

**JESUS
CHRIST
THE
ETERNAL
SACRIFICE**

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

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Printed in U.S.A.

First Printing: 2000 copies

Second Printing: 3,000 copies

Third Printing, 5,000 copies

Fourth Printing, 5,000 copies

Fifth Printing, 5,000 copies

Printed in India in English and Hindi

Printed in Indonesia in Bahasa Indonesian

Typesetting and layout: Betty Burton Choate

Cover: Steven Burton Choate

The art depicting the crucified Christ is from Steve Choate's painting, done for his mother, a copy of Diego Velázquez's *Christ on the Cross*.

“The greatest of the religious paintings by Velázquez, the Cristo Crucificado (1632, English: Christ on the Cross), is a work of tremendous originality, depicting Christ immediately after death. The Savior's head hangs on his breast and a mass of dark tangled hair conceals part of the face. The figure stands alone.”

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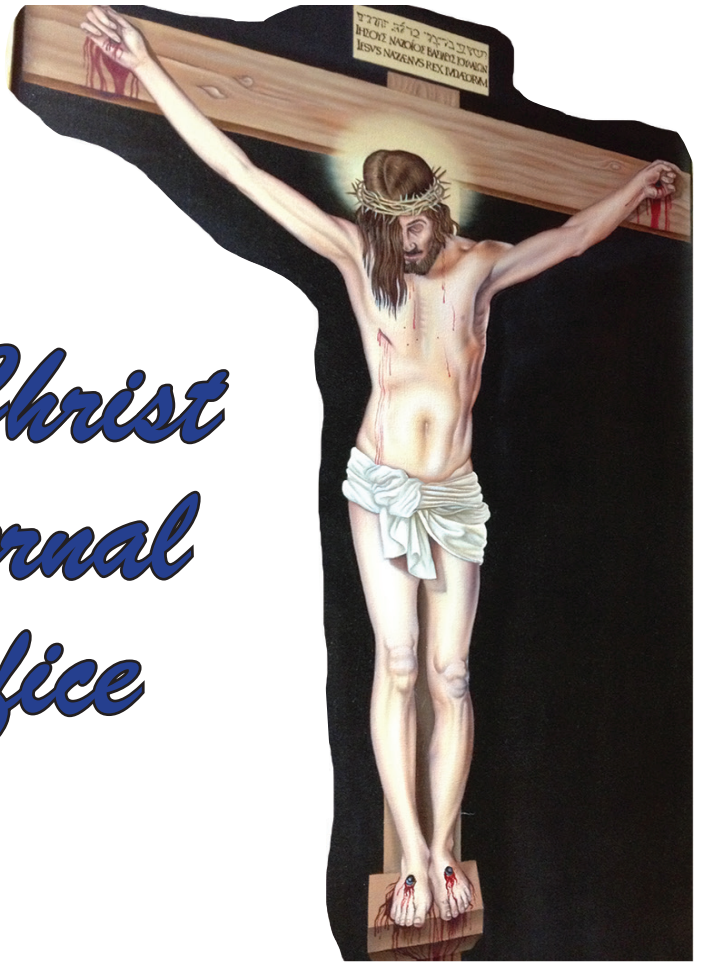
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*Jesus Christ
the Eternal
Sacrifice*



BETTY BURTON CHOATE

Published by
**Into God's World
Adult Study Series**

Publisher's Statement

I count it a privilege and honor to be able to introduce this book to you. I know the author quite well since she is my wife.

Betty has been studying the sacrifice of Christ for years, thinking in terms of His mission to this world, the implications of His death, and how all of these things relate to us. I have seen her many times, when visiting with someone or when someone was visiting us, take them aside and study with them the sacrifice of Christ as long as time would permit. Although her understanding of the entirety of that sacrifice was generally new to the people she was studying with, still what she had to say was always well received.

I must say that Betty's view of the sacrifice of Christ was new to me, too, even though the whole of the story is there in the Scriptures. Certainly, such a deep and precious subject deserves our careful and prayerful attention.

After studying about the sacrifice for a period of about fifteen years, Betty began to write this book. When the material had been written down, she sent it to a number of well known preachers and writers, as well as to friends and family members, for their evaluation, corrections, and recommendations. All highly commended her study and some made suggestions on how to improve its content, which she appreciated and tried to follow whenever possible. Clay Wilkerson offered grammatical suggestions, and Bob and Nina Stewart did the final proofreading.

So here is the finished product, the book for which so many who have heard her speak on the subject have been waiting. We are anxious to see how it will be received throughout the brotherhood. If all goes well, we hope to print it in other countries where we work because very little material is available there on this subject.

It is our prayer that you will take the time to study the contents of this book and that you will think it through before you reject it or jump to false conclusions. Betty has not written to be controversial, but she has written out of conviction, believing that we must seek to understand whatever the Scriptures say about Christ and our salvation. We cannot grow to maturity if we are content to feed only on the milk of the word. It is our longing that this book help to stimulate a new desire throughout the church, to study more deeply what the Bible says and to accept only that.

Truly, when we come to know and understand more about the sacrifice of Christ — the great price He paid that we might be saved — then we will be better prepared to live the Christian life. Betty wrote this book for that purpose, and for the same reason I commend it to you.

J.C. Choate
Winona, MS
August 16, 1988

Introduction

Like pieces of a jig-saw puzzle, the various facts about Jesus Christ are presented here and there in sermons and class lectures. For years I've had the desire to assemble all of the pieces together to form 'the big picture' of our Saviour. In my own mind I wanted to replace the fragmented ideas with one coherent whole that harmonized with every part of itself. This book is the result of that desire.

Of course, comprehension of the Godhead is beyond the human mind. We can see only a small part, and even about that small part scholars are not always in agreement. Obviously, dogmatism cannot be characteristic of any serious and honest study of the subject.

Yet the concepts as they are presented in these lessons harmonize with each other in such a way that as each part was fitted into place, my involuntary response was, "Well, of course... !" It has been my determination not to print the book until I was satisfied that none of the conclusions conflicted with any other, but rather that each one helped to deepen the understanding of the whole. In a study of any Bible topic, this method is the best safeguard against misconstruction of truth. I believe it is also reliable in regard to a study of the Godhead.

As readers, naturally you may hold other views on some of the points. Or there may be full agreement on all of them. Regardless, it is my prayer that each reader will study with an open mind but will be slow about forming or accepting conclusions, especially in regard to thoughts perhaps not previously considered. During forty years of studying these concepts, a body of supportive Scriptures have assembled themselves in my mind as I read here and there and studied on many other themes. Always, though, I kept the search in mind and when I came across a Scripture that supported an idea or seemed to conflict with it, I added it to my growing body of references. So the Scriptures themselves have formed the direction of the study and shaped the conclusions into their present form.

I have deliberately written out each Scripture reference so that even those students who do not have their own copy of God's word may understand what is being said. Also, though I have read from the writings of many scholars, it is my conviction that Biblical messages must be taught from the Scriptures and not from the minds of men. For that reason, and particularly with this subject, I have used related Bible references to explain passages, rather than quoting from any other author.

It is my suggestion that class groups plan to use the material for at least two quarters, going through it the first time in order to get the whole picture

in mind, and then using the second quarter for a more thorough study of the concepts.

2 Corinthians 3:18 assures us, “**But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.**” If we want to be like Him, we must devote more of our study time to beholding His image in the glass...

The deepening of my own love for God and the closeness with our Lord are the result of this study, and I treasure this as truly “**the pearl of great price**”. God bless you, also, as you join me in the search to better know Him who is love.

Betty Burton Choate
[Revised and re-formatted, 2014)

Please Note: Italics in Scripture references are for emphasis, not indicating that those words are not in the original language. In those instances, an asterix follows the quote.

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Jesus Christ

Chapter One

In every human heart there is a religion and a god. The cynic, the proud, may believe only in himself but, regardless, it is faith and it becomes his religion. The other extreme is the man who, ignorantly and superstitiously, worships every god he hears about, fearful of offending if even one should be overlooked.

Through the ages man has not changed. Haughtiness of heart prompted God to say long ago:

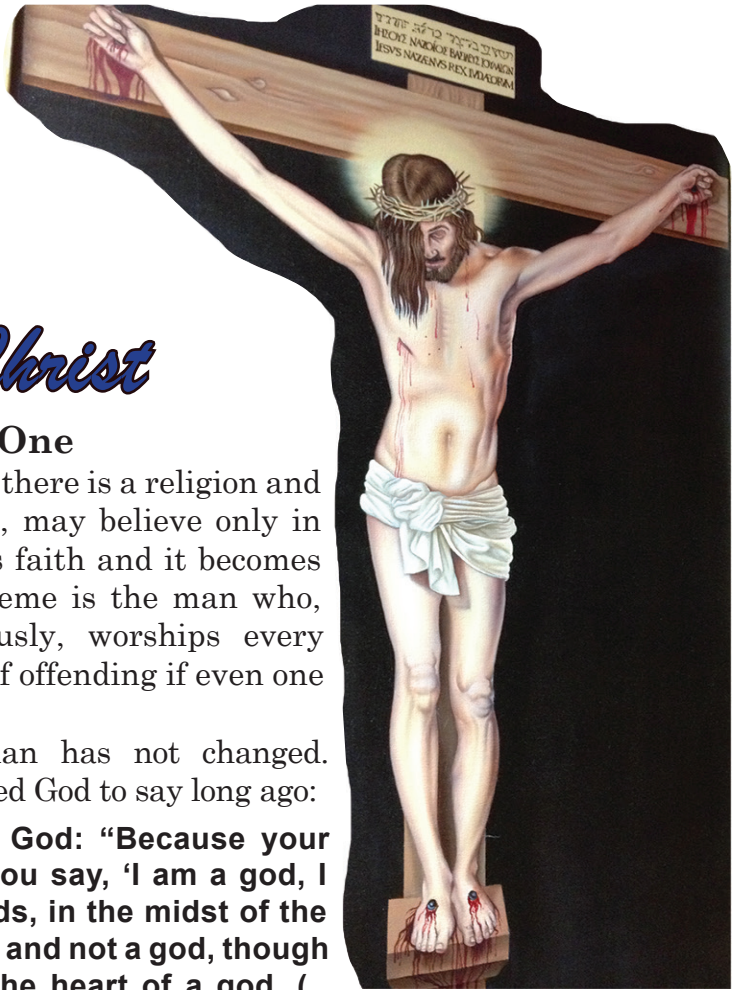
Thus says the Lord God: “Because your heart is lifted up, and you say, ‘I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the midst of the seas,’ yet you are a man, and not a god, though you set your heart as the heart of a god. (...

With your wisdom and your understanding you have gained riches for yourself, and gathered gold and silver into your treasuries; by your great wisdom in trade you have increased your riches, and your heart is lifted up because of your riches.)

