. It provides encouragement to the sower (teacher). Some seed will take root and flourish. Isa. 55:11

B. It teaches the responsibility of hearing properly, (listening and acting upon that which was heard) The sower is responsible to sow, but the hearer is responsible to hear.

III. Since all children of God are to be sowers of the seed, let us examine our divine obligation.

DISCUSSION: The Sower Must...

I. Go Out and Sow Vs. 3

A. Unlike earthly crops it is always time to sow for that which is spiritual. No excuse or reason not to.

B. Disciples were to go under limited commission. (Matt. 10:6)

C. We are to go under the Great Commission. (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15,16)

D. No matter what the return is, great or small, we are to "Always be abounding in the work of the Lord". (1 Cor. 15:58)

II. Sow The Seed

A. The Seed is the Word of God. (Lk. 8:11)

B. Not enough just to have the seed; it must be sown.

1. To have a harvest the seed must be sown.

2. Where no seed has been sown there can be no harvest.

(1 Peter 1:22,23; Col. 1:5-6)

3. Many who won't sow the seed wonder why the church doesn't grow.

4. It takes work for there to be a harvest.

C. The Harvest also depends upon the kind of seed sown.

1. Seed reproduces after its kind (Gen. 1:11; Gal. 6:7,8)

2. In order to produce Christians the pure seed must be sown. We must not contaminate the seed with the doctrines and whims of men.

3. Amount of harvest is proportionate to amount of seed sown. (2 Cor. 9:6)

Let us abound in our sowing.

III. Prepare the Soil

A. To be successful in sowing, the soil (hearts and minds of men and women) must be receptive of the seed.

1. Hard soils need sunshine and rain, love and goodness.
2. Weeds, stumps and underbrush (denominationalism, and selfish opinions must be rooted up. (Matt. 15:13)

B. The soil is the heart of man. Vs. 19

1. The heart is man's intellect, and emotions. (Rom. 10:9,10; 6:16,17; Matt. 22:37)
2. The heart is to be kept and guarded diligently. (Prov. 4:23)
3. We are what our heart thinks (Prov. 23:7)
4. Since this is the case we are responsible. (James 4:8; Acts 8:21,22)

IV. Be Prepared for Different Types of Soil.

Notice there are four kinds, three of them will not produce. The Sower must be aware of this as he goes out and sows. A knowledge of this truth will help the sower not to be taken by surprise and thus quickly discouraged. If we plant and water, God Will give the increase. (1 Cor. 3:6)

A. Wayside

1. This represents those with a hard heart. This soil is predominant in the world today. The seed is sown but it lies exposed; unable to penetrate and take root.
2. The word never gets under the surface of their thoughts.
3. The seed is there, it has been sown, but Satan removes it before it can germinate.

B. Stony

1. Represents a heart with a thin layer of rice soil, but underneath it is a bed of stone.
2. This heart belongs to those who are impulsive, yet have no strong convictions, such as the Galatians. (Gal. 5:7; 1:6,7)
3. A person who has no root in himself. Vs. 21
4. A heart that is convicted is a heart that is rooted and grounded in love. (Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:23)

C. Thorny

1. Sadly this condition of the heart describes many in the Lord's church today.
2. The seed takes root, the plant comes up and flourishes for awhile but then worldliness creeps in and chokes out the life.
3. It is never able to bear the fruit that it ought.
4. May we be reminded we cannot serve God and mammon. (Matt. 6:24; 1 Tim. 6:10; James 1:13-16; Col. 3:2)

D. Good

1. This is the soil (heart) the sower is searching for. Although it is not as plentiful as the others it is the most conducive for spiritual growth.
2. The seed sprang up, and brought forth fruit, not only that but it increased.
3. This is the good and honest heart.
4. This is the heart we must strive to locate.

V. Not Take The Blame For Those Who Will Not Hear.

- A. Our job is to sow the seed.
- B. We are not responsible for the soil into which that seed may fall.
- C. Our job is to sow, theirs is to hear. We must not blame ourselves if the majority refuse to listen. Again we have been told that only one soil is best for the desired results.
- D. Let us be more concerned with the content of the message, and less with the method of deliver. For it is the Gospel of Christ that is the power of God unto salvation. (Rom. 1:16)

CONCLUSION: As Sowers Let Us Remember:

- I. Go out and sow
- II. Sow the Seed (the Word of God)
- III. Prepare the soil as best we may
- IV. Be aware of the different kinds of soil
- V. Not blame ourselves for those who will not hear. As this parable teaches, many, if not most, will not hear.

And as we go out and abundantly sow let us constantly ask ourselves this sobering question "What kind of soil is my heart?"

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THE TRANSFIGURATION

Terry Jones

TEXT: Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9: 2-13; Luke 9:28-36

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The transfiguration of Jesus was preceded by two significant events:
 - 1. Peter's confession (Mt. 16:13-18).
 - 2. Jesus' informing the disciples of His death and resurrection (Mt. 16:21).
- B. The transfiguration must be seen as a significant event which exalts Jesus as supreme authority with the divine approval of God Himself.

DISCUSSION:

I. PLACE OF PRAYER (Mt. 17:1; Lk. 9:28).

- A. Purpose of the journey.
 - 1. Luke alone clarifies that Jesus' purpose for climbing the mountain was so that He could spend some time in prayer (Lk. 9:28).
 - 2. This was not the only time that Jesus chose a quiet place for prayer (Mt. 14:23; 26:36; Lk. 6:12).
- B. People with Jesus.
 - 1. Jesus chose Peter, James, and John to accompany Him on this journey (Mt. 17:1).
 - 2. This trio was often selected by Jesus to be with Him (Mk. 5:37; Mt. 26:37).
- C. Place of the journey.
 - 1. Each of the synoptic writers record that their destination was a "high mountain."
 - 2. The most logical and most commonly agreed upon place in question seems to be Mt. Hermon.
 - a) Mt. Hermon was certainly a "high mountain" with an elevation of approximately 9200 feet.
 - b) Hermon was also in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi.

II. PANORAMIC PHENOMENON (Mt. 17:2).

A. Defining the term.

1. Transfigured” comes from the Greek word metamorphoo, meaning “to change into another form.” [The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary].
2. The transfiguration resulted in visible physical changes that took place in the body of Jesus which could be witnessed by the apostles.

B. Description of the transfiguration.

1. His clothing was radiant (Mt. 17:2; Mk. 9:3; Lk. 9:29).
2. His countenance was altered (Lk. 9:29) [i.e., “his face did shine as the sun” - Mt. 17:2].

III. PAIR OF PROPHETS (Mt. 17:3).

A. Recognizing the prophets.

1. Moses - Had died centuries before and had been buried by God in an unmarked grave (Deut. 34:5-6).
2. Elijah - Had been taken to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kgs. 2:11).

B. Reason for their presence.

1. To discuss Jesus’ exodus (Lk. 9:31).
2. To declare Jesus’ exaltation (Lk. 9:35).

IV. PETER’S PRONOUNCEMENT (Mt. 17:4).

A. Reverence shown - “Lord . . . if thou wilt.”

B. Ridiculous suggestion - “let us make here three tabernacles.”

V. PROCLAMATION OF PREEMINENCE (Mt. 17:5).

A. Peter interrupted.

B. Presence of the cloud.

C. Preeminence stated.

VI. PROSTRATION OF THE APOSTLES (Mt. 17:6-8).

A. The men trembling (6).

B. The Master’s touch (7-8).

VII. PUBLICIZING PROHIBITED (Mt. 17:9).

A. Descending the slope.

1. It is uncertain how long they were on the mountain.
2. Even Luke's statement, "on the next day, when they were come down from the hill" (9:37) is not helpful because we are not told how much time elapsed prior to their descent.

B. Demanding silence.

1. Jesus charged these three eyewitnesses of the transfiguration "that they should tell no man what things they had seen" (Mk. 9:9) till after His resurrection.
2. This would be the disciples' first test as to whether they were ready to "hear ye him" (Mt. 17:5).
 - a) They passed the test "and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen" (Lk. 9:36).
 - b) Others whom Jesus had ordered to silence rarely obeyed (Mk. 1:40-45).

VIII. PONDERING THE PROPHECY (Mt. 17:10-13)

A. Analyzing the saying (Mk. 9:10).

B. Asking the Savior (Mt. 17:10).

C. Answering the scribes (Mt. 17:11-12).

D. Apprehending the saying (Mt. 17:13).

CONCLUSION:

- A. This extraordinary event provided assurance of the authority of Christ, as well as, the resurrection, both His and ours.
- B. The only way for one to have hope in the resurrection is to obey Christ (Heb. 5:8-9).

Terry G. Jones - Terry was born in Parkersburg, WV and was raised in Toll Gate, WV. He is the son of Glenn and Linda Jones. He married Melinda S. Hilvers on August 10, 1985. They now have two sons: Austin (Age 9) and Quintin (Age 6). He is a 1986 graduate of East Tennessee School of Preaching in Knoxville, TN. He is scheduled to receive the B.A. degree from Ohio Valley College in May 1996. He worked with the church in Mountain City, TN from 1986 to 1989. He then moved to Pennsboro, WV where he has been preaching to the present.

ASCENSION AND KINGSHIP

H. A. "Buster" Dobbs

I. Introduction.

A. God's kingdom is infinite -- without beginning or end.

1. The kingdom of God existed when Adam was created.
2. God's kingdom will outlast the ages.

B. God promised to set up an indestructible kingdom on earth.

1. When Israel blessed his sons, he said "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10).
2. "A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:1-4).
3. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:6-7).
4. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).
5. The promise to set up an ageless kingdom on earth does not mitigate against the everlasting kingdom of God in heaven, but confirms it. It is an earthly phase of a spiritual kingdom.