“Because you have set your heart as the heart of a god, behold, therefore, I will bring strangers against you, the most terrible of nations; and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom, and defile your splendor. They shall throw you down into the Pit, and you shall die the death of the slain in the midst of the seas.

“Will you say before him who slays you, ‘I am a god’? But you shall be a man, and not a god, in the hand of him who slays you... for I have spoken,” says the Lord God (Ezekiel 28:2-10).

On the streets of Athens the other extreme was evident, and the apostle Paul said:



Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.

God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, "For we are also His offspring."

Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead (Acts 17:22-31).

Between these two extremes are the masses of the people. They are going about their normal lives, often too busy to feel a deep concern about religion. Most are trying, basically, to be 'good' people, believing that surely this will satisfy God — whoever He may be — when they die. "After all," they reason, "being good is the important thing, because all religions require that."

Yes, it is true that all religions teach personal goodness and social goodness, to some degree. The question is, is human goodness enough to make us acceptable to God? No religion actually teaches such a doctrine, for all demand also some type of gift or sacrifice, some system of gaining merit or forgiveness.

Some religions teach forgiveness through monetary sacrifices; some through animal sacrifices; some through acts of penance — even extreme physical abuse to one's own body; some teach rebirth; some rely on the accumulation of good deeds a person performs, in contrast to his bad deeds. But all of these religions are saying the same thing, in essence: that man, by his own efforts, must save himself and provide the cleansing for his own sins.

Only one religion says that it is impossible for a man to save himself; only one religion offers a Saviour: the religion Jesus Christ brought to the world.

Someone might say, "But each and every religion had its own founder, its own 'holy man'. In every case, those men dedicated their lives to teaching

what they believed to be truths and, in some instances, they even died as martyrs for their beliefs. So all religions are good; all 'holy' men are good; and Jesus is Lord, like Buddha, Krishna, and so many others."

Is this true? Is Jesus Christ only 'one among many'? Is the religion He gave to the world through His death only a variant form of the 'truth' found in all religions?

If not, what makes Jesus different? What did He do, what did He have to offer that no other has given or done?

Jesus once made the statement,

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6).

With these words, Jesus Christ claimed to be our only means of access to God. By what authority did He make such a statement? Was He speaking the truth? If so, He was not simply one lord among many in this world; He was *the* Lord. The purpose of our study is to learn the answers to these questions.

His Preexistence and Relationship in the Godhead

Chapter Two

In order to understand the role and authority of the One called Jesus Christ, we must ask: What is the overall picture? Who is He? What is His origin? How long has He existed?

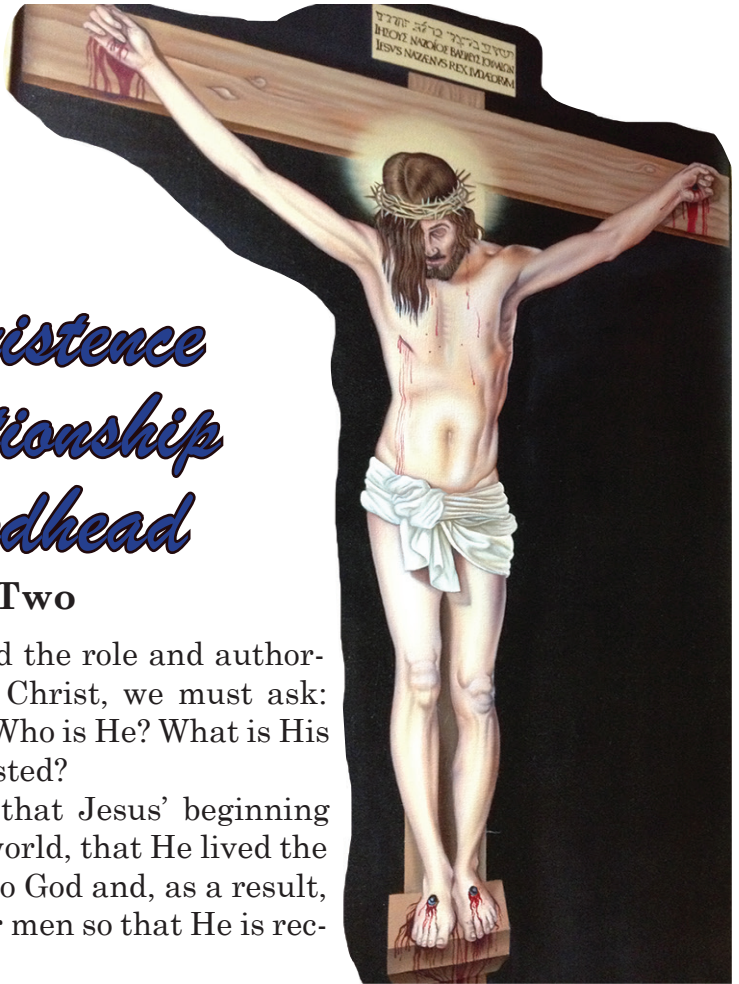
Some, of course, say that Jesus' beginning was with His birth into the world, that He lived the life of a good man, obedient to God and, as a result, God exalted Him above other men so that He is recognized as His Son.

Others say that Jesus has existed from the beginning as a Son with His Father, God. They believe that the only change brought about by His birth into the world was the clothing of Himself with a physical human body.

In the world view, there are those who believe in recurring manifestations of God in the form of prophets, or actual reincarnations of Himself in various human forms. They say that Jesus was one of these appearances God made on the earth, at a time when man needed new direction.

In many cases, conflicting views arise about a subject because people speak from hearsay and opinion. If we want to know the truth about Jesus we must go to the primary source of information about Him: the Bible. Who is He, according to the Bible? What is His origin, according to the Bible?

John 1:1-3 takes us back to the beginning, not to the beginning of Deity, but to a declaration of Deity in relation to the beginning of the present universe and its inhabitants:



In the beginning [an echo of “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1] **was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and *without Him nothing was made that was made.****

Hebrews 1:2B says of the Word:

...through whom also He [God] made the worlds.

Colossians 1:15-17 says of the Word:

He is *the image of the invisible God...for by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**

These verses introduce us to One of the personalities of the Godhead who is identified as ‘the Word’. Going all the way back to these earliest pictures of Him, we do not see a portrayal of a Son, subject to His Father, but we see the Godhead in which ‘the Word’ holds a position of absolute equality.

The Word

The Word *was* God. The Word was *with God*, His companion in creation. In Him [the Word] was life—not *derived* life as man has life from God, but *inherent* life. That is, within the Word was the characteristic of Deity, the power of life, separate and apart from any external source.

The Word is also identified in these verses as the One *through Whom* and *for Whom* all things were created.

He is described as being “**...the image of the invisible God**”, as being “**...the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person**” (Hebrews 1:3).

The average reader of the Old and New Testaments would conclude that God is the focal point of the Old Testament and that Jesus, His Son, becomes the focal point of the New Testament. A deeper look shows an entirely different picture.

For Discussion:

- 1. In Vine’s Word Dictionary, look up “God” as it is written in Hebrew in Genesis 1:1. Which word is used? _____**
- 2. What is its meaning? _____**
- 3. Was the singular form or the plural form for God used in this verse? _____**
- 4. What does this tell us about the Persons of the Godhead? _____**

El and Elohim

The word ‘God’ in the Hebrew language of the Old Testament had a singular and a plural form. The singular word ‘El’ appears almost 500 times in the Old Testament. The plural form ‘Elohim’, carrying with it the actual meaning of ‘Godhead’, appears more than 3000 times. This means that in most cases when the English reader sees the word ‘God’ and is thinking of God in the *singular* sense, the scriptures are actually referring to the ‘Godhead’ in the *plural* sense: God, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.

Notice these examples:

In the beginning God [Elohim, plural] created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1).

Then God [Elohim, plural] said, “Let Us [plural] make man in Our [plural] image...” (Genesis 1:26).

Then the LORD God [Elohim, plural] said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us [plural]...” (Genesis 3:22).

Hear, O Israel: The LORD [Jehovah] our God [Elohim, plural], the LORD [Jehovah, singular personal name] is One! [Hebrew: Achid, meaning a *united* one, not *only* one] (Deuteronomy 6:4) [This verse is a declaration of the absolute oneness, in substance as well as in purpose, of the plural Personalities that comprise the Godhead.]

Thus says the LORD [Jehovah], the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts: “I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God [Elohim, plural]” (Isaiah 44:6).

For I am the LORD [Jehovah] your God [Elohim, plural], the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour... (Isaiah 43:3).

Also, the plural ‘Elohim’ was used repeatedly with a singular verb, a further declaration of the oneness of the Personalities of the Godhead. An example of this is Genesis 1:1 where the plural ‘Elohim’ is used with the singular form of ‘created’ [bara].

So, we see from these verses that most often it was the *Godhead* at work throughout the Old Testament, and *not God [the Father] alone*. But it is the role of ‘the Word’ that we are attempting to understand. We have seen from John 1:1 that He *was* God, that He was *with* God. We have read numerous

For Discussion:

5. Find two prophecies of the Old Testament that are actually speaking of Jesus.

A.

B.

scriptures that speak of the Godhead, a term that would have included God, the Word, and the Holy Spirit. As One of the Godhead, the Word would have had within Himself all the characteristics inherent within Deity: life, omnipotence [all-power], omnipresence [all-present], omniscience [all-knowledge], perfection. He would, necessarily, have held a position of equality since there cannot be degrees of absoluteness.

We are familiar with the role of the Word in the New Testament. John 1:14 declares,

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us....

Thus, we are introduced to Jesus Christ. But before we go into a serious study of this One who was the **“only begotten of the Father”** (John 1:14), let us look to the passages between **“In the beginning”** and **“the Word was made flesh”** and answer the question: What was His role during the Old Testament period of time?

HIS ROLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Was the Word [that One who would, in the fullness of time, be **“made flesh”**, Jesus Christ] active in the world’s affairs before His birth in human form? Or was He, at that time, an obedient Son sitting at His Father’s right hand, waiting for His ‘cue’ to ‘go on stage’?

To answer this question, let us allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves:

Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and His redeemer, the LORD of hosts: I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God (Isaiah 44:6).

In Revelation 1:8, Jesus Christ said: **‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,’ says the LORD, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty’.**

By the parallel identification of the speaker in these two verses, we see that the ‘Jesus Christ’ of the New Testament was also ‘the Lord’ who spoke to the people with absolute authority in the Old Testament.

The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob. And they did not thirst when He led them through the deserts; He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them; He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out (Isaiah 48:20,21).

...our fathers were under the cloud ... and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

These parallel passages identify ‘the LORD’ who led the Israelites from Egyptian bondage as Jesus Christ.