II. The Kingdom Comes.

- A. The kingdom announced.
1. John the baptist declared that the expected and hoped-for kingdom was “at hand” (Matt. 3:2).
 2. Jesus repeated the message (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15).
 3. Jesus said the kingdom was present in his ministry: “If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you” (Matt. 12:28).
 - a. The unseen, eternal kingdom of God is always there.
 - b. Anytime the awesome power of God is displayed the kingdom is affirmed.
 - c. Jesus affirms that kingdom by supernatural power demonstrated in casting out demons and other miracles.
 - d. Jesus speaks not of the promised earthly phase of the kingdom, but of the everlasting and ever-present kingdom of the Almighty.
 4. Jesus taught his disciples to pray “Thy kingdom come” (Matt. 6:10).
 - a. The kingdom had not come in the sense of Daniel 2:44.
 - b. It had not come in the sense Jesus and John taught the people to look for it since it was at hand.
- B. The kingdom was to come with power and in the lifetime of some who were contemporary with Jesus while he was on earth in human form.
1. “And he [Jesus] said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power” (Mark 9:1).
 2. Jesus promised that his disciples would receive “power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts 1:8).
 3. The apostles received the promised Spirit on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:1-4).
 4. Therefore, when the power came in the outpouring of the Spirit upon the apostles (until it filled the house where they were), the power came. When the power came the kingdom came because the kingdom was to come with

power. Jesus said, You will see the kingdom come *with* power.

C. Jesus went from earth to heaven to receive a kingdom.

1. In one of his parables, Jesus said a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive a kingdom and have received it, he returned to judge, to reward, and to punish (Luke 19:12,15). The nobleman went away to receive a kingdom.
2. Daniel foresaw a time when one “like unto a son of man” would come to the “ancient of days (Jehovah)” to receive “everlasting dominion, glory, and a kingdom that “would never be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13-14).
3. The coronation of Jesus in heaven is portrayed in Revelation 5:1-14.
4. Jesus went from earth to heaven to be given a timeless kingdom.
5. His ascension, reported by Luke at the end of the his gospel and the beginning of the book of Acts, was necessary to his coronation and to his mighty intercession.

III. The Earthly Phase of a Heavenly Kingdom Exists.

A. Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16).

1. A king rules over a kingdom
2. Jesus compared his kingdom to:
 - a. A man who sowed good seed (Luke 8:1, 5-15).
 - b. A grain of mustard seed (Matt. 13:31).
 - c. Leaven (Luke 13:20-21).
 - d. Treasure (Matt. 13:44).
 - e. Pearl (Matt. 13:45).
 - f. Net (Matt. 13:47-48).
 - g. Householder (Matt. 13:52).
 - h. A king who made a marriage feast for his son (Matt. 22:1-14).
 - i. Ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-12).
3. Jesus said many things about his kingdom.

- a. My kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36).
- b. Children of the kingdom (Matt. 8:12).
- c. Rich people have difficulty entering the kingdom (Matt. 19:23).
- d. Keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:19).
- e. Good news of the kingdom (Luke 8:1).
- f. Mysteries of the kingdom (Matt. 13:11).
- g. Does not consist in meat and drink (Rom. 14:17).

B. People on earth can be in the kingdom.

1. Paul said that God had translated some “into the kingdom of his dear son” (Col. 1:13).
2. We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved (Heb. 12:28).

C. Obedience necessary to entrance into the kingdom.

1. Obedience brings God’s blessing and entrance into the kingdom (Matt. 7:21-29).
2. Jesus saves those who obey him (Heb. 5:9).
3. Flesh and blood cannot enter the heavenly phase of God’s eternal kingdom (1 Cor. 15:50).
4. Those who have faithfully served the Lord in the earthly phase of the kingdom will enter the heavenly phase of that kingdom when they die and at the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:49).

Note: See biography at end of first lecture, "Jesus Speaks Today".

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT HEAVEN

Eddie Cooper

INTRODUCTION:

In the teachings of Jesus, we cannot miss the emphasis he places on the life beyond, both for saints and sinners. When dealing with the hope of heaven or the fear of hell, it is apparent that both of these were real to him, for he spoke often of the joy and blessedness of the redeemed and of the unhappy fate of those who die lost. Is a matter of fact, he would set one against the other (Mt. 7:21-27).

Jesus taught that this world is not the only abode for humans. He would often refer to the life to come (Mt. 5:12). He emphasized that this world is to be used to care for the soul, (Mt. 6:25-33) build up the kingdom, (Mt. 5:13-20) and prepare for eternity, with each person reaping what is sown here.

I. JESUS SPOKE OF HEAVEN AS A REALITY!

- A. Jesus was familiar, as was Job, that the Father's home had spacious dwelling places and its vault rested upon pillars (Job 26:11), and was divided by the firmament from the waters and the world beneath (Gen. 1:8; Prov. 8:27).
- B. Jesus spoke with the authority of heaven because He had been there.
 - 1. Further, it is not true to refer to the other side of death as an undiscovered country, from which no traveler has returned.
 - a. Jesus came from heaven to put away our sins by His death and be buried in the tomb. But, he did not remain dead.
 - b. He arose and appeared to His disciples as the traveler who had returned to declare the reality and glories of heaven.
- C. The term HEAVEN occurs well over one hundred times in the four gospel accounts and in the majority of references the word came from the lips of Jesus.
 - 1. From the language he used, we gather he knew that heaven was the eternal dwelling place of the Father from which Jesus, as the eternal Son, descended and from whence the Holy Spirit is received and which is also the everlasting abode of the redeemed.
 - 2. Just as God spoke of the Temple at Jerusalem as his earthly dwelling place (John 2:16), so he could also say, "Heaven is my throne" (Acts 7:49).

II. JESUS TAUGHT THAT HEAVEN IS A PLACE!

- A. Among the fascinating contrasts Jesus employed in his teachings is the one which he urged his disciples not to lay up treasures "upon earth" but "in heaven" (Mt. 6:19,20).
 - 1. Although a very tangible place, "earth" is insecure and fleeting....(Mt. 24:35) but heaven is permanent and eternal.

B. Jesus used phrases during his personal ministry that prove heaven to be a place:

1. "Our Father in heaven"....(John 3:12)
2. "powers that are in heaven"....(Mk. 13:25)
3. "the angels of heaven"....(Mk. 13:32)
4. "bread from heaven"....(John 6:31,32)
5. "sinned against heaven"....(Lk. 15:18)

C. Although in the majority of references to heaven, symbols are used, they are figures of truth.

1. To some of the ancient saints, the Father's home was a heavenly country of which God is the heavenly Father...(Heb. 11:16; Lk. 11:13)

D. A wonderful feature of our ultimate presence in heaven will be the fact that we are there because of the express wish of the Savior himself. (John 17:24)

1. These precious thoughts were uppermost in the mind of Paul when he wrote that the moment he was absent from his body he would "be at home" with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:1-6,8).
2. Such a hope of heaven was not based upon natural instinct or desire, or even on the completion of an obviously incomplete life here, but upon the authority of Jesus.
 - a. Paul, who was immersed in the teachings of the Lord he dearly loved and sacrificially served, clung to his explicit affirmation...(John 14:2)
 - b. But he did tell us all we need to know about heaven and how to reach there, and such is sufficient for faith to rest upon.
 - c. His presence there is its chief blessedness.

E. Heaven is a new order, made ready for them who have prepared for it.

1. Jesus will return to receive His own into that glorious abode prepared by the Father "from the foundation of the world." (Mt. 25:34)
2. We prepare ourselves by obedience to the glorious gospel and remaining faithful unto death. (Mk. 16:15,16; Rev. 2:10)

III. JESUS TAUGHT WHAT CONSTITUTES HEAVEN!

A. Apart from heaven being the eternal abode of the Trinity, of the angelic hosts, and of the redeemed of the earth, there are certain discernible features as to what kind of sphere it is, apart from being the place we enter at death.

1. Its atmosphere is one of purest joy. (Lk. 12:36,37; 15:7,10)

2. Its ever-wider service.

- a. Rewards will be ours for faithful service rendered on earth. (Mt. 5:12; 25:21; I Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:8-11)
- b. Such faithfulness will bring us larger opportunities of serving the Master in heaven as he taught his own in the parables of the talents and the pounds (Mt 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27)

3. Its selective occupants from earth.

- a. Jesus left men with no uncertainty as to who are qualified to go to heaven.
- b. In unmistakable terms he described those who will reach there as well as those excluded from the heavenly abode. (John 3:3; Mt. 5:3)
- c. Declaring himself to be the TRUTH about his Father in heaven, and as the only WAY to reach him there, Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6).
- d. Whether it be access to the Father in salvation or worship or ultimately heaven, we cannot approach him acceptably apart from the mediation of the Savior.
- e. It is the abode for those that "overcome." (Rev. 21:7)

CONCLUSION:

Mt. 7:13,14

This implies that only a few will seek Christ's way, not because it is hard to find but because it is exacting or strict or difficult. The broad way is easy to find and many will follow it. There will be few in the strait and narrow way because the first step requires the giving up of all our plans and purposes of life, the surrendering of all the sinful pleasures that are so dear to us. To continue in the strait and narrow way requires us to daily sacrifice these sinful pleasures. Most people are not willing to give up their sinful pleasures the short time they are here on earth for the blissful life in heaven throughout eternity. They will enter the wide gate.

Eddie Cooper - Eddie was born April 23, 1946 to Denver and Florence Cooper and married Barbara Buckley on September 2, 1966. They have two sons: Jason (Age 24) and Scott (Age 18). He is a graduate of St. Marys High School, received an Associate of Science from Ohio Valley College and BA in Bible from Abilene Christian University. He has served as located preacher in OH, WV and TX and is currently serving at North End Church of Christ in Parkersburg, WV. He has preached in several gospel meetings, conducted radio and TV programs, has worked in many capacities in youth camps, directed singing schools in OH and WV and contributed articles to several brotherhood publications and local newspapers.

JESUS AND MONEY

Burt Jones

PURPOSE: To impress upon our minds that Jesus taught us to give for our own interest as well as the interest of others.