“Angel” means messenger. Some of the Old Testament references to “my Angel”, “the Angel”, “the Angel of the Lord”, “the Angel of His Presence” are these:

“My” or “His” Angel:

Genesis 24:7,40

48:16

Exodus 23:23

32:34

33:2

Daniel 6:22

Numbers 20:16

22:22

“the Angel of the Lord”:

Genesis 16:2,7,9,10

22:11,15

Exodus 3:2

Judges 2:1,4

5:23

6:11,12,21,22

Judges 13

1 Kings 19:5,7

2 Kings 19:35

1 Chronicles 21:12

Psalms 34:7

Zechariah 3:1

“the Angel of His Presence”:

Isaiah 63:9

“Commander of the army of the Lord”:

Joshua 5:13-15

The Angel of the Lord

The third chapter of Exodus, when laid side-by-side with 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 and John 8:51-59, helps us to understand even more about the role of the Word in the Old Testament era. In Exodus 3:2, a person called the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a **‘flame of fire from the midst of a bush’**. Though there is a host of created beings called angels, this One who was identified as *the* Angel of the Lord was not one of those, because in verse 4 He was called the LORD and God. In verse six, *the LORD* said,

I am *the God* of your father — the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

In verse eight, *God* said,

I have come down to deliver them [the Israelites] out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land...*

We saw in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 that the Person of the Godhead who actually dealt with the Israelites was ‘the Word’, the One who later took the form of man and was born as *Jesus Christ*.

In Exodus 3:13,14, Moses asked the heavenly Spokesman,

..when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, “*The God of your fathers* has sent me to you, and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them? And *God* said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.”

For Discussion:

6. When you read the story of Moses and the burning bush, did you think an angel was speaking to him, or God (the Father), or the Word (Who became Jesus)? _____

7. Imagine being in a crowd of people, listening to Jesus. Give some reasons why you would think they did not “see” Him as being anything more than human.

In John 8, *Jesus* was having a discussion with the Jews. At the end of the conversation, He made the statement,

... Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.

By applying to Himself these words that were normally used exclusively in reference to *God*, *Jesus* was making a statement of *His eternal existence*. He was identifying *Himself* with the I AM who had spoken to Moses. His listeners had no trouble understanding His statement of claim. Their response was to pick up stones with the intention of stoning Him to death for blasphemy.

The use of the definite article ‘the’ and the phrase ‘of the LORD’ signifies that this Person was distinct from the created angels who are God’s servants in His work. Other accounts of appearances made by this angel of the LORD are Exodus 32:34, Exodus 14:19, Judges 13:6, 2 Samuel 14:17,20, Judges 2:1, Isaiah 63:9.

Exodus 32:34, and continuing through chapter 33, shows *the Lord* promising to send *My Angel* before the Israelites. Since Exodus 2 along with John 8 identifies the Angel as One of the Godhead, *Jesus Christ*, and since 1 Corinthians 10:14 further identifies the One with the Israelites as *the Rock, Jesus Christ*, then we can conclude that *the Sender, the LORD*, in Exodus 32, 33 was *God the Father* [and the Spirit, Isaiah 48:16], while *the Angel, the One being sent*, was *the Word* who became *Jesus Christ*.

Judges 2:1 identified the Angel of the LORD as the One who **“led you up from Egypt....”**

Judges 13 relates the story of Manoah praying to the Lord, and asking that *the Angel of God, the Man of God*, be sent to him and his wife. Verse 9 states:

And God listened to the voice of Manoah and *the angel of God* came.... *

Again, we see *the LORD* as *the Sender* and *the Angel of God* as *the One who was sent*.

Isaiah 63:7-10 mentions the LORD, the Angel of His Presence who redeemed Israel, and His Holy Spirit, the three Personalities of the Godhead.

For Discussion:

- 8. In Vine’s Word Dictionary, look up “LORD”, “Jehovah”, and “God”. Find Old Testament references using these words.**
- 9. How many of them can you identify as speaking of God the Father?**
- 10. How many would seem to be speaking of the Word, Who would be born as Jesus?**

In reading accounts of appearances of Spirit Beings to humans, we need to read carefully, noting whether the person speaks with authority or as a messenger; whether he is called “God”; whether he accepts worship or requires that reverence be shown by the human. These are clues that will help us to understand whether the “person” was actually a created angelic being, or whether He was One of the Godhead.

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES APPLIED TO CHRIST

Throughout the Old Testament, statements and prophecies were made about God. Parallel verses in the New Testament were applied to Jesus Christ, as being fulfilled by Him.

[NOTE: All italics in the following verses are mine, for emphasis of the points being made. BBC]

Old Testament

Isaiah 40:3: **The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord: make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”**

Psalm 24:9,10: **...and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory.**

New Testament

Matthew 3:3: **For this is he [John, the ‘voice of one crying in the wilderness’] who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying; “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD, make His paths straight.’”**

Later, in John 1:29, John himself identified the One for whom he was preparing the way as Jesus Christ, **“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”**

1 Corinthians 2:8 says that the rulers of that day had not known the mystery of the work God was doing through Jesus Christ, **“...for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”**

James 2:1: **...our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory....**

For Discussion:

11. In your studies of the Old Testament, have you seen the Word at work?

Old Testament

Jeremiah 23:5: **Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.***

Isaiah 8:13,14: **The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.**

Psalms 110:1: [The prophecy was made by the pen of David, the king] **The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”**

Malachi 3:1: **“Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts.***

New Testament

1 Corinthians 1:30: **But of Him [God] you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption...***

1 Peter 2:7,8: **Therefore, to you who believe, He [Jesus Christ] is precious; but to those who are disobedient, ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,’ and ‘A stone of stumbling and a rock of offence.’**

In Acts 2:34-36 the statement is made: **‘For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”’ Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.’**

Luke 1:76 records this statement about the prophet, John the baptizer: **“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest, for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways....”***

John 1:30, John himself said of Christ Jesus: **“This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for he was before me.’”*** [Preexistence of the Word, Jesus Christ]

Old Testament

Joel 2:32: **And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.***

By inspiration, the writer of the Psalms said in Psalm 45:1,6,7: **“...I recite my composition concerning the King:...Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed you...”**

Psalm 102:25-27 says of God: **“...Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; yes, all of them will grow old like a garment; like a cloak you will change them, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will have no end.”**

Throughout the Old Testament, God spoke to various ones, inspiring them to write prophecies of future events. Many of these described the coming and the work of Christ; and even the prophets themselves did not understand what they wrote about Him. God, Himself, though, is identified as the One who spoke through them: **“For thus says the LORD God...”*** Isaiah 52:4

New Testament

1 Corinthians 1:2: **...to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.... ***

Hebrews 1:8 records that *God* said to the *Son*, Jesus Christ: **“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed you....”***

Hebrews 1:10 says that God was actually speaking of Jesus Christ when the statements were made, **“You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but You remain; and they will grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.”**

Concerning this inspiration by God, 1 Peter 1:10 states: **“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ....”***

What conclusion can we draw from these passages of scripture from both the Old and New Testaments?

Summary

(1) We see a portrayal of *the Word* in the Old Testament as *Jehovah, God, the Lord*, speaking with absolute authority. No real distinction can be made between the tone of authority and supremacy in the statements made by *the Lord* [the Word who would be Jesus Christ] and *the Lord* [who would be the Father]. Their speech is the same.

(2) In prophetic statements made about *the Lord* [and fulfilled by the Word, Jesus Christ], He is identified as *Jehovah, the Lord of Glory, the Father*. The portrayal is one of shared glory and equality in the Godhead.

(3) We also see glimpses presaging the future role of the Word as *Jesus Christ*, the mediator between God and man. Repeatedly, even in the Old Testament, it seems that He was the One of the Godhead who dealt directly with man. The New Testament, as we have seen, identifies the I AM of Moses' experience with *Jesus Christ*, the *God of the Israelites' wilderness experience* with *Jesus Christ*, the *Spirit* who testified to the prophets (1 Peter 1:10,11) as *Jesus Christ*. In many cases we, ourselves, cannot distinguish which of the Godhead was speaking or acting, and there is no New Testament clarification to help us know, but it would seem probable that there were many other times when **the Word was already functioning in His mediatorial role before His actual birth in the flesh**. After all, in the mind of God, He was

...**the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world** (Revelation 13:8).

(4) Not only do we see glimpses of the coming Mediator, but we see rare occasions of the Mediator acting in His role of subjection during the Old Testament period:

Therefore God, Your God, has anointed you...*
(Psalm 45:7).

Consider also the unique wording of many passages that begin, **“the word of the Lord came to ... saying ... ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts...’**” Repeatedly this wording is used in Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, as well as in other places. In much the same sentence structure, we might say, “The ambassador came to so-and-so, saying, “Thus says the President...” Could it be that “the word of the Lord” in these cases is actually the Word, delivering a message to a prophet from God?

(5) Also, *the Angel of God* was the One being *sent by the Sender*. Yet, even in carrying out those missions, He was called *Lord* and *God*, and He

Compare this passage in David's psalm with Hebrews 1:8,9.

Who is speaking? [David]

To whom is he speaking? [the King].

How does he address the King? [as “O God”].

He says that “God, YOUR God” has anointed the King with the oil of gladness. “Your God” would be a reference to Whom? [God, the Father, as related to Jesus Christ].

spoke as God with *inherent authority*. For example, as *the Angel of the Lord*, the Scriptures say in Exodus 3:4:

So when *the LORD* saw that he [Moses] turned aside to look, God called to him, “Moses, Moses... I Am the God of your father....”*

In contrast, when Jesus spoke, He said,

I have come in My Father’s name....* (John 5:43)

His tone was always one of subjection to God and of being sent by the authority of God.

So, the Godhead, in all of His glory and authority, is shown throughout the Old Testament as being actively involved in the affairs of man. The Word is portrayed not *as a Son* sitting in obedience at the right hand of the Father but as an equal participant, existing in the substance and the glory of God, and functioning with the authority inherent in Deity, or as a Mediator, delivering the message of God to humanity.

What, then, caused the change between the Old Testament portrayal and the New Testament portrayal? Why do we see a pattern of equality and authority in the Old Testament, but one of subjection in the New Testament? What brought about such a difference in roles?

For Discussion:

12. Who was the voice crying in the wilderness? _____
13. Why did John say Jesus was before him? _____
14. Our Lord Jesus Christ is also called the _____ of glory, the _____ of _____, and the _____ of _____.

The Emptying

Chapter Three

Typically, in books and lessons dealing with the Godhead, all Scriptures on the subject are simply lumped together, with total disregard of the time-table. If we study the topic of salvation in such an unobservant manner we will reach many wrong conclusions while believing sincerely that we have a ‘Thus saith the Lord’ for whatever we practice. No study of the kingdom or church will make biblical sense unless we first learn how to ‘rightly divide the word’.

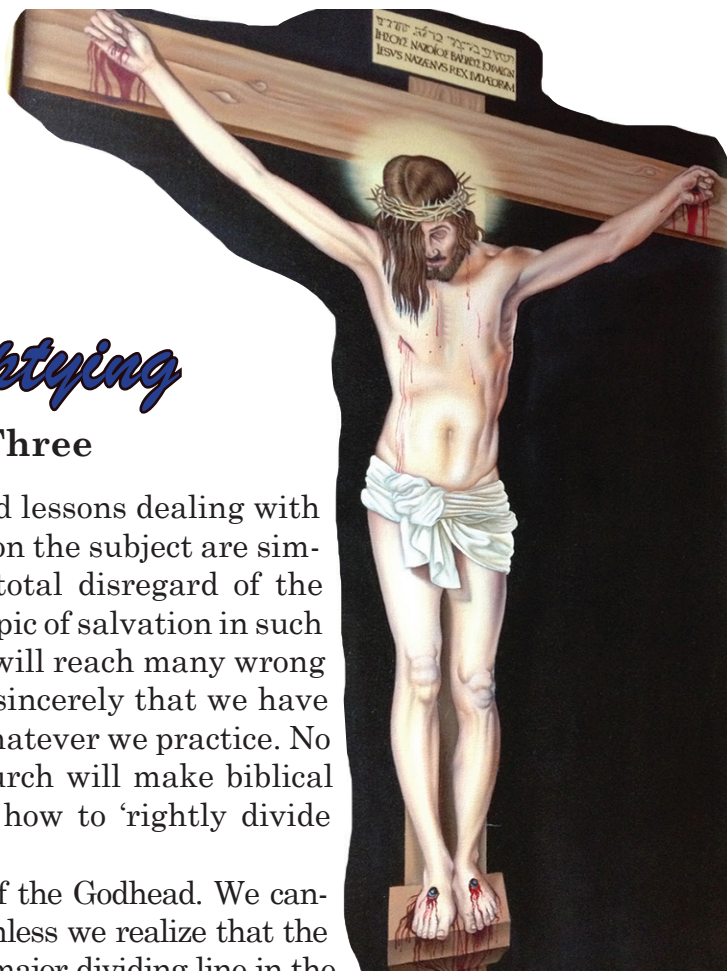
The same law is true of the Godhead. We cannot see the true perspective unless we realize that the birth of the Son of God was a major dividing line in the relationship in the Godhead as well as in the relationship

Actually, the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are probably the oldest biographies in literature! They tell the story of the life of Jesus Christ — but not the complete story of the Word, Who existed from eternity but was born into this world in human flesh as Jesus.

between God and man. Every Scripture on the subject must be considered in the light of the questions: *When was this verse written? Is it speaking of the Godhead before or after the Word was made flesh?* Many verses that would have seemed puzzling or confusing or even contradictory will fall easily and logically into place when the proper dividing of the Scriptures is done.

For Discussion:

1. How have you thought of the relationship between Jesus and God from the beginning?
2. Write your answer before discussing the question with the class.



Even to understand the history of God's dealings with man, we must rightly divide the word. Sometimes, in developing the general picture of God's work, people think that during the early years He dealt with the fathers of families — the patriarchs. When this method proved ineffective God tried the law given through Moses, attempting to deal with a whole nation of people, the Israelites. When the Israelites repeatedly turned from God to worship idols, there are those who think that, finally, God tried sending Jesus Christ. Through Him Christianity came into the world and, now, if people choose to follow God they can do so through the law Christ gave to man.

The Focal Point

While this outline does show a general idea of God's pattern in dealing with men, the concept of trial-and-error methods is wrong. God did not replace one system with another because the earlier system had failed. On the contrary, from the beginning God knew that man would sin and be lost; He knew what would be required to save man and so *everything* He has done has been to reach that *one* goal: the salvation of believers.

Revelation 13:8 speaks of

...the Lamb [Jesus Christ] slain from the foundation of the world....*

2 Timothy 1:9 says that Christians are called

...according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began....*

From the beginning, in God's plan of the ages to save man, there was one focal point: *the coming of the Word in the form of Jesus Christ and then His sacrifice to pay the penalty for sin*. All other dealings between God and man have been simply interim, filling the need of the moment until Christ could come and fill the entire need of the ages.

With this over-all picture in mind, let us go back to the thoughts of the previous chapter and to the concluding questions:

What caused the change between the Old Testament portrayal of the Word and the New Testament portrayal? Why do we see a pattern of equality in the Old Testament and one of subjection in the New Testament? What brought about such a difference in roles?

For Discussion:

- 3. Are there "degrees" of Deity? _____**
- 4. People often think of God, then Jesus, then the Holy Spirit, in descending order of importance and authority. Is this what the Scriptures teach? _____**
- 5. Which Scripture reference tells us that the plan for saving man was begun before Adam and Eve were created? _____**

First Period of the Word's Existence: From eternity.

- As **One of the Godhead**; Deity, divine. Deity is eternal, not created, matter. There are no *degrees* of Deity, but *equality*, because the Spirit, the substance, the power, and the eternal nature are the same. The fact that He is Deity means that He had no beginning and will have no end.

Second Period: the Old Testament era.

- As the One of the Godhead **who would become the Messiah, the Savior**. Because of this special thing He would do, His role in the Godhead was affected even before Adam and Eve sinned. According to Revelation 13:8, He is “...**the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**” And even though in the Old Testament period, He spoke and acted with the same authority and power as the One who would become God the Father, the Word seems to have been most often **the One of the Godhead who dealt directly with man** — even then, He was **the Mediator**.

A mediator is a person who serves as a “go-between” for two parties that have become enemies, or are separated for some reason.

In the Word's role as Jesus, **the Man**, He was serving as a mediator between God and humans.

In this role, He was **the Angel of Jehovah** (Exodus 3:4,6), the Angel of His Presence (Isaiah 63:7-10), the One who was sent (Exodus 32; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4), or more often, He was simply called **God, Jehovah, the Lord, or the Word** in the text. And when He spoke, it was not merely as a messenger but as God Himself, with equality and full authority in the Godhead.

The Line of Demarcation.

His Birth as one with humanity.

Third Period: The New Testament era.

- The Word emptied Himself and was born as **the Son of God** and **the Son of man** (Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 1:5; Luke 1:34,35; 19:10), the Son who **learned obedience** (Hebrews 5:8), and the One who was **made in all things like His brethren** (Hebrews 2:17).

Fourth Period: As the resurrected Savior.

- The One who sits at God's right hand, as **the Mediator between God and man** (1 Timothy 2:5); the One who “**has been given all power and authority in heaven and in earth**” (Matthew 28:18). He will be the judge in the last day: “. . . **the words that I speak unto you will judge you in the last day . . .**” (John 12:48).

Fifth Period: In eternity, after the judgment.

- Romans 8:16,17 promises that faithful Christians will be **joint heirs with Him**. Whatever He inherits eternally, we will share.

Philippians 2:5-8

Philippians 2:5-8 helps us to understand what happened: [NOTE: Italics in these quotations are mine. BBC]

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, *being in the form of God...*” (NKJ)

**...though the divine nature was His from the beginning...*
(20th Century NS)

**...Who, though from the beginning He had the nature of God...*
(N.T. in Modern English)

**...for He, who has always been God by nature...* (Phillips)

**...His nature is, from the first, divine...* (Knox)

“...did not consider it robbery to be equal with God...” (NKJ)

**...counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped...*
(American Standard)

**...did not reckon equality with God something to be forcibly retained...*
(N.T. in Modern English)

**...did not cling to His prerogatives as God’s equal...* (Phillips)

**...yet He did not look upon equality with God as above all things to be clung to...*(20th Century N. T.)

“...but made Himself of no reputation...” (NKJ)

**...but emptied Himself...* (American Standard)

**...but laid It aside...* (Goodspeed)

**...but stripped Himself [of His glory]...* (Conybeare and Howson)

**...but stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity]...*
Amplified N. T.)

“...taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”* (NKJ)

For Discussion:

5. We are told in Philippians 2 that we are to learn to have the “mind of Christ”. In what ways should we be like Him in our thinking?
6. What does it mean, that Christ “emptied” Himself? As a class, discuss what He could have given up.
7. Could He have emptied Himself of His attributes of Deity?

Meanings:

Eternal: Having no beginning and no ending. Only God is *eternal*.

Immortal: When God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and Adam became a living soul, he became *immortal*. He was given a soul that would never die. The human soul has a beginning, but it will have no end. In this way, we are made in the image of God.

Attributes of Deity:

Eternal, Holy, Just, Loving, Merciful, Truthful, Perfect.

Powers of Deity:

All-knowing, All-powerful, Present everywhere.

Rights of Deity:

Equality, can forgive sins, power over life.

Recalling the statement of John 1:1, we read,

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and *the Word was God*....*

Yet, when “the fullness of time” had come, that is, at the prepared moment in the history of man (Galatians 4:4), the Word emptied Himself of His glory and of His inherent rights and privileges in the Godhead, to be born in the flesh as man.

Analysis of the Emptying

We should analyze just what would have been included in this ‘emptying’. **First, He could not have ceased being Himself, the Self-existent Spirit.** Just as the soul of man never goes out of existence once it has come into being, so the Existing Essence of Deity which was the Word remained, of necessity, the same.

Further, the attributes that were Himself could not have changed. His holiness could not have been laid aside, for that would have been the equivalent of becoming unholy. The attribute of love could not have been emptied out, for that would

have necessitated that He become unloving. To have laid aside the attribute of justness would have required that He be unjust. Without the attribute of mercy, mercilessness would have become His make-up. To have laid aside the attribute of truthfulness would have left untruthfulness in its place. None of these attributes of perfection that are the essence of Deity could have been changed. They, of necessity, remained the core of Himself, even when the Word was made flesh, for to have lessened them would have been the acceptance of a measure of evil in their place.

So what did He give up when He emptied Himself? Not the *attributes*, but the *rights* and *powers* inherent within Deity. He could fore-go the right of equality without incurring wrong. The result was only one of subjection and obedience as man is subject to God. He could fore-go the powers of being

For Discussion:

8. What kind of “sacrifice and offering” did God not want? See Isaiah 1:12-15.
9. Was the Word only temporarily in “disguise”, “pretending” to be a human, but actually retaining all of His rights, powers, and attributes? _____
10. What was prepared for the Word? _____

all-knowing, all-powerful, everywhere-present without incurring any wrong within Himself. The result was only one of dependence as man is dependent, so that He, as the emptied Word, could think and learn and grow and function as a man.

The Second Adam

When the Word was thus born, He was in actuality the ‘Second Adam’: Man in the flesh, yet holy within as no man has remained since the fall of the first Adam. (1 Corinthians 15:21,22,45-49) Man is composed of his physical being [the flesh] and his spiritual being [his soul, molded by intellect, thought, and will]; Jesus Christ was composed of **the physical body that had been prepared**, and **the emptied Word** [parallel to man’s soul] providing the intellect, thought process, and will.