INTRODUCTION

A wise man will put his money where he believes it will do the most good. It is for this reason that some men invest in stocks and bonds, others in real estate, some in this particular company or some other. All of these men have one thing in common: SELF INTEREST. This is the reason that a Christian invests in spiritual things.

When someone calls my bluff and states that I am no better than a worldly man because I am giving because of self-interest, my response has to be in the affirmative because of my interest in seeing the POOR fed, my interest in seeing the GOSPEL preached and my interest in laying up TREASURES in heaven.

In Matthew 6:19-24 Jesus teaches us to lay up treasures in heaven. I often wonder how my brethren reason who NEVER give as they have been prospered.

I believe that the greatest and most pervasive sin in the church today is the sin of stealing from God, made even worse by members lying about their giving.

- I. Jesus' motive in giving.
 - A. Christ taught much on giving
 - B. When are we blessed for our giving?
- II. The Bible: a book on giving
 - A. Cain and Abel
 - B. The giving of Abraham
 - C. Jacobs' giving
 - D. Written for our example
- III. Laying up treasures in heaven.
 - A. Earthly treasures
 - B. Heavenly investment
 - C. Jesus' advice about our treasures
 - D. The power of treasures
 - (1) Positive
 - (2) Negative
- IV. Rewards for scriptural giving
 - A. Things our Lord has promised
 - B. Old Testament promises
 - C. New Testament promises
 - D. Our faith in God's promises
- V. The joy of giving
 - A. Acts 20:35
 - B. Appreciation for what God has done
 - C. The grace of giving

VI. False concepts on giving

A. Romans 12:8

B. Types of givers

(1) Dry wells

(2) Pump wells

(3) Overflowing wells

C. Acts 11:29

VII. The Christians' relationship to material things

A. Man owns nothing

B. Riches are dangerous

C. Form habits early in life

CONCLUSION:

Not only must Christ and His Kingdom be first in everything that we do, but this idea must also come first in the disposition we make of the increase that comes from our labor. By this I simply mean that if I am a wage earner and draw a salary of \$200, \$300 or \$400 each week, as soon as my check is received the **FIRST** thing that I must do is to take out that part that should be used for the interest of the Kingdom, that church of Christ that our Lord died to establish. How can I do otherwise?

Brethren, we had better wake up because many of us have the wrong attitude about Jesus and money.

Could it be that we live so far this side of the cross that it is difficult for us to realize how much He gave?

Let each of us go back in our mind and sit at the foot of the cross for awhile. No one can refuse to give of himself, his talents, his means or his money when he keeps his heart near the cross.

"I gave my life for thee,
What hast thou given for me?"

Burt Jones - Burt is a native of Gadsden, AL. After having spent most of his life as an Episcopalian, and having a military and business background, he obeyed the gospel, and one week later began his preacher training. He is the father of three children, Dinah, Geoffrey, and Clayton. Dinah now teaches in Ohio, while Geoffrey and Clayton continue studying toward their education degrees. Burt holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education from Jacksonville University and a Master of Arts degree in Middle Eastern History from Youngstown State University. He is a former combat officer during the Vietnam era. He is a graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching. He is also the composer of the hymn, "Safe In His Arms." Jones additionally is the instructor in the popular four part video series on music fundamentals "Singing with Grace," and the author of the Music Fundamentals pamphlet published by Proclamation Press, Memphis, TN. Burt presently conducts gospel meetings and singing workshops throughout the brotherhood. He teaches Bible and English at the **WVSOP**.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

D. Gene West

Text: (Mark 14:22-25 NKJ)(22) And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed {it} and broke {it}, and gave {it} to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." (23) Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave {it} to them, and they all drank from it. (24) And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. (25) "Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." See also: Matthew 26:26-29 and Luke 22:19-23.

Introduction:

1. Man, by his very nature is a monument builder.
2. He uses monuments to remind him of the great, the near great, and the small of his race.
3. He does this because he wants to remember, and be remembered.
4. In Washington, D.C. one may look with satisfaction upon such great monuments as:
 - a. The Washington Monument.
 - b. The Jefferson Memorial.
 - c. The Lincoln Memorial.
 - d. The Kennedy Memorial.
5. We may ask, "Do these men deserve these memorials?"
6. The answer is obvious!
7. God, knowing the nature of man, when he made covenants or agreements with him, or when he delivered him from some great catastrophe gave him some memorial, inanimate or living to cause him to remember the covenant or the deliverance.
8. Some examples of this truth follows:
 - a. When God delivered Noah and his family from destruction he gave Noah the sign of the rainbow to remind him, and perpetual generations, of His covenant that he would never again destroy the earth by water.
 - b. When God made a covenant with Abraham to bless him, to make him the father of many nations, to give Abraham the promised land, and to give him a son, God gave Abraham the command to circumcise all the male children as a sign, or memorial of God's promises. Genesis 17:5-14
 - c. When God delivered the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, He gave the Israelites the feast of the Passover to remind them that He had spared the lives of the firstborn of Israel from the tenth plague, the plague of death, and delivered them from Egypt. Exodus 12: 1-47
 - d. And he gave them the Sabbath to remind them of their deliverance from Egypt.
9. In the New Testament we have the Lord's Supper, given by Jesus Himself, and given to us as a memorial of Christ who died upon the cross to deliver us from the oppression known to man, namely, the yoke of sin.
10. Christ did for us what no man can possibly do for himself, that is, he saved us!
11. Surely, Christ is worthy of an everlasting monument, a memorial to be loved, cherished, and faithfully observed.
12. It is to this memorial, or monument, that we wish to devote considerable attention.

I. THE LORD'S SUPPER IS OF DIVINE ORIGIN.

- A. Our Lord, on the occasion of the last Passover feast, on the night in which He was betrayed, and in the very shadow of the cross, gave us this memorial of Himself. Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 11:19-22

- B. The unleaven bread and the fruit of the vine are perpetual witnesses to the purchase price of our redemption, which was the sacrifice of the body of Christ and the pouring out of His blood from the cross of Calvary.
- C. If the Lord's Supper is not a perpetual witness of Christ's suffering and death, then there is a need to explain the following truths:
 - 1. Its endurance through the centuries and the fact that the feast is as fresh today as when it was given.
 - 2. If someone says it can be explained as a tradition of the church, let them tell us why the first group of Christians ate the supper.
 - 3. If it celebrates a myth, we need to explain who fooled the first group of Christians into sitting down to the table to celebrate that which never existed!
 - 4. If it is only tradition or myth someone needs to explain why a **new word** was coined in the Greek language to point out the particular relationship of this supper to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a. It is called the **KURIAKOS** supper, and this word is not found in previous Greek literature.
 - b. **KURIAKOS** means, "Of or belonging to the Lord; relating to the Lord."
 - 5. These things cannot be explained if the Lord's Supper is not a perpetual witness to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

II. THE LORD'S SUPPER IS BOTH A MEMORIAL AND A COMMUNION. (See: Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:19-22; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-30.)

- A. As a memorial the Lord's Supper is both commemorative and declarative.
 - 1. Jesus said, (Matthew 26:26-29 NKJ)(26) And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed {it} and broke {it}, and gave {it} to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." (27) Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave {it} to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. (28) "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (29) "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."
 - a. Jesus did not say that we are do this in order to remember Him, but because we do remember him.
 - b. "In remembrance of me," in 1 Corinthians 11:24 & 25 means, "for a memorial of me." (1 Corinthians 11:24-25 NKJ)(24) and when He had given thanks, He broke {it} and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." (25) In the same manner {He} also {took} the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink {it}, in remembrance of Me."
 - c. Those who cherish the memory of Christ in their hearts will gladly show it in faithfully keeping the sacred feast.
 - d. They do this for a memorial of Christ, His birth, life, teachings, obedience, good deeds, His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.
 - e. The world builds great monuments to commemorate the lives and deeds of great men, so we eat this feast to commemorate the greatest of all men, our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 2. The Lord's Supper is declarative. 1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. (NKJ)
 - a. We declare to the world that Christ died to save us from sin and from Hell.
 - b. We declare that Christ will come again to receive us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also.
 - c. We declare to all that Christians will keep this feast until He comes again.
 - d. We declare to all that He is our Sovereign Lord, Ruler of our lives, and Savior of our immortal souls.

3. If we refuse, or neglect, to meet with the Lord and His saints on the Lord's Day to eat the Lord's Supper we are failing to do certain spiritually important things.
 - a. We are refusing to proclaim His death until He comes.
 - b. We are refusing to memorialize him in the acts of eating the bread and drinking the fruit of the vine.
 4. Would we want Christ to return on that day?
 5. Only the faithful Christian, who is prepared for the Lord's coming, will find the day of his coming a time of great joy and supreme happiness. Colossians 3:4 When Christ {who is} our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (NKJ) Hebrews 9:28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. (NKJ)
- B. The Lord's Supper is a Communion. (1 Corinthians 10:16-17 NKJ)(16) The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (17) For we, {being} many, are one bread {and} one body; for we all partake of that one bread.
1. Communion is not something we take, but something we do.
 2. We partake of the bread and fruit of the vine, and in so doing we show our joint participation (communion) in the blessings procured by the body and blood of Christ.
 3. When we partake of the bread and fruit of the vine we acknowledge our joint participation in the benefits of belonging to the Body of Christ, which is the church of Christ.
 4. We show our fellowship in joint participation in Christ's innumerable blessings for time and eternity.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTAKING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

- A. For a Christian to willfully forsake the assembly in which we partake of the Lord's Supper in memory of Christ's death is to walk in darkness and refuse to commune with Christ Himself in the blessings He has given us.
 1. A member of the Lord's church who willfully forsakes the Lord's Supper is not in fellowship, or communion, with the Lord, nor is he in fellowship with those Christians who do continue in the fellowship, or communion, with the Lord Jesus Christ.
 2. The person who willfully forsakes worshipping God, which includes the Lord's Supper, is one who is yet to learn the depth and beauty of Christianity.
 3. The Christians who want to hold hands, hum, or sing during the communion with Jesus Christ have yet to learn the depth and beauty of worship or the Lord's Supper.
- B. We should never neglect the sacred feast when we are physically able to be with the saints of God in worship.