Man has nothing *inherent* within himself. Everything he has is *derived* from God, so that man is *totally dependent* on the gifts and the grace of God. The Word, as we will see from a detailed study, *laid aside* His inherent power and placed Himself in a position of total dependence on God, just as man is totally dependent. This was the meaning of emptying Himself. This was the limiting factor He accepted when He was born in a human body.

100% God and 100% Man?

In our concept of Christ in the world, to overlook the effect of His emptying is to create a distorted understanding of Him. Ignoring this fact has resulted in the erroneous teaching that Christ was 100% God and 100% man, as though He were two separate persons inhabiting one body. When He did superhuman acts, the explanation is made that the God-part was functioning; when He was tempted or struggling in the garden or facing death, we are told that His human will was dominant because, after all, God cannot be tempted; God does not struggle; God cannot die.

Is this portrait correct? Did Christ flip-flop at will from one role to the other, according to the need of the moment? Was He 100% God and 100% man? The truth is that He was neither. He was not a 200% Being. Rather, He was the *body* of man housing the *emptied* Deity, the Word — one whole Person.

Believers in Christ in the 300's and 400's had great debates over these questions:

- ◆ Was Jesus the Son of God from the beginning?
- ◆ Did Jesus have a human soul as well as a human body?
- ◆ Was Jesus actually Deity, or only God's Son by adoption?

The Council of Nicaea was convened in 325 A.D. to deal with these questions. The Nicene Creed, which resulted from that Council, pronounced “God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit” as the “Triune Godhead”. This definition has come down as the foundation of faith for most believers in Christ to this day.

However, many of the questions raised about the Word, the Christ, and Jesus were answered according to human logic, rather than from analysis of the Scriptures. For this reason, they missed many of these basic truths concerning Him.

But Christ did many mighty deeds during His sojourn on this earth. How was that possible? It was not by His own powers, for He had divested Himself of them! To have reclaimed their use according to random need would have been to negate being “**made in all things like unto His brethren**”.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

By whose power, then, were all of His supernatural deeds accomplished? By the power of the Holy Spirit, the One of the Godhead who indwelt Him ‘**without measure**’. (John 3:34) At His baptism He received the outpouring of the Spirit. (Luke 3:21,22) Deity given to Deity? Does the idea not seem ludicrous? If Jesus was functioning as 100% God and 100% man, what purpose would there have been in giving Him the Holy Spirit, too? But the fact was that the Word had emptied Himself *of the right to use His own powers*, so that as long as He clung to His avowed role of becoming man’s Saviour, He faced life with no more supernatural powers of His own than His brethren have. Yet His work of manifesting Himself to the world as the Son of God, the Saviour of man, had to be *proved*; and that proving had to be done through the use of undeniable supernatural powers. *The Holy Spirit provided that power!*

(Luke 4:1) ...Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit...

(Luke 4:14) Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee...

(Matthew 12:28) Jesus said, “I cast out demons by the Spirit of God.”

The prophecy in Isaiah 61:1

which Jesus read in the synagogue at Nazareth said:

(Luke 4:18) “The Spirit of God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me.”

Do we now have the idea that the Word emptied Himself, only to be filled by the Spirit? Was He, thus, rescued from enduring life’s challenges as humans must endure them? On the contrary, the Holy Spirit *empowered* Him only *to do His work*, His teaching, and His miracles of confirmation, but His *daily personal life* was lived as Jesus Christ, the emptied Word, the Brother of man. There was no miraculous rescue for Him when He faced temptation or when He struggled with the challenges of life. For these, He answered as we must, with God’s word (“**It is written....**” Matthew 4:4) and with frequent communion with God in prayer (Luke 6:12). Twice, at the end of these struggles, we read that angels came to Him and strengthened Him (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43). Could *angels* strengthen *Deity*? No, not functioning *as* Deity. They strengthened Jesus Christ, the emptied Word, the Brother of man (Hebrews 1:13).

DID HE EMPTY HIMSELF OF DEITY?

Do the foregoing verses teach that Jesus gave up being Deity? Some are willing to call Him *the Son of God* but they would be hesitant to actually say He was, and is, *God*. What do the scriptures teach?

In Vine's Word Study, look up "angels" and check several references that show the interaction of angels with humans. Be sure to note whether these references are to created beings or to One of the Godhead.

Did they usually appear as heavenly, spirit-beings, or as men?

Are angels eternal, or are they created beings?



Above: An artist's drawing of an angel, based on Biblical descriptions. Below is an artist's idea of the **cherubim** over the **Mercy Seat** in the Temple at Jerusalem.



Christ Was Acknowledged As Deity

As we have already noted, Jesus referred to Himself (in John 8:58) as the *I AM* who spoke to Moses from the burning bush. This was no less than *a declaration of His eternal Deity*, a truth that could not be changed, even though He dressed Himself in the body of man.

John 10:30 is a further statement of His Deity, **"...I and My Father are one."**

Acts 20:28 identifies the followers of Christ as **...the church of God [the Lord and God] which He purchased with His own blood.***

This is an inspired referral to Christ as Deity.

Christ Was Worshiped As Deity

Throughout the ages, God has continually forbidden the worship of any being or anything except Deity.

I am the LORD your God...you shall have no other gods before me...you shall not make for yourself any carved image...you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God.... (Deuteronomy 5:6-9; 4:15-39).

In Revelation 19:9,10, the voice of a heavenly being spoke to John the apostle. John said, regarding this:

And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow-servant, and of your brethren... Worship God!..."

There is no record of any created angel or spirit receiving worship. Throughout the Bible, the only One who was ever worshiped with approval was God (Elohim, plural: Godhead).

Therefore, the fact that Jesus allowed and approved worship of Himself is evidence that, even in the flesh, He was Deity, worthy of being worshiped.

After the miraculous stilling of the storm on the Sea of Galilee,

...Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him (Matthew 14:33).

John 9:35-38 records an interesting and poignant story of Jesus' work among men. At the beginning of the chapter He had healed a man who had been born blind. When the leaders among the Jews heard of the miracle, they called both the man and his parents, to question them concerning whether he had actually been healed and who had healed him. The parents answered:

"We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue (John 9:20-22).

Do you know the difference between the Temple and a synagogue?

Does the Temple exist today? When was it destroyed?

Do Jews offer sacrifices today?

During that time, to 'be put out of the synagogue' meant that one was cut off from God, since worship was possible only through the priestly system, in the synagogues and the temple.

Later, the leaders questioned the healed man alone and tried to force him to deny that the one who had healed him was of God. He answered,

"If this man were not from God he could do nothing." They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out [excommunicated him] (John 9:33,34).

Jesus knew that, according to the Jewish system, this man's defense of Himself had resulted in his excommunication; he was no longer able to worship God. In pity for him in his plight, Jesus found him and told him clearly what very few understood at that point in time: that He was the Son of God — Deity. When the man was told this, he responded,

"Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him (John 9:38).

Later, after Jesus' resurrection, when He appeared to the apostles and showed them the wounds in His hands and side, Thomas cried out,

"My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

Revelation 5 portrays Jesus as the Lamb of God before whom the elders and all the host of heaven fall down and sing a new song:

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain.... (Revelation 5:12).

Christ Forgave Sins As Deity

Another evidence of Jesus' Deity is that He forgave sins. If a person *offends* me, I have the privilege of forgiving him if I choose to do so. But *sins* are committed against *God*; therefore, only God has the right and the power to forgive sins.

- (1) He was acknowledged as Deity.
- (2) He was worshiped as Deity.
- (3) He forgave sins as Deity.

The Jews understood this fact. In Matthew 9:2, when Jesus said to the paralytic, **"Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you,"** the immediate response of the Jews who heard Him was, **"This man blasphemes!"**

But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" — then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose....* (Matthew 9:4-7).

Again in Luke 7:48,49 Jesus said to the woman who bathed His feet with her tears:

"Your sins are forgiven." And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

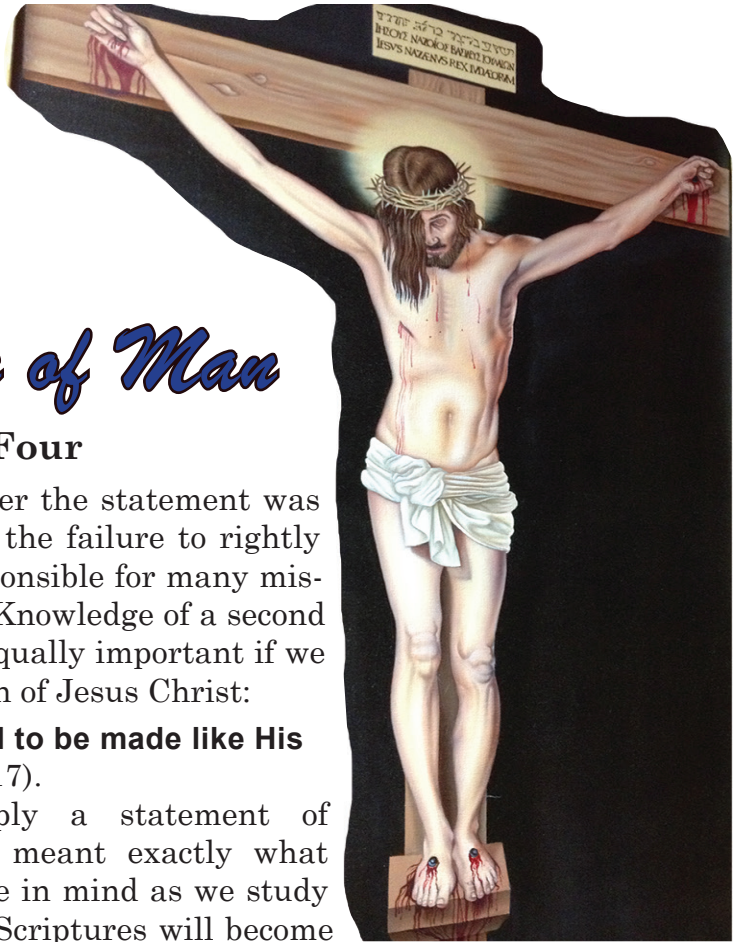
So, just as a man cannot cease to be a man, Deity cannot cease to be Deity. The Word, even in the flesh of humanity, was God.

What, then, do the scriptures mean when they say that the Word became flesh and dwelt among men (John 1:14), *emptying Himself and taking the form of a servant?* (Philippians 2:7) What was involved in this change of relationship in the Godhead? Was the change merely like a change of garments, taking a human 'outer garment' but remaining inside as He had been from eternity? If, even as the Son of God, Christ was Deity and could rightfully be worshiped as God, what does it mean that

...in all things He had to be made like His brethren... (Hebrews 2:17)?

For Discussion:

11. Can humans forgive sins? _____
12. Did Jesus forgive sins? _____
13. In what three ways do the Scriptures show that the Word was still God, even in the flesh? (1) _____ (2) _____
(3) _____



The Brother of Man

Chapter Four

In the previous chapter the statement was made and emphasized that the failure to rightly divide the Scriptures is responsible for many misunderstandings about God. Knowledge of a second factor — a key factor — is equally important if we are to understand the Person of Jesus Christ:

...in all things He had to be made like His brethren... (Hebrews 2:17).