CONCLUSION:

Let us all be urged to worship in solemnity, and in deep spirituality when we come together to praise God. Let us turn the Lord's Supper into neither a mass, nor a mess! Let us be faithful at the table remembering the one who died for us, and declaring His awesome power to save to a dying world.

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MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Mark Bass

Introduction:

- A. In recent years our nation has witnessed a divorce explosion:
1. In 1870 there was one divorce for approximately every thirty-four marriages. In 1900 the ratio was approximately one to twelve. By 1930 it had become one in six.
 2. For several years the rate was one out of four with a much higher rate in some localities.
 3. Today, one in three marriages ends in divorce, with the rate being one out of two in some places.
 4. And yet, the divorce rate, as high as it is, does not present a true picture of marriage failure.
 - a. Some couples separate without divorce.
 - b. Others continue to live together even though their marriages have become bankrupt.
 - c. Thus marital failure is far more common than the divorce rate would indicate.
- B. The laws of our land permit divorce and remarriage for practically any and every conceivable reason.
1. Adultery, desertion, conviction of a felony, impotency, wife with child at the time of marriage, incompatibility, are just a few of the legal reasons for divorce in America.
 2. Certainly Christians and all others who have any regard for the scriptures cannot and will not take advantage of such loose legislation.

Discussion:

I. THE BIBLE MAKES IT CRYSTAL CLEAR, THERE IS BUT ONE REASON FOR DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE -- FORNICATION:

- A. It was never God's intention that husbands and wives divorce.
1. Jesus addressed the subject in Matthew 19:3-8.
 - a. A man must leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. v. 5
 - b. As husbands and wife they are joined by God. v. 6
 - c. Divorce was "*not so*" from the beginning. v. 8
 2. To enter into marriage with a mental reservation, thinking, "Well, if this doesn't work, I'll divorce and try again," is nothing short of rebellion against God and His Word!
 - a. Marriage is to last as long as both partners live. Rom. 7:2,3; I Cor. 7:39
 - b. God's arrangement is "*till death do us part.*" This is the general rule (Jesus makes one exception in Matthew 19:9)
- B. Just who may marry again?
1. Obviously one whose companion has died. Rom. 7:2,3; I Cor. 7:39

- a. In death the marital bond is broken without dishonor on the part of either partner.
 - b. The contract has been carried through to its completion.
2. Also one whose marriage partner has committed fornication is free to remarry. Matt. 5:32; 19:9
- a. Thayer defines "*fornication*" as "illicit sexual intercourse in general."
 - b. The Lord's teaching in these passages is not hard to understand even though there is much discussion about it and many attempts are made to evade the force of it.
 - c. To state it as plainly as possible: Those who separate for any cause other than fornication must either remain unmarried or be reconciled. I Cor. 7:10,11
 - d. The sin of fornication is the only one that allows a person to divorce a mate and remarry without committing adultery.
 - 1) Those who divorce their companions because of fornication are free to remarry. **But**, if divorce is obtained for any reason other than fornication and either party remarries, that person and the one they marry commit fornication.
 - 2) Contrary to what some are teaching this is not a one time action!
 - (A) They commit adultery as often as they come together.
 - (B) "*Committeth adultery*" in the Greek is in the present tense, which always means continued action.
 - (C) If a single act were meant, the aorist tense would have been used.
 - (D) Those who are thus married continue to commit adultery -- that is, they keep on committing adultery.

II. SOME TRY TO GET AROUND THE TEACHING OF MATTHEW 19:9 BY INSISTING THAT JESUS WAS EXPLAINING THE LAW OF MOSES:

- A. This being true, the passage would have no application to us.
- B. But the context shows the teaching to be a contrast to the law of Moses.
 - 1. Jesus said that Moses allowed men to put away their wives (Deut. 24:1-4), but from the beginning it was not so." In verse 9 He says in essence, "This is what Moses allowed, but my teaching is different."
 - 2. In Matthew 5:31,32 the contrast is even clearer. Jesus quotes the law of Moses (v. 31) and then says, "*But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*" **Matt. 5:32**
 - a. The words, "*But I say*," clearly show that what follows is in contrast to what precedes.
 - b. How can one statement be an explanation of another when the one is put in contrast to the other?

III "ARE ALL PEOPLE SUBJECT TO GOD'S MARRIAGE LAWS?" I.E., "DO GOD'S MARRIAGE LAWS APPLY TO NON-CHRISTIANS?"

- A. Some claim that God's marriage laws do not apply to alien sinners (non-Christians).
1. Briefly stated this argument says that those outside of Christ are under "civil law" only, therefore God's marriage laws do not apply to them.
 2. It is claimed that so long as men obey the civil law under which they live (no matter what the civil law may be regarding divorce and remarriage) they may divorce and remarry in violation of Jesus teaching of Matthew 19:9 without sinning.
 3. This argument is based on Matthew 19:3-9 where the Pharisees came to Jesus with the question of divorce.
 - a. The argument goes something like this: "These words of Christ were spoken to Jews, God's covenant people at that time. Therefore they only apply to God's people today -- no aliens were/are included.
 - b. Present day application of this argument (?) says that marital entanglements prior to obeying the gospel makes no difference. One just can't be divorcing and remarrying after becoming a Christian.
 - 1) But why not carry this argument one step further and say that since most of Christ's teachings were directed to the Jews (God's covenant people at that time), nothing He taught during His earthly ministry is binding on aliens? **If not, why not?**
- B. Consider the consequences of this position:
1. It would mean that the vast majority of couples living together in the world are not married in God's sight (remember, they are not under God's marriage laws).
 2. Homosexuality, lesbianism and bestiality would be legitimate unions provided they violate no civil law!
 3. This position would allow polygamy -- while an alien sinner it would not matter how many wives one had, provided it met the approval of the courts.
 4. Furthermore, free love communes with total sexual freedom would be quite alright unless prohibited by civil law.
 5. It would allow complete freedom to divorce and remarry (for any reason) as long as it was recognized by, or accepted by the civil authorities.
 6. It denies that unbelief is a sin since no civil law that I know of demands faith in Christ.
 7. It denies that the gospel will be the basis for judging those who reject the words of Christ.
- C. Those holding this view need to explain I Corinthians 5:9-11 where Paul distinguishes between "fornicators of this world" and fornicators that are brethren in the Lord. (How can there be fornicators in the world if God's marriage laws do not apply to them?)

D. Herod the Tetrarch illustrates how all men are subject to God's laws.

1. He was a ruler who was not considered a child of God, but John the baptizer rebuked him in Matthew 14:4.
 - a. Why? Because he had taken his brother Philip's wife.
 - b. John rebuked him for it and said, "*....It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. Mk. 6:18*
2. So God does recognize the marriages of unbelievers even though He does not approve of them.

E. The word "*whosoever*" in *Matthew 19:9* makes Christ's marriage laws apply to everyone.

1. Notice "*a man*" (not just a Christian man) is to enter into marriage. *Matt. 19:5*
2. Jesus is here referring back to *Genesis 2:24*, but those words were not spoken to Adam (he never left father and mother to cleave to his wife).
3. The words of *Genesis* were a law given to all humanity to govern marriages for all ages.

F. *I Corinthians 6:9-11* is another passage which completely devastates this doctrine (argument).

1. Paul reminds his readers that in their former state (before they became Christians) some of them had been fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, coveters, drunkards, and such like.
 - a. Not all of these sins were violations of civil law.
 - b. Notice especially verse 11: "*And such were some of you....*" but not any more, they gave up these sins and obeyed the gospel.
 - c. Obviously they were subject to and in violation of God's laws even before they became Christians.

G. Notice further that if this position is true, then a Christian woman (a saint to whom Christ's marriage law does apply) could be married to a man who is not a Christian (to whom Christ's marriage law does **not** apply); but he would not be married to her, since Christ's marriage law is for saints only.

1. Yet Peter gave instructions to women on how to convert their unbelieving husbands. *I Pet. 3:1ff*
2. So Christians can be married to non-Christians, and the non-Christians are just as much married as the Christians are.

H. Closely related to the "saints only" theory is the belief that non-Christians are subject to a "*law....in their heart*" rather than to the law of Christ. This is based on *Romans 2:14,15*.

1. Time will not allow us to notice the many proofs that such an interpretation is false. (Only one point is needed to annihilate this theory:)
2. Notice the context: In *Romans 2* Paul is talking of a time before the New Testament went into effect.
 - a. He speaks of those "*under the law.*" *v. 12*

- b. At the cross the law was done away and men were no longer under it.
- 3. So Paul is speaking of a time before the last will and testament of Christ went into effect.
- 4. We will not take the time to go into it, but the careful Bible student will see that it is not the law that was written on the heart, but the **works** of the law!

IV. I CORINTHIANS 7:20:

- A. Still others try to circumvent the Lord's teachings by appealing to *I Corinthians 7:20*: "*Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.*"
 - 1. It is claimed that obedience to the gospel erases the sin of adultery and makes the adulterous relationship right before God. Therefore to separate would be failing to abide in that calling wherein one was called.
 - 2. The absurdity of this argument is easily seen:
 - a. If a man has ten wives when he is converted (called), can he remain in that polygamous relationship?
 - b. What if one was involved in a homosexual marriage when he was called (legal in many states); should he/she continue to abide in that relationship after becoming a Christian?
 - c. What about the prostitute, the gambler, the drug addict?
 - 3. How absurd to have Paul suggesting that one should continue living in sin after being called to become a Christian. Cp. Rom. 6
 - 4. To use I Corinthians 7:20 out of context and make it apply to unscriptural marriages is to make baptism a "magical rite"; something that could change adultery into purity.
 - 5. So what is Paul teaching? Simply this: One may remain in the state (condition) in which he is called **provided it is a right relationship in the first place!**
 - a. In particular Paul was dealing with the concept of slavery.
 - b. Converts could remain faithful to Christ and still be in servitude to a master.

V. MAY THE GUILTY PARTY (DIVORCED FORNICATOR) REMARRY?

- A. From time to time we hear brethren ask: "May the guilty party (divorced fornicator) remarry?"
 - 1. It is generally agreed that the innocent (offended) party has a scriptural right to divorce and remarry. But in recent years some have begun to contend that the guilty party has the same right.
 - 2. In spite of the popularity of this idea it needs to be clearly understood that the Bible nowhere teaches that the guilty party may remarry.
 - 3. The Bible clearly teaches that this person (guilty party) has **no right** to contract another marriage.

B. In Luke 16:18 we find the Lord's general rule concerning divorce and remarriage.

1. Notice, anyone who divorces and remarries commits adultery; and anyone who marries a divorced person commits adultery.
2. However, there is one exception to this rule:
 - a. Matthew 19:9 gives the right of remarriage to one of the partners following divorce.
 - b. The Lord makes it crystal clear that the man or woman who divorces his/mate for some trivial cause (other than fornication) is guilty of adultery.
3. Stop and think: If it is true (as some argue) that the guilty party is free to remarry following a divorce for fornication, then **Christ has no law at all regarding divorce and remarriage!**

C. Invariably someone will ask, "What about David? He committed fornication, had Uriah murdered, and then married Bathsheba. Since God allowed David to marry and keep Bathsheba, surely the fornicator today is free to remarry."

1. I would point out that this is not parallel to the issue at hand.
 - a. David did not commit fornication to break his own marriage, nor was it used by a wife to put him away.
 - b. David did not marry Bathsheba as long as she had a living husband.
2. Of course, this is not an effort to justify David's sin. Surely if he had it to do over again, he would not have acted so foolishly.
3. David also had other wives -- does this justify polygamy?
4. We must remember that David lived and died under the law of Moses.
5. Some are quoting brother J.W. McGarvey to support this view. Brother McGarvey did espouse this view in his *Commentary on Matthew and Mark* (1875). But several years later he renounced this view in his book, *The Fourfold Gospel*, p. 242. This should be understood as his more mature understanding of Jesus' teaching.
 - a. Even if this were not the case, the fact that brother McGarvey or any other brother subscribed to a false doctrine, does not lessen the fact that it is still false doctrine.
 - b. Remember, men are not our standard of right and wrong!

VI. MAY ONE REMARRY ON THE GROUNDS OF DESERTION?

- A. Another false doctrine in regard to marriage, divorce and remarriage is based on I Corinthians 7:15.
1. It is claimed, (based on this passage) that when the unbelieving husband or wife deserts his believing partner, the deserted Christian is free to remarry.
 - a. In actuality I Corinthians 7:15 only deals with the abandonment of a husband or wife by a former partner -- not remarriage!
 - b. To make it teach such is to misapply the context.

2. The word here translated "*bondage*" (*DEDOULOTAI*) means "enslaved, subservient, bound by the will of another.
 - a. It is often used, in the feminine form, in Greek literature, of a female slave, one in a servile condition, abjectly (totally -- mb) submissive to the will of another.
 - b. It follows, therefore that the contention by some today that this word is descriptive of the marriage relationship and that an abandoned party is on this account free to remarry is saying that a married woman is in a state of slavery!
 - 1) No New Testament writer ever used this word (*DEDOULOTAI*) in reference to the marriage relationship.
3. Paul seems to be saying that if the unbeliever departs, the believer is not bound to give up his/her Christianity in order to save the marriage. They are not "bound" (enslaved) to that husband or wife.
 - a. As Christians we are not enslaved to our mates so that we must give up Christ in order to please them.

VII WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL'S RESPONSIBILITY WHEN HE LEARNS THAT HE/SHE IS LIVING IN ADULTERY?

- A. Certainly no study of this topic would be complete without asking, "What is an individual's responsibility when he learns that he/she is living in adultery?"
 1. Simply stated, **they must repent!**
 2. Repentance is essential to avoid condemnation. Lk. 13: 3,5; Acts 17:30,31
 3. It is required of alien sinners as well as erring children of God. Acts 2:38; 8:22
- B. Just what is repentance?
 1. The word translated "*repent*" means to undergo a change of mind and feeling...to make a change of principle and practice, to reform.
 2. It means to practice it no more; it is a change of mind that results in a change of life.
 - a. The penitent drunkard must give up his bottle -- likewise the adulterer must give up (separate from) his unlawful companion. I Cor. 6:9-11
 - b. Suppose that I run off with my neighbor's wife, wallet and car.
 - 1) Later I hear the gospel and become a Christian, may I keep his car and wallet? Of course not! (Repentance demands restitution where possible.)
 - 2) May I keep his wife? Some say "Yes, baptism will make it all right."
 - 3) If baptism will make another man's wife mine, why won't it make his car mine.
 - 4) Godly repentance demands that all sinful relationships be severed.
- C. Someone will object, "But baptism takes away all sin, therefore, one may continue to live with the wife or husband he has at that time."
 1. According to this view all marriages and divorces which have taken place before baptism are of no concern since all sins are washed away in baptism (including

adultery), thus making it right and permissible for such persons to continue living together.

- a. In other words, the adulterous marriage now becomes holy and acceptable.
- b. This is a very comforting doctrine (& very popular).

2. In reply to this let me say:

- a. It is true that all sins are cleansed by the blood of Christ at baptism.
- b. But repentance demands that they (all sins) be given up before one is baptized.
- c. We must understand that baptism does not cleanse a sinful relationship so as to make it no longer sinful.
 - 1) If it was wrong before baptism, it will still be wrong after baptism.
 - 2) Baptism does not make an unholy relationship holy!

3. Consider the following questions:

- a. May the **thief** who obeys the gospel continuing to steal since all of his past sins are forgiven?
- b. When the **polygamist** is baptized, he is forgiven of the sin of polygamy; may he continue living in that state of polygamy?
- c. What about the **homosexual** who is baptized, he is forgiven of all sins; may he continue living in that abominable relationship?
- d. May the **proprietor of a house of prostitution**, after becoming a Christian, continue in that line of work, or does repentance demand that he find another line of work?

4. Clearly one's past sins are forgiven in baptism, but he may not continue in that sinful relationship!

D. We could apply this same logic to the child of God in an adulterous relationship:

1. Prayer on the Christian's part will do for the Christian exactly what baptism will do for the alien -- remove every sin, including adultery. Right?
 - a. That being the case, the adulterous union entered into by the child of God can be made holy by simply praying and asking God for forgiveness.
 - b. If not, why not?
2. "Oh, but he must repent," someone says.
 - a. That's right, but so must the alien sinner (non-Christian). Acts 2:38
 - b. Repentance has the same meaning for both!

E. As we pointed out earlier, the words, "*committeth adultery*" in *Matthew 19:9* denotes a continuing action.

1. Literally, Jesus is saying that when one divorces and remarries without the cause of fornication, he keeps on committing adultery as long as the marriage relationship exists (continues).

2. Baptism will not change this, only repentance will, and repentance demands that we put away sin.
 3. True, one is forgiven of all sin when he/she is baptized, but the moment he/she cohabits again with an unlawful marriage partner, adultery is committed.
- F. Beloved, sinful relationships and practices of every kind must be broken or given up!

VIII SOME APPEAL TO EMOTION RATHER THAN SCRIPTURE:

- A. Almost invariably, someone will ask, "What about those poor innocent little children whose hearts are broken and lives are ruined?"
- B. Unfortunately, this is often true. (Those least responsible are the ones hurt the most.) But our responsibility is to determine the Lord's teaching on the matter and obey it.
 1. We have no obligation to either justify or apologize for what the Lord teaches and requires.
 2. Have we forgotten that the way of *"the transgressor is hard"*? (*Prov. 13:15b*). (Not only for the transgressor, but for those associated with him/her.)
 3. I don't like to tell persons that they must separate (give one another up), my heart bleeds for them, but I have no authority to change the doctrine of Christ; I must preach it like it is!
- C. Others argue that there is no example of God ever breaking up a marriage.
 1. But God has required the breaking up of "homes" or marriage relationships, even where children were involved.
 - a. Consider Ezra 10:2-5, 10, 11, 44: (Esp verse 11:)
 - b. I don't know how the Lord could have made it any plainer.
 2. Some will argue, "But there is no example of such in the New Testament."
 - a. No, but neither is there an **explicit** example for breaking up a polygamous marriage or a homosexual marriage!
 - b. While it is true that there are no explicit commands to separate, there are several implicit examples.
 - 1) If John the Baptizer was not telling Herod to give up his brother Philip's wife (Mk. 6: 17,18), what was he telling him?
 - 2) In I Corinthians 6:9-11, Paul wrote to Christians and listed various *"works of the flesh"* which will keep one out of heaven. One of the sins is adultery.

Conclusion:

- A. We need to do more teaching on this vital subject before it is too late. So very much depends on it:
 1. The happiness of our children.
 2. The keeping of our homes.

3. Even civilization itself.
 4. Most importantly, the purity and identity of the Lord's church.
- B. The church has a tremendous responsibility to do more teaching on this vital subject -- it has been neglected for far too long.
1. Plain Bible teaching will save many heartaches and sorrows!
 2. Just think of the homes and souls that might have been saved if more preaching and teaching on this subject had been done in the past.
- C. I Corinthians 5:1-13 clearly teaches that the church must withdraw itself from and have no fellowship with fornicators.
1. We have been too permissive for too long beloved.
 2. Let us pray for the courage and strength to accept and preach the whole council of God on this subject; and more importantly to **obey it!**

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JESUS AND WORSHIP

Tim Nichols

INTRODUCTION

The prophet Micah prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. He was inspired to utter warnings concerning the sins of both Israel and Judah and to point to the coming of the Messiah from the little town of Bethlehem. As is often the case when men's sins are being pointed out to them, it appears that Micah's audience needed to have matters simplified for them. Inspired truth is never so complicated that it becomes inaccessible. Sin-hardened men, however, intent upon doing what they will, often muddy the waters with lofty-sounding speculation and confusing quarrels that justify their actions (at least in their own minds).