This was not simply a statement of good-sounding words; God meant exactly what He said. If we keep this rule in mind as we study Christ, many things in the Scriptures will become clearer.

Imagine a great kingdom, ruled by the mightiest of kings. Imagine that a plague breaks out among the people, killing thousands. The king, in love and pity for his subjects, lays aside his crown and his royal robes. He leaves the palace, clothed in the ordinary dress of his people, to help those who are sick and dying. This is what God did for a world that was sick with sin.

For Discussion:

1. Can God do anything? — that is, can He set aside justness and inherent penalties simply because He wants to? For instance, the inherent penalty in committing sin is the resulting absence of God; God is the source of life; so when God is separated from a soul because of sin, the automatic result is spiritual death. Can God continue to extend life to the sinner, ignoring the wall of sin, simply because He doesn't want the separation?

In the beginning was *the Word*, and the Word was *with God*, and the Word was God ... and the Word *became flesh* and dwelt among us...* (John 1:1,14).

Hebrews 10:5 tells us that *a body* was prepared for the Word, so that He could be one with humanity. Hebrews 2:14-17 says:

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same,...For indeed He does not give aid to angels [Some of the angelic host had rebelled against God, but the Word did not take the form of angels to provide salvation for them] **but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore in all things He had to be made like His brethren....***

Just as the king in our imaginary story could not cease being himself, the Word could not cease being of the essence of God. Yet, as the king laid aside his powers and authority inherent in the kingship, the Word emptied Himself and was made like man.

Being Made Like His Brethren

1. Christ became the Son of God, the Son of man.
2. He was born of the Holy Spirit.
3. God's first-born Son and His other children.
4. There is a Family resemblance.
5. Humans become heirs of God.

today I have begotten You. And again, I *will be* to Him a Father and He *shall be* to Me a Son.*

These statements refer to a specific point in time when Christ *became* the Son of God. "**I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son**" shows that at the time the prophecy was made, the Word had not become **'the Son of God'**. At that time the Word had not emptied Himself to take the form of man; He still held His position of inherent equality in the Godhead.

God does not choose words carelessly. Believers in the 4th and 5th centuries who debated whether Jesus had been the Son of God from eternity were not paying attention to God's prophetic words in Psalm 89 and Hebrews 1.

Becoming the Son

This change in relationship had been prophesied (Psalm 89:24-29), and we find the prophecy explained in Hebrews 1:5 where God is quoted as saying to Christ:

You are My Son,

For Discussion:

2. If the Word was not the Son of God from eternity, when did He become God's Son? _____
3. What was promised in Psalm 89 and fulfilled at the birth of Christ, according to Hebrews 1? _____

But God, looking down through time, said that **“In the fullness of time”** the Word would be begotten of God in the flesh, that the Word **“shall be to me a Son.”** He did not say, “to *man* a son”, but **“to Me a Son.”**

This choice of wording is significant because Jesus made a distinction between ‘Son of Man’ and ‘Son of God’, applying both identities to Himself.

When Was God’s Promise Fulfilled?

...the angel Gabriel was sent by God to...a virgin....Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God, and behold, you...will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest”* (Luke 1:26-32).

Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?”

The virgin birth meant that Mary had had no intimate relationship with any man; that the Child Who was born to her was unquestionably conceived by supernatural power.

And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy one who is to be born will be called the Son of God”* (Luke 1:34,35).

Two significant factors should be noted from these passages. First, they agree with Hebrews 1:5 in giving a future tense to the designation as Son. The statements do not say, “The Holy One *is* the Son,” or “The Holy One *has always been* the Son,” but they say, “He *shall* be called the Son.”

Secondly, verse 35 states that it was through the work of the Holy Spirit that Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary. Matthew 1:18-20 further explains:

...she was found with child of the Holy Spirit...for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*

The Agency Of the Spirit

Why, then, is Jesus called ‘the Son of God’? Why not ‘the Son of the Spirit’? Why is this truth worded in a way that seems to raise confusion?

Because, first, God was restating His Oneness. And, second, *the characteristic role of the Holy Spirit is that of quickening life.* Further down the way,

For Discussion:

4. Who was given to Jesus “without measure” at the time of His baptism? (See Matthew 3:16; John 3:34) _____

5. When we obey God in scriptural baptism, Who is given to us? (See Acts 2:38; 5:32) _____

as God’s redemptive plan will continue to unfold after Christ’s coming into the world, we will see that *humans also will be enabled to become the children of God through the agency of the Spirit*. Even in this, the pattern of the parallel between Christ and His brethren is strongly adhered to.

Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is *born of water and the Spirit*, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”* (John 3:5).

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by *the Spirit* you put to death the deeds of the body, you will *live*. For as many as are led by the *Spirit of God*, these are *sons of God (Romans 8:13,14).**

Returning to our question, “When was the prophetic statement of Psalm 89:24-29 fulfilled?” The Word became the Son of God at the same time that He became the son of man, that is, when He emptied Himself, becoming subject to God and obedient to Him, and was born into the world in the human form. Hebrews 1:6 describes this moment:

But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let *all the angels of God* worship Him.”*

This is a referral to Luke 2:7-14:

And she [Mary] brought forth her firstborn Son [Jesus], and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger... Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields...And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them...Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a *Saviour who is Christ the Lord*”...And suddenly there was with the angel a *multitude of the heavenly host* praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!”*

The Firstborn

Jesus Christ was called *the firstborn* of God in Hebrews 1:6. In a human family the firstborn is the child born first to his parents. Other brothers and sisters may follow, but the order of birth gives the firstborn a distinction above all who are born afterwards.

For Discussion:

6. Define “creator”. _____
7. Define “heir”. _____
8. Define “joint-heir”. _____
9. Through Whom do humans become sons and heirs of God? _____

In God's family, comprising all the obedient righteous of all time, there is the firstborn, Jesus Christ. In prospect, Abraham could be called a child of God, or David could be called a child of God, because Jesus' coming as God's Firstborn would open the way of sonship to those before Him as well as to those who would come after Him.

How can we know that this understanding is correct? By the simple answer to the question: Which man, born before Christ chronologically, could approach God on his own merits? Where was the man without sin? There was no one. Without argument, if Christ had not become the Son of God, there could have been no sonship for any human.

A parallel concept to this truth is presented in Hebrews 9:15 where we learn that the death of Christ cleanses not only those of today's world but also reaches back **"for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant"** In the same manner today, through His Sonship with the Father and His brotherhood with man, human beings continue to become the children of God through Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:29 says that God pre-determined that all of His children would be formed in the image of His Son,

...that He might be *the firstborn among many brethren.**

Galatians 4:4-7 explains that Jesus was born as God's Son so that the redeemed

...might receive the *adoption as sons.* And because you are sons, God has sent forth *the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"**

This passage, too, teaches that our sonship with God is possible only through the Sonship of Jesus Christ. Colossians 1:15-18 says:

He is the image of the invisible God, *the firstborn over all creation.* For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

These verses show Jesus' preeminence over all things, because It was through Him and for Him that the creation was brought about. But the word *firstborn* carries with it a meaning greater than simple preeminence. It declares Jesus to be *God's firstborn Son*, bearing *the image of the Father* (v. 15) and being *the heir of God* (Hebrews 1:2; Galatians 4:7).

Definitions:

Transgressions: to break God's laws of righteousness; to sin.

Redemption: to buy back what was lost, as a slave is bought out of slavery.

The First Covenant: the Old Testament Law that was given through Moses. The redemption mentioned in Hebrews 9:15 covers the sins of all the obedient since the creation of Adam and Eve.

From these verses, we know these facts:

- (1) **The Word emptied Himself to be born in the flesh.**
- (2) **He became the firstborn Son of God, opening the way for others to be the children of God.**
- (3) **He became submissive to His Father.**

THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Functioned as a Human

- 1. He grew in wisdom and stature.**
- 2. He learned obedience.**
- 3. He faced temptation.**
- 4. He asked for information.**
- 5. He made human, emotional responses.**

In the remainder of this lesson we will consider passages that show the human characteristics and strengths of Christ. In the following lesson we will read references that show what God gave back to Him as the necessary tools to do the work He came to do.

He Grew

Since Christ was made in all things like unto His brethren, we learn that He *grew*. We read of Him prophetically in Psalm 22:9-11:

But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me *trust* when I was on My mothers breasts. I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God.*

Luke 2:52 says of Him as a child,

And Jesus *increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.**

To “increase in wisdom” means that Jesus learned through His experiences.

To “increase in stature” means that his physical body grew.

To “increase in favor with God and man” means that He grew in relationships. It is not surprising that people grew in their appreciation of such a good and pleasing child, but the thought that He also grew in favor with God is a striking statement. It can be understood only in the light of the fact that He “learned” obedience, and that He pleased God as He moved forward obediently in His life and development.

This statement is almost beyond comprehension! *How* could the all-knowing Word so limit His *mind* that He could actually grow, as humans do, in wisdom?

Hebrews 5:8 says also that as a Son

...He *learned obedience by the things which He suffered.**

These statements could have been true only because He had actually laid aside the powers inherent within Deity and had limited Himself to functioning as a human, dependent on God.

He Faced Temptation

Another evidence of the effect of emptying Himself was temptation. James 1:13 says,

...for God cannot be tempted by evil.

Yet, Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus

...was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Some might reason that He was *confronted* with evil, yet there was no *real temptation* because He was God in the flesh. But the purpose of the statement in Hebrews is to show that Jesus had faced and had overcome all temptations, in the same way that each of us is tempted. If there had been no reality to the temptation, it would not have served as a reassuring statement that He can

...sympathize with our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15)

and

...in that He Himself has *suffered*, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).*

Definitions:

Temptation: being drawn by desire or weakness to disobey God.

Sin: giving in to temptation; falling short of what God requires, or disobeying God's laws.

Holiness: absolute purity of mind and actions.

Foreknowledge: knowledge of events before they happen. One of the attributes of God is that He is all-knowing — and only He can know what will happen before it does. This is why prophetic statements and their fulfillment are evidence that they were spoken by God.

How, then, was He able to live in this world and to resist all temptations so that He was sinless?

Let us consider ourselves for a minute. When a very sinful person is born into God's Family and then faces temptations in the many areas in which he previously sinned, the temptations strike numerous answering chords in his nature. As he grows, fewer responses are made to the temptations. A mature Christian will not be moved at all by temptations to commit sins of immorality, murder, thievery, drunkenness, or many other things because they are so totally contrary to his nature. The nearer we come to

absolute holiness, the less strength temptation will have over us.