The waters had been muddied, in Micah's day, by proud men who apparently wanted to combine idol worship with the worship of Jehovah and unjust treatment of their fellowman with sanctimonious worship of God. Bound as they evidently were to such a desire to continue in their sins and to retain the approval of God, they were unable to see the very simple and basic principles that they were violating. No doubt there were some among them who declared that the issues were just too complex for anyone to really understand and that no one has the right to claim to be sure about any of it. Micah clarified the issues for all who were willing to have them clarified by asking a series of rhetorical questions:

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?
shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the
Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my
soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require
of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?
(Micah 6:6-8).

Micah's questions had already been answered in the Law of Moses for anyone who cared to look. God had shown them, in great detail, what they were to offer to God as worship and the attitude of heart with which they were to offer it. To continue to question what they ought to

have done as worship after God had already shown them what is good was not reasonable. Neither is it reasonable in our day. When men ask, in our day, "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with the swelling sounds of organs, with pianos well-tuned? Will the Lord be pleased with choirs and choruses? Shall I partake of the Lord's Supper once per year and listen to the preaching of our female preacher every Lord's day?" -- the people of God ought to be ready and willing to open their New Testaments and say to them, "He has shown you what is good. What does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"

When we do so we will surely want to point out some of the principles of worship taught by our Lord.

I. OUR LORD HAS SHOWN US THAT TRUE WORSHIP MUST COME FROM WITHIN.

A. In His discussion with the woman at the well He revealed that God *seeks* worshippers who will worship Him "in *spirit* and in truth" and that those who worship Him *must* worship Him "in *spirit* and in truth" (John 4:23, 24).

1. The spirit of a man is that unseen part containing his thoughts, desires, intentions... (1 Corinthians 2:11).

2. Our worship *must*, therefore, consist of more than just the outward acts. Those outward acts *must* be motivated by the true devotion of the heart.

B. Jesus pointed out the double sin of the Pharisees, who actually dishonored God with wrong acts (false teaching of men) by which they feigned to honor God with their lips while their hearts were far removed from even their wrong acts (Matthew 15:1-9).

C. Jacob was able to convince Isaac that he was Esau by putting on the skins of goats and by offering him the meat that he loved (Genesis 27:16-29). But the eyes of our Father are not dim as were those of Isaac in his old age. He knows the heart of the worshipper more thoroughly than the worshipper himself. No outward act of "worship" is pleasing to God when the heart is not behind it.

II. OUR LORD HAS SHOWN US THAT TRUE WORSHIP MUST BE AUTHORIZED.

- A. Jesus taught the woman at the well that our worship must be "in spirit and in *truth*" and that those who worship Him *must* worship Him "in spirit and in *truth*" (John 4:23, 24).
1. The "truth" is the word of God (John 17:17).
 2. All that we offer to God as worship, therefore, must be offered on the basis of God's revelation that He desires such acts in order to be "in truth" (see also Colossians 3:17).
 3. Since God has revealed what He wants us to *do* in order to express our adoration to Him, those who walk humbly with God will simply remain in the truth and not wander into other activities that do not have divine sanction (2 John 9; 1 Corinthians 4:6). The Holy Spirit has searched the mind of God and has revealed to us what God desires of us. As a result we can know the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-12).
- B. Nadab and Abihu have taught us an important lesson by their negative example that we must not forget (Leviticus 10).
- C. It is not the heart *alone* - or the act *alone* - that is pleasing to God. Both combine in the most reasonable way imaginable to express the real sentiments of our hearts to God. Like those under the Old Covenant, we must serve God "in sincerity and in truth" (Joshua 24:14).

III. OUR LORD HAS SHOWN US THAT TRUE WORSHIP IS TO BE UNPRETENTIOUS.

- A. The very idea of engaging in acts of worship in order to be seen of men is offensive to the One who seeks to be worshipped by men. Jesus called those who so worshipped "hypocrites" and revealed that those who worship in order to receive the reward of man's approval will have to settle for that reward alone. Such worshippers will receive no reward from God (Matthew 6:1-8).
1. The fact that worldly people love and admire a good show and might be drawn in by a show of worship does not give us license to ignore the principle (1 Corinthians 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 4:1-7).

2. The sense that a thing might be more pleasurable for us carries no weight with God (1 Corinthians 11:20-26).
- B. Just as faithful men have had to trust *God* and *God's means*, throughout the centuries, to accomplish the will of God, we must look to God and not to ourselves.
1. Using God's wisdom and might, Gideon's little army defeated countless Midianites.
 2. Shamgar killed six hundred men with an ox goad.
 3. Samson killed a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass.
 4. David killed Goliath with a pebble....
- C. Only faithless men can believe that we cannot accomplish the will of God today by simply doing as He has taught us to do. The gospel, both *taught* and *practiced*, is still the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).

CONCLUSION

The Lord has shown you what is good. Are you willing to abandon all else and to walk in simple humility with God? The formula is fairly simple and not as sensational-sounding as many in our sensual world would like. Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. You will then have no difficulty knowing what to do as you come before the Lord, and bow before the high God.

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MIRACLES OF JESUS

Will Montgomery

I. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS.

A. Terms.

1. Miracles. John 2:11.
2. Signs. John 20:30.
3. Wonders. John 4:48 (Wonder is never used by itself in the biblical text).
4. Power. Luke 9:1.
5. Mighty works. Mark 6:2.
6. Strange things. Luke 5:26.

B. Definition.

1. Negative.
 - a. Miracles are not just a remarkable event or thing.
 - (1) A body being healed by a physician and medicine and time is remarkable, but it is not a miracle in the biblical sense.
 - (2) A child being born into the world is amazing, but it is not a miracle in the biblical sense. These are accomplished by natural law.
 - b. Miracles are not just the intervention of God through his providential care. Romans 8:28.
2. Positive.
 - a. 'Miracles' and 'Power' refer to production.
 - b. 'Signs' refer to proof. (They signify something).
 - c. 'Wonders' refer to perception. (People were amazed, astonished).
3. George Pledger defines a miracle as:
 - a. "the intervention of God in such a way which cannot be accomplished by natural law."
 - b. "a mighty work of God which causes wonder and signifies that the one who does it is of God."

II. PURPOSE OF THE MIRACLES OF JESUS.

- A. Matthew 9:1-8 -- showed the power of Jesus to heal and forgive sin, thus **PROVING HIS DEITY**.
- B. John 2:11 -- The miracles **MANIFESTED HIS GLORY**.
- C. John 3:1-2; John. 20:30,31 -- to **PRODUCE FAITH**.
- D. Mark 16:16-20; Hebrews 2:1-2 -- to **CONFIRM THE WORD**.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF MIRACLES.

- A. Kinds of miracles (two basic groups - healing and natural).
 1. Sickness and disease. Luke 17:11-19. Ten lepers. Matthew 9:35.
 2. Nature. Matthew 8:23-27. Calmed the storm.
 3. Power over demons and unclean spirits. Matthew 8:28-34.
 4. Power over Death. John 11:43. Lazarus raised.
- B. Witnessed by many people.
 1. People who knew the facts before and after the miracle was worked.
 - a. Lazarus raised from the dead (Bethany) John 11:38-44.
 - b. Man born blind. (Jerusalem) John 9:1-7.

- c. Paralytic healed (Capernaum) Luke 5:18-26.
- 2. Acknowledged by his enemies. Luke 5:17.
- C. Some unique considerations about the miracles of Jesus. Mark 5:25-30.
 - 1. Two of Jesus' miracles had a destructive effect.
 - a. The cursed fig tree. Matthew 21:19-20.
 - b. Demons cast into swine which drowned. Mark 5:11-13.
 - 2. One of Jesus' miracles mentioned in all four gospel records -- feeding of the 5000.
 - 3. Five miracles of Jesus were done in *absentia*. Four were miracles of healing and one was a miracle over nature.
 - a. Son of the nobleman healed. John 4:46-54.
 - b. Centurion's servant healed. Matthew 8:5; Luke 7:1-10.
 - c. Syrophenician's daughter healed. Matthew 15:21-28.
 - d. Ten lepers cleansed. Luke 17:11-19.
 - e. Temple tax money provided. Matthew 17:24-27. (Mouth of a fish).
 - 4. One miracle was accomplished in two phases. Healing of the blind man in Bethsaida (Jullias). Mark 8:22-26.
 - 5. One woman was raised from the dead by Jesus in Capernaum. (Jairus' daughter). Matthew 9:24-26.
 - 6. The first and final miracle recorded in the gospel records are in John's gospel.
 - a. Water turned into pure grape juice (wine). John 2:1-11.
 - b. Second catch of fishes in lower Galilee. John 21:1-14.