Christ functioned as a human, with the same emotions and the thought processes which resulted in decisions. But when temptation had worked its way through those processes and had reached the core of Himself, there was nowhere an answering chord to any evil. As the "Second Adam", only absolute holiness was there. He was what He came to transform us into being: the perfection of Adam when he was created by God.

He Foreknew Events That Were to Happen

Another consideration involves the question of His *foreknowledge*. Repeatedly, in the Gospel accounts, we are told that Jesus knew the thoughts of those around Him. *These were cases in which the use of supernatural power was needed in His work and in confirming His own identity to His witnesses:*

...for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who would betray Him (John 6:64).

But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man (John 2:24,25).

Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you" (John 1:48).

But He knew their thoughts... (Luke 6:8; also, Mark 9:33-37; Luke 19:1-10).

In Contrast, He Asked for Information

Yet there are also instances recorded when Jesus asked for information or acted in response to information given Him:

When Jesus *heard* it, He departed from there by boat...* (Matthew 14:13).

And He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they found out they said, "Five, and two fish." **Then He commanded them...*** (Mark 6:38, 39).

And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, **He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it...*** (Mark 11:13).

And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" (Luke 9:18).

In the sickness of Lazarus:

...Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom you love is sick." **When Jesus heard that...*** (John 11:3,4)

Later, going to the sisters:

For Discussion:

10. Give an example of Jesus' foreknowledge. _____
11. Give an example of Jesus asking for information. _____
12. What explanation can you make to show that this is not a contradiction? _____
13. List three things Jesus did in response to information He asked for and was given:
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.

...He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." (John 11:34).

During the agony before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed,

...**Oh My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass....*** (Matthew 26:39; Luke 22:42)

Concerning the time of His coming at the end of the world, Jesus said,

...**But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father*** (Mark 13:32).

While it is true that in most of these cases it might be said that the questions were asked for the benefit of the hearers rather than for His own information, Mark 13:32 says clearly that the Son did not know the time of His second coming to the world.

Also, considering the truth of the statements that Jesus *grew in wisdom* and that He *learned obedience*, it is evident that **whenever He needed to know the thoughts and hearts of men, God empowered Him through the Holy Spirit with that knowledge; and when supernatural knowledge was not necessary, He gained the information just as we do: by inquiry. This conclusion is in keeping with the other revealed factors regarding His humanity.**

Physical and Emotional Response

We also see points of His brotherhood with man in the physical and emotional glimpses given of Christ. In the story of the rich young ruler, when the young man answered,

"Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth." Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him* (Mark 10:20,21).

And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them* (Matthew 14:14).

On the occasion of Lazarus' death, the Gospel of John pictures Jesus' reaction in these words:

For Discussion:

14. When did Jesus use the power of the Holy Spirit to know things?

15. When did He ask for information and then respond to what He was told?

16. If Jesus "learned obedience", does that mean that He was not in submission to God, and was not required to be obedient, before emptying Himself and being born as a human? _____

Therefore when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, ***He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.*** And He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see? ***Jesus wept**** (John 11:33-35).

Later, in foretelling the betrayal and death He would soon suffer, John 13:21 says,

When Jesus had said these things, He was *troubled in spirit....**

Concerning Jerusalem and her impending destruction because of her rejection of Himself, Luke 19:41 records,

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and *wept over it.**

John 4:6 tells us,

Jesus, therefore, being *wearied from His journey....**

He knew *hunger* (Matthew 4:2) and *thirst* (John 19:28). In the garden, facing the agony of bearing the sins of man in His death, Jesus told the apostles,

My soul is *exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with me** (Matthew 26:38).

Luke 22:44 explains further,

And being *in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.**

Hebrews 5:7 says of Jesus,

...who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up *prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear....**

In response to His bitter need, Luke 22:43 says,

Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, *strengthening Him.**

We have learned that *emptying Himself* meant laying aside not Deity itself, but ***the rights and powers inherent in Deity.***

We have learned, further, that *being made in all things like unto his brethren* meant that Jesus lived in the flesh as a sinless human, and that He was dependent on God for everything, just as man is dependent. He gave up everything, and then ***God gave back to Him through the power of the Holy Spirit whatever He needed, whenever He needed it, to do the work He had come to do.*** Are there other scriptures that support this subjection and dependence? Let us look carefully at the many informative references in the Gospel of John.

Sent by The Father

Chapter Five

Unless we understand that the birth of the Word into the world as the Son of God and the Son of Man marked a great change in His existence and His relationship in the Godhead, there are many passages of scripture that will not make sense or will seem contradictory.

For instance, John 1:4 states,

In Him was life....

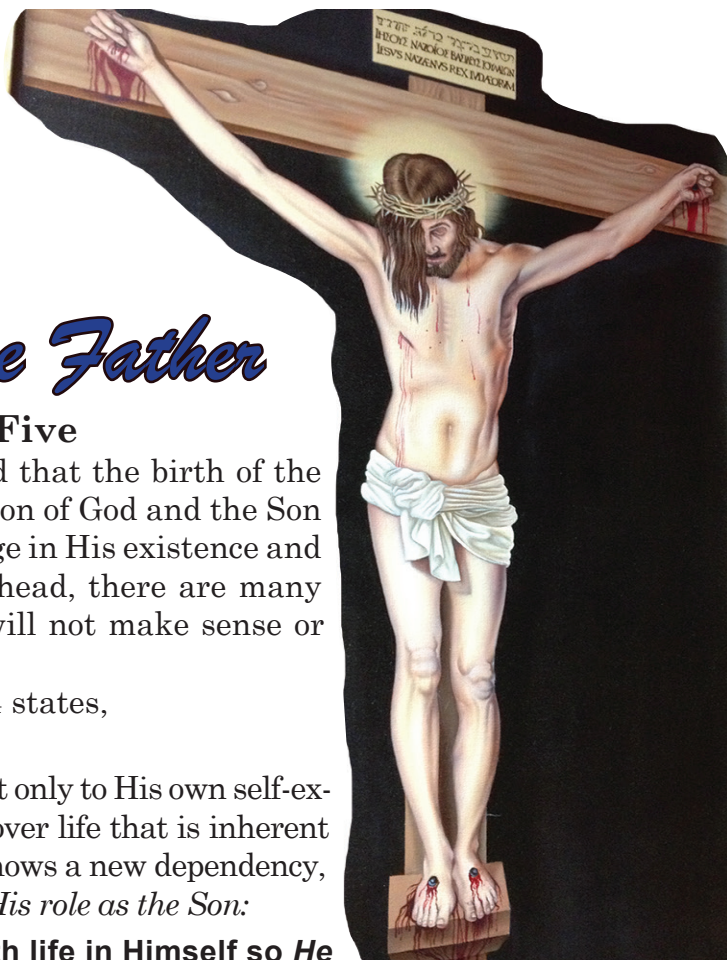
This was a reference not only to His own self-existence but also to the power over life that is inherent within Deity. But John 5:26 shows a new dependency, characteristic of Him only in *His role as the Son*:

For as the Father hath life in Himself so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself.*

His self-existent life (somewhat parallel to the soul in man which never ceases to exist once it is begun) did not change, but His power over life was relinquished along with the other powers inherent within Deity. However, when He was born as Man, God gave back to Him the power over the life within His own physical body, that He might lay it down and take it up again at His own will; and He also gave Him the power over life in others through the Holy Spirit. The effect — the power of life — was the same; the difference was that, as the Word, the power was inherent within Himself; as the emptied Son, made in all things like His brethren, He had the power of life because it had been granted to Him by the Father.

For Discussion:

- 1. Review:** How would you explain the statement in Philippians 2:5, that Jesus emptied Himself?
- 2. Why did the Word, in the Old Testament, speak with full authority, as God?**



Before we go on to consider other statements of the dependence of Jesus on God, let us remember these facts regarding Him:

Before His Birth in the Flesh

- (1) The Word was *with* God and the Word *was* God (John 1:1).
- (2) All things were made by Him (John 1:3).
- (3) He was the I AM who spoke with authority to Moses (Exodus 3:14,15).
- (4) He was the Rock with the Israelites (I Corinthians 10:4).
- (5) He was the Word testifying through the prophets (1 Peter 1:11).
- (6) He existed in the form, the essence, of God. (Philippians 2:6).
- (7) He was the brightness of God's glory, of His person; the exact image, the substance, of God (Hebrews 1:3).
- (8) He was called God by the Father (Hebrews 1:8).
- (9) The names Immanuel (God with us), Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace were His (Isaiah 9:6).
- (10) He was the Word of the Godhead: the scriptures refer to the Godhead (Elohim) more than 3,000 times.

Yet with His birth, we see a complete change. The tone of absolute authority is replaced by the tone of subjection to the Father: He was the Son, submissive and obedient in all things.

The Word speaking in the Old Testament:

And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' " „Moreover God said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: "The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations"' (Exodus 3:14,15).

The Word, as Jesus, speaking in the New Testament:

Read **John 8:57-59** for confirmation that the one who spoke to Moses was Jesus.

For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me (John 17:8).

For Discussion:

3. What passage tells us that it was the Word who was born as Jesus?

4. Which verse tells us that Jesus was the One of the Godhead who was with the Israelites in the wilderness? _____
5. How would you explain the statement, "In Him was life..." (John 1:4). _____

FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

[NOTE the emphasis of underlined words in these passages. BBC]

John 3:35: The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. [Contrast: The Word, Who *became* the Son *was* the Creator; now, He is *given* the things He created!]

John 5:19,20: Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does. [Derived authority to work.]

John 5:22: For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son. [Derived power to judge.]

John 5:26: For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself. [Derived power of life.]

John 5: 27: ... and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

John 5:30: I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. [God is the sender and the One empowering Christ; the subjected Word is the One being sent and empowered by God to do what He was born to do.]

To “have life in Himself” would have reference to “*life inherent*”, welling from Himself.

When this was “granted” to the Son it means that He had the power of life, but it was now *derived from the Father*, not of Himself, as had been true before He emptied Himself.

Jesus Functioned as a Human

- (1) Jesus did nothing on His own.
- (2) His judgment was on God’s authority.
- (3) He came to do God’s will, not His own.
- (4) And He was sent by God.

For Discussion:

6. Humans are living beings. Why is it not correct to say, “In humans there is life”?
7. Is there a real difference between the Word doing things by His own power and Jesus doing things by the power given to Him by God? _____
8. The change in authority shows Jesus’ subjection to God. True or false?
9. Whose works did Jesus do? _____. Verse? _____

Sent by the Father

John 5:36: ...for the works which the Father has given Me to finish — the very works that I do — bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

John 5:37: And the Father Himself, who sent Me has testified of Me.

John 5:43: I have come in My Father's name

John 6:29: This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.

John 6:37: All that the Father gives Me will come to Me

John 6:38: For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 6:57: As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father

John 7:16: ... My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

John 7:28: ... but He who sent Me is true.

John 7:29: But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.

John 7:33: I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me.

John 8:16: ... for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.