IV. THE TERMINATION OF MIRACLES.

- A. The New Testament teaches that there would come a time when miraculous gifts would cease. 1 Corinthians 13:8-10.
- B. These passages make it very clear that miracles would fail, cease and vanish away.
 - 1. **Prophecies shall fail.**
 - 2. **Tongues shall cease.**
 - 3. **Knowledge shall vanish away.**
- C. 1 Corinthians 13:9 states "for we know in part and we prophesy in part."
 - 1. Knowledge and prophesy are in **part**.
 - 2. Paul writes there is a time coming when miraculous works will end.
- D. When shall the miraculous gifts cease?
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 13:10. "But when that which is perfect is come then that which is in part shall be done away."
 - 2. Two things are discussed: The Part and the Perfect.
 - a. What is 'the part'? Knowledge and Prophecy. (13:9).[miraculous]. The part refers to things and not people or a person.
 - b. What is 'the perfect'? Whatever it might be is in direct contrast to 'the part'. It must refer to a thing and not a person to be consistent.
 - (1) Perfect means completion; that which is brought to its end.
 - (2) Here it refers to the full and complete revelation of God's Word in its written form.
 - c. It is the same as the 'perfect law of liberty' in James 1:25.
- E. When the last apostle died and the last person he had laid hand on died, the working of miracles as demonstrated in the Bible **stopped!**

1. Since there are no apostles living today, there can be no miracles today.
2. We appeal to observation on our part today. Bible miracles were witnessed by many people. Where are the witnesses today? Even the enemies of Jesus and his apostles acknowledged their miracles. Why can not the 'miracles' being 'worked' today convince the enemies?
3. Who is walking on water, calming storms, giving sight to the blind, raising the dead? For lack of evidence we can conclude they do not exist today just as Paul said they would end -- **they have!**

CONCLUSION:

Denominationalism claims to be doing miracles today. But the people who performed miracles in the first century sang (Ephesians 5:19), took the Lord Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), gave on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), prayed (Acts 2:42), and continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine (Acts 2:42), they taught baptism was for remission of sins (Acts 2:47).

If miracles were still being done today would it not stand to reason that they would be performed by the Lord's church in the twentieth century just as they were by the Lord's church in the first century. Having served their purpose in the first century, and having the complete and confirmed Word of God for all ages (Jude 3) to guide us to eternal life we no longer need miracles today.

PURPOSE OF THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

Consider these scriptures that give insight in the purpose of miracles.

1. Matt. 9:1-8 Showed his power to heal and to forgive sins thus proving deity.

1. And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.
2. And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, laying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.
3. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.
4. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?
5. For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?
6. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.
7. And he arose, and departed to his house.
8. But when the multitude saw it, they marvelled and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

2. John 2:11 The miracles of Jesus manifested his glory.

11. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

3. John 3:1-2 Nicodemus concluded Jesus was a teacher come from God. This conclusion was based on the miracles Jesus worked.

1. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:
2. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

4. **John 2:23 Because of the miracles many believed in Jesus.**

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

5. **John 5:36 Jesus stated that the works that the Father gave him bear witness that the Father sent him.**

36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

6. **John 20:30,31 The purpose for recording these miracles is that all might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.**

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

7. **Mark 16:16-20 Signs confirmed the word that was preached.**

16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

8. **Hebrews 2:1-4 The word was confirmed by signs, wonders, and divers miracles.**

1. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

2. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

3. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

4. God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

(This study compiled by Will Montgomery and used by his permission)

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THE GREAT COMMISSION

Ken Chumbley

INTRODUCTION

- A. In Matt. 28:18-20; . 16:15-16; Lk. 24:46-47 we have recorded the commission Jesus gave His disciples before ascending to His Father's right hand.
 - 1. This is commonly, and rightly, called "The Great Commission."
 - a. The world-wide and time-lasting commission of our Lord.
 - 2. Hence among last words spoken by Christ to men who had followed Him so closely for more than three years.
- B. This study will center our thoughts on Matthew's account.
 - 1. Leroy Brownlow has a sermon outline entitled, "The Four 'Alls' of the Great Commission" with the sub titles, "All power" or "all authority," "Teach all nations," "All things whatsoever I have commanded you" and "I am with you always." (Seed For The Sower, page 92).
 - 2. We will not be using this outline - but the basic divisions will be there as this is a natural way to break up the passage for study.

I. "ALL AUTHORITY"

- A. A great claim ("All authority hath been given unto me").
 - 1. Jesus makes this claim after His death, burial and resurrection.
 - 2. Before His death on cross none had ever prayed or been baptized or offered sacrifice or praise to God in His name.
 - 3. However, after He had conquered death and became the Christian's High Priest, then Christians were taught to pray in His name and to offer service to God in His name (Eph. 5:20; Heb. 13:15).
- B. Jesus during His earthly ministry, observed every jot and tittle of the law of Moses and taught the Jews to do so (Matt. 5:17-18), but having fulfilled the law, He "took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14).
- C. This all-embracing authority was conferred on Christ when God the Father "raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:20).
- D. Since Jesus was given "all authority" both "in heaven and on earth," any mortal is excluded, even though he may claim to be the visible "vicar" of Christ on earth.
- E. The Commission is great because of the great authority that empowers it.
 - 1. Jesus has all power, all authority, not only in earth but in heaven and thus He is pre-eminently qualified to give such a commission.
- F. The power that Jesus claims to have is the power of rule or government and is generally translated authority.
 - 1. It is the power of Him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed.
 - 2. The power, rule, government Jesus claims on this occasion is that which was predicted seven centuries before He claimed it (Isa. 9:7).
 - 3. There are only two kinds of power or authority - primary or delegated.
 - a. Jesus said all power or authority He had was given to Him.
 - b. Thus Jesus received His power from another.
 - c. The Father delegated all power in heaven and on earth to His Son.

4. Jesus exercised this kingly power through His kingdom or church after He ascended to the right hand of the Father.
 - a. Angels, authorities and powers being made subject unto Him (I Pet. 3:22).
 - b. The power then which Christ has transcends all earthly and heavenly powers, might, principalities, dominions (cf. Dan. 7:13-14; Eph. 1:19-21).
- G. In view of His great authority Jesus gave the Great Commission.

II. "GO MAKE DISCIPLES"

- A. The New Testament plan for evangelism is the Great Commission.
 1. The church which follows it will - mighty instrument in God's hand.
- B. Since Satan knows this better than we he always tries to pervert it.
 1. Not openly denying its validity, he rather seeks to distort and misrepresent it.
- C. The Great Commission is two-fold.
 1. The first part, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."
 2. Satan's first attempt to distort has to do with English word "go."
 - a. The Greek word translated "go," - participle verb denoting "action contemporary with the action of the leading verb" (New Testament Greek - J. Gresham Machen, New York, The McMillon Company., in 1946, page 277).
 - b. The Greek word is poreuthenes which comes from poreuomna.
 - i. Best translated here "as you go" or "while going."
 - c. The thrust of commission is to make disciples while we are in process going into all the world.
 - d. Satan would have us to believe that evangelism is some special project and wants us to limit our outreach to a Sunday morning or a special time set on a calendar.
 - i. This is far from teaching of the Great Commission.
 - ii. Evangelism should be an everyday thing, a lifestyle and not just something for special occasions.
 4. Emphasis of the Commission - not to "go and do" rather it is "do as we go," in other words, we should be in the routine of going into our own little world and as we go we need to "make disciples."
 - a. As we read the New Testament, we note this method being put into action by early Christians and the Lord.
 - b. Jesus seldom went out of his way to evangelize. In fact many would-be disciples came to Him to be taught:
 - i. Andrew and John (John 1:35-42).
 - ii. Nicodemus (John 3:1-5).
 - iii. The Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42).
 - iv. The woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11).
 - v. Even hanging on cross, Jesus busy "making disciples."
 - c. Need for going, not eliminated but emphasis placed where needed.
 - d. The disciples followed the same pattern:
 - i. Peter and John and the lame man at the Temple (Acts 3:1-11).
 - ii. Early Christians - scattered abroad, preached (Acts 8:4).
 - iii. Philip and the Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40).

- iv. Paul and Silas in prison - Philippian jailer (Acts 16:23-40).
 - v. Paul taught while prisoner in Rome (Acts 28:16-31).
 - vi. Evangelism to early Christians - not "go and do" but "do as you go."
5. Today churches are stagnant and declining in growth as a direct result of Satan's perversion of Great Commission.
 6. We need to "make disciples" in our own little world, at work, at home or in our recreation.
 7. The evangelism of the Great Commission is "spontaneous," not "spasmodic." It is not a special project but an everyday event.
- D. Satan's second attempt to distort the Commission concerns the word "teach" - attempts to make the emphasis on simply teaching rather than making disciples.
1. The Greek matheteusate means far more than just making converts or Christians it literally means "learners" or "pupils."
 2. The central imperative of the Great Commission is to MAKE DISCIPLES all the other action verbs in these verses are helping verbs - "going," "baptizing" and "teaching."
 3. The King James Version has "Teach" rather than "make disciples."
 - a. Unfortunate, and is misleading to those not familiar with Greek.
 - b. The command is to "make disciples" and not merely "teach."
 - c. Church's mission - not to teach, or baptize but to make disciples.
 4. Simply because we are teaching people the Gospel does not mean that we are carrying out the Great Commission.
 - a. Just because we get people into the baptistery does not mean we are fulfilling the Great Commission.
 - b. Jesus will not be satisfied until we do what He has commanded, that is to make disciples.
 - c. It is a shame today to hear congregations boast about how many they are bringing to services, or about how many were baptized last year, as if this was their mission.
 - i. Both, of course, are essential in process of making disciple, but is this where we should place our emphasis?
 - ii. Increasing attendance is not our goal, it is a direct result of "making disciples."
 - d. The great Commission is not about making "decisions" but "making disciples, there is a great difference between the two.
 - i. A "decision" suggests a moment in time, a solo act but "disciple" suggests a way of life, a process.
- E. Jesus practiced this, He spent most of His time with His disciples and not with the masses.
1. He wasn't simply seeking to see how many He could get to follow Him, He was more concerned with making and maturing the twelve.
 - a. However as a direct result the masses won to the Master.
 - b. Instead of doing the work of twelve - taught twelve men to work.
 - c. In far too many cases we baptize some soul into Christ but never try to mature him.
 - i. We have made him a new convert, not a disciple.
 - ii. We must also remember, disciples are made, not born. It does not come automatically.
 - iii. Is it any wonder we have so few disciples in the church today?

F. A study of Acts leads us to understand that faith in Jesus Christ, sincere repentance of sins and baptism for the remission of sins constitutes what one must do to be saved and become a disciple, a Christian.

G. Note the essentiality of baptism.

1. As seen in Mark's account of the commission, those who became disciples were to be baptized, immersed (Mk. 16:15-16).
2. This baptism "in the name of _"
 - a. That is by the authority of - "in the name of the law."
 - b. "One acts in the name of another only when his acts are authorized. To baptize in the name of Jesus is, therefore, to baptize in the manner he authorized. We have seen that he directed that it be "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20). Hence, only those who baptize into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit baptize in the name of Jesus! Any variation thereof is unauthorized, and, therefore, not in his name." (Guy N. Woods, Questions and Answers - Open Forum, Henderson, Tennessee, Freed-Hardeman College, 1976. Page 165.

III. "TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS"

A. Second part of the Great Commission - "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

1. Hence, those who become Christ's disciples are to be taught.
2. Greek word for teaching is didaskontes which means instructing.
3. Some cannot see anything in the Great Commission except baptism but a Christian needs to know what to do to be saved in heaven as much as a sinner knows what to do to be saved from past sins.
 - a. Newborn babes in Christ are taught to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Pet. 2:21).
 - b. Of the 27 books of N.T. - 21 epistles were written to Christians instructing them how to live the Christian life, how to "observe all things whatsoever" Christ commanded them.

B. The early Christians recognized this and used this method.

1. Baptism - not the end of the conversion experience, only the beginning.
2. The 3000 baptized at Pentecost, taught further by Apostles (Acts 2:42).
3. Paul knew the necessity of follow-up and disciple making - when he would establish a congregation - often he returned to strengthen them in the faith (Acts 16:5).
4. One disciple Paul made, his child in the faith, Timothy, who in turn was to make disciples of others (II Tim. 2:2) - four generations of Christians in here - Paul, Timothy, faithful men, others.

C. The Crosroads/Boston movement - abused this biblical concept.

D. The principle of disciple multiplication is God's way to win the world.

1. Disciple is born to reproduce after his King - disciples are to make other disciples.

IV. "LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS"

A. To encourage His apostles in this great work Jesus said:

"And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

1. What does Jesus mean?
 - a. McGarvey says:

"This is a promise not of bare companionship, but of full sympathy and support (Isa. 43:2; Exod. 33:15; Josh. 1:5). The duration of this promise shows that it is intended for all disciples." (J.W. McGarvey, *The Fourfold Gospel*, Cincinnati, The Standard Publishing Foundation, page 764.)

- b. This is not physical companionship or a miraculous intervention in our daily lives. Jesus physically left the earth and the purpose of miracles having ceased, miracles themselves having ceased
 - c. We see Christ active in the churches in the Revelation (2:5; 2:2:16; 2:22; 3:8).
2. This is promise of abiding presence - "I am with you always."
- a. A victorious presence - "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." - Since gospel message to be preached and in preaching it, the Lord has promised to be with us even unto the end of the world - hence just that long will the gospel last.
 - b. Note what Peter said - I Pet. 1:25.
 - c. Centuries have rolled by, empires have risen and fallen, the earth has made countless changes - but gospel remains the same.
 - i. Hence man does not need a new gospel for a new age.
 - ii. This glorious message was "once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).
 - iii. Note the words of Jesus - Matthew 24:35.

CONCLUSION

- A. In his book of Sermon Outlines, W. A. Schultz sums up the New Testament this way, based on the Great Commission:
 1. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - "All authority in heaven and earth."
 2. Acts - "Preach the gospel to every creature." - or "Teach (make disciples) of all nations."
 3. Epistles - "Teaching them to observe all things."
 4. Revelation - "Lo, I am with you always."
- B. Truly the commission of our Lord is great - may we each seek to do our part in carrying it out.

Ken Chumbley - Ken was born and educated in Coventry, England and emigrated to Australia in 1964 where he became a member of the Associated Churches of Christ (Christian Church) and began preaching for them while attending their training school 1966-67. He renounced errors of the Christian Church in 1967 whilst still in Australia and began preaching for the Lord's Church. He returned to England in 1968 and was involved in mission work there until 1972. He did mission work in Canada from 1974 to 1976 and , again, in England from 1985 to 1992. He has worked for congregations in TX, MI, CO, KS, and MO and edited the *Old Paths* magazine, produced mainly for Christians in Great Britain, since its beginning in 1987 until 1995. He is married to the former Orlanda (Linda) Thomas from Gonzales, TX and they have three children, Stephen (22), Thomas (20) and Ellen (12). He began preaching for the Washington Street church in St. Albans, WV in February 1994.

JESUS PRAYER FOR UNITY

H. A. "Buster" Dobbs

I. Introduction.

A. Jesus prayer for unity.

1. His pre-incarnate glory (John 17:5).
 - a. The pre-existence of Jesus is stressed in the New Testament.
 - b. Jesus speaks of himself as having been born only once, and then adds "and for this cause came I into the world" (John 18:37).
 - c. Jesus is eternal and is deity (John 1:1-14).
 - d. Jesus was aware of his divinity.
2. His concern for his disciples (John 17:6-10).
 - a. Jesus prayed for the apostles, especially.
 - b. Their work was critical and their importance is shown in having their names written on the twelve foundations of the wall of the heavenly city (Revelation 21:14).
 - c. They sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).
3. He puts emphasis on the word of revelation (John 17:6-8).
 - a. The apostles to be given a spirit of truth to guide them into all the truth (John 16:13).
 - b. The Spirit of truth would speak the apostles words that he would hear (John 16:13).
 - c. He would hear the words from Jesus and speak those words to the apostles (John 16:13). What the apostles spoke and wrote, and authorized to be spoken and written, are the words of Jesus. Their words are red-letter words.
 - d. "He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare *it* unto you" (John 16:14).
 - e. Jesus gave to his apostles the Father's word (John 17:14).
 - f. Jesus wanted his apostles to be "one" (John 17:11).

B. The apostles were dear to Jesus and their work was very important.

1. He prayed that his Father would keep them in the world.

2. He did not want them taken from the world because they had a necessary work to do in the world (John 17:15-16).

II. Jesus Prayed For the Unity of All Believers.

A. “Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we *are* one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me” (John 17:20-23).

B. Let us examine Jesus prayer for unity.

1. He prayed for those who believe on him as a result of the words of the apostles (John 17:20).
 - a. The apostles words came from Jesus and are therefore the words of Jesus.
 - b. Jesus spoke not his own mind but the eternal wisdom of deity (John 8:38).
 - c. The words of the apostles are preserved in the New Testament.
 - d. Faith comes from hearing the word of God about Christ (Romans 10:17).
2. Those who believe on Jesus because of the words of the apostles are obedient to the gospel.
 - a. “By whom [Christ Jesus] we [the apostles] have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name” (Romans 1:5).

(1) Harper’s Bible Dictionary says on the word “obedience” here:

“**obedience**, submitting to the will or authority of another. The OT has no separate word meaning ‘obey.’ ‘Obey’ translates the Hebrew ‘to hear’ (Gen. 22:18; Isa. 42:24). The concept is also expressed as ‘keeping’ or ‘observing’ the commandments (Exod. 16:28; 34:11) and ‘walking’ in God’s ways (1 Kings 11:33). God punishes disobedience by exile, e.g., from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22-24) or from the Promised Land (Deut. 4:25-28), but God forgives and restores (Deut. 30:1-5). In the NT Christ is obedient to God (Rom. 5:19; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 5:8), and Christians are called to obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26), obedience to Christ (John 3:36; Heb. 5:9), and obedience to the gospel (Rom. 10:16; 1 Pet. 4:17). The NT also reflects Roman social-political order in calling for obedience to the state (Rom. 13:1-

5) and, in later writings, obedience of slaves, children, and wives within the household (Eph. 5:21-6:9; 1 Pet. 2:13-3:7). *See also* Commandment; Law.”

(2) No one can be a believer who does not obey Jesus as absolute ruler -- King of kings and Lord of lords.

b. Romans 1:5 teaches that “grace and apostleship,” which includes their being guided into a full knowledge of salvation truth as promised to them by Jesus, would bring people to a condition of belief (John 17:20), which includes obedience.

c. No one is called a believer who is not obedient.

d. James shows the necessary connection between faith and works (James 2:14-26).

e. Paul says Jesus will punish with everlasting destruction those “who know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord.”

(1) There is a connection here between knowing God and obeying Jesus.

(2) The apostles were to reveal a more perfect knowledge of God to the world.

(3) This knowledge of God would lead to perfecting the believer through obedience (Hebrews 5:7-8). Note: Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him (Hebrews 5:8).

f. Believers therefore are those who trust God, accept the Lordship of Jesus, and obey all of his commands. No one else can be called a believer.

3. Jesus prayed for unity among believers (John 17:20).

a. Believers are those who have obeyed the commands to repent, confess and be baptized for the remission of sins.

b. Only those whose spirits have been born of the water of baptism are born again,

c. Since Jesus prayed for unity among believers, and since believers are those born from above, therefore only members of the one church about which we read in the New Testament are the subjects of this prayer for unity.

4. To apply Jesus’ prayer for unity to those in denominations is to misunderstand and misrepresent the prayer.

C. Only members of the church -- the one body of Jesus -- are included in the Lord’s request that believers be united.

1. Jesus prayed for his true followers “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may

- a. To apply this to denominations is to misunderstand the passage.
 - b. To apply this to denominations is to deny the oneness of the true church of Christ, which is the one body of Jesus.
2. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no ^{divisions} among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). This is what God wants for the church.
3. "I therefore, the prisoner of the ^{Lord}, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:1-6).
- a. The one faith is for those who have experienced the one baptism to be members of the one body according to the instructions of the one Spirit given by the one Lord for the glory of the one God and to insure the one hope.
 - b. This answers the Lord prayer that they may all be one -- nothing else matters.

Note: See biography at end of first lecture, "Jesus Speaks Today".