John 8:18: ... and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.

John 8:26: ... He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.

John 8:28: ... I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.

John 8:29: And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.

John 8:38: I speak what I have seen with My Father

John 8:42: ... for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.

Before

1. Equal in the Godhead.
2. Creator.
3. Had life within Himself.
4. Had the authority of the Godhead.

← **Emptied Himself** →

After

1. Subject to the Father.
2. Heir of God.
3. God gave Him the power of life.
4. God gave Him all authority.

For Discussion:

10. Who sent Jesus? _____. Verse? _____
11. Whose words did Jesus speak? _____. Verse? _____
12. In whose name did Jesus come? _____. Verse? _____
13. Whom did Jesus seek to please? _____. Verse? _____

- John 8:55:** ... but I do know Him and keep His word.
- John 9:4:** I must work the works of Him who sent Me
- John 10:18:** ... This command I have received from My Father.
- John 10:25:** ... The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.
- John 10:29:** My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all
- John 10:32:** Many good works I have shown you from My Father.
- John 10:36:** ... do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming," because I said, "I am the Son of God"?
- John 10:37:** If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me
- John 11:41:** Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.
- John 11:42:** ... I know that You always hear Me
- John 12:44:** He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.
- John 12:45:** ... he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.
- John 12:49:** ... the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.
- John 12:50:** ... whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.
- John 13:3:** Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands
- John 13:20:** ... he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.
- John 14:10:** ... I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.
- John 14:16:** ... I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper
- John 14:24:** ... and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.
- John 14:31:** ... and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do.
- John 15:10:** ... just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.
- John 15:15:** ... all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.
- John 15:21:** ... because they do not know Him who sent Me.
- John 16:5:** But now I go away to Him who sent Me
- John 16:28:** I came forth from the Father

- John 17:1:** ... Father,...Glorify Your Son
- John 17:2:** ... You have given Him authority over all flesh
- John 17:4:** ... I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.
- John 17:6:** I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me
- John 17:7:** ... all things which You have given Me are from You.
- John 17:8:** ... For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.
- John 17:9:** ... I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.
- John 17:11:** ... keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.
- John 17:12:** Those whom You gave Me I have kept
- John 17:21:** ... that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.
- John 17:23:** I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.
- John 17:24:** Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me
- John 17:25:** ... I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.
- John 18:9:** Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.
- John 18:11:** ... Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?

It would be impossible to read these many statements of Jesus' submission to God and of His dependence on God for all the He said and did without concluding that, truly, becoming a Brother to man was a total change in His role.

For Discussion:

14. Jesus said He must work Whose works? _____
15. Who gave all things into Jesus' hands? _____
16. By Whose authority did Jesus speak? _____
17. Jesus said that He and the Father were _____.
18. God gave Jesus authority over _____.
19. Jesus drank of a bitter cup. Who gave it to Him?

We have seen that He emptied Himself of the inherent powers of Deity, that He was made in all things like His brethren, and that, thereafter, everything He said and did was by the authority of the Father. But what else was involved in the sacrifice made for man's salvation? As we study further, we will learn what our salvation cost.

How do these statements in Isaiah correspond with those in the book of John? Who was speaking? The speaker says that "the Lord God" and "His Spirit" are His senders...

For Discussion:

1. Everything Jesus _____ and _____ was through _____'s direction.
2. Jesus said that He is the _____ and the _____.
3. Whose Hand laid the foundation of the earth?
4. Who stretched out the Heavens?
5. How long has the one who became Jesus "been there", according to His own statement?
6. Jesus said that He was _____ by the Father, and was _____ to Him.
7. What example of obedience does Jesus set for us in our family relationships?
8. Jesus wants His followers to be _____, united, in Him, that the world may believe that He is from God.
9. Based on our lessons so far, name some of the things the Word gave up in order to be our Brother.
10. Who sent the Word into the world? This statement identifies the Three of the God-head. Who are they?

Isaiah 48:12,16: One of the God-head is speaking: "... I am He, I am the First and I am also the Last. Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens; When I call to them, they stand up together...

"Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord God and His Spirit have sent Me..."



God speaking to Moses from the bush that did not burn up.



Jesus cleansing the Temple while He was on the earth.

The Commitment in Finality

Chapter Six

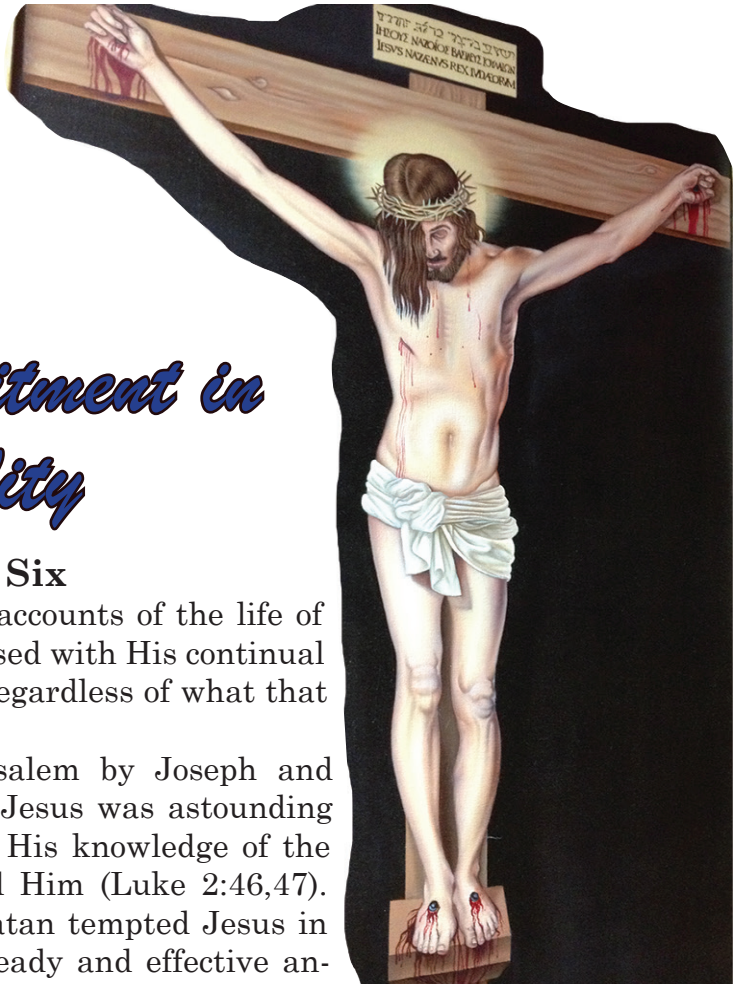
Throughout the four accounts of the life of Jesus Christ, we are impressed with His continual command of the situation, regardless of what that situation might have been.

Left behind in Jerusalem by Joseph and Mary at the age of twelve, Jesus was astounding the temple leadership with His knowledge of the scriptures when they found Him (Luke 2:46,47). After His baptism, when Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, He had a ready and effective answer for each confrontation (Matthew 4).

Entering the temple of God in Jerusalem, He reacted with outspoken indignation to the merchandising and thievery that were taking place there, making a whip and driving out the money changers and those who sold animals for the sacrifices (John 2:14-17). Officers were sent by the Pharisees and chief priests to arrest Jesus but when they returned to the authorities, empty-handed, their explanation for their failure was, **“No man ever spoke like this man!”**

Repeatedly, both in the answers Jesus gave to the questions asked Him by doubters and unbelievers, and in the parrying questions He asked in response to their efforts to discredit Him before the people, He was in complete control.

...No one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare question Him anymore (Matthew 22:46).



The Agony in the Garden

But there was a time when the Scriptures say Jesus

...offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears... (Hebrews 5:7),

when He said to His followers,

“My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death”...He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed... (Matthew 26:38,39). Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground... (Luke 22:43,44).

At no other point in the record of Jesus' life do we see such a challenge to His mental and emotional and spiritual being. Even the crucifixion did not wring from Him the anguish that is described so vividly in this hour alone in the garden. Here, we are allowed to look at the horrified soul of Jesus as He shrinks back from the cup He is soon to drink.

His Physical Response to Agony

Sometimes, when fear and horror are unbearably strong, the human body breaks out in a cold sweat, but the word used by Luke to describe Jesus' sweat was *'thromboi'*, a medical term which meant *'clots of blood'*. Historically, and even in modern medicine, there have been cases in which extreme mental anguish caused such a blood-sweat, usually followed quickly by death. Jesus had not been exaggerating when He had said, **“My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death”** (Matthew 26:38).

What was He feeling? Was it, as many say, that He knew that He was soon to be condemned to die on the cross and that the agony was merely evidence of His humanity? Was it His dread of the physical pain and the death He would endure?

The Faith of His Followers

Before reaching a conclusion, we need to consider the behavior of those who were martyred for their faith in Christ during the first century. Historical records tell us that those Christians died excruciating deaths by crucifixion, being boiled in oil, facing wild animals in the arena, being burned alive, and enduring many other forms of painful torture. Yet, thousands went to their deaths singing praises to God, and their bravery in the face of pain and death

“Thromboi” is the Greek word, used only here in the New Testament for “drops of blood”. Regarding this physical stress, Aristotle (Hist. Anim.iii: 19) said that in certain extraordinary states the blood becomes very liquefied, and flows in such a manner that some have perspired blood.

J.R. Dummelow, as quoted by James Burton Coffman in his commentary on Luke, said, **“Great mental agony has been known to produce this phenomenon.”**

Coffman said, “The fact that death usually followed very quickly after such a blood sweat suggests the necessity of the angel's mission to strengthen Jesus, who Himself described His condition as being ‘exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death’.” (**Commentary on Luke**, Page 476, James Burton Coffman, ACU Press, Abilene, TX.)

Nero's Persecution, A.D. 67

"Nero even refined upon cruelty, and contrived all manner of punishments for the Christians that the most infernal imagination could design. In particular, he had some sewed up in skins of wild beasts, and then worried by dogs until they expired; and others dressed in shirts made stiff with wax, fixed to axletrees, and set on fire in his gardens, in order to illuminate them. The persecution was general throughout the whole Roman Empire; but it rather increased than diminished the spirit of Christianity." (Fox's Book of Martyrs).

was so unusual and exemplary that many unbelievers were won to Christ.

Looking from Gethsemane down through the first century, can we really think that the disciples of Jesus had more courage than He? Is it possible that He feared death to the point of sweating, as it were, great drops of blood, while those who followed Him were the very essence of courage? Surely there must be another explanation.

Considering the question of death objectively, obviously those early Christians had nothing stronger than their faith to fortify their spirits. They *believed* the promises of Jesus:

He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live... (John 11:25).

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:1-3).

They *believed* that the promises were true, but they didn't *know* from their own experience. They had not passed through death to enter into life. They had not *seen* the Father's house. Yet their *faith* supported them, even in the face of death.

But what of Christ? Though the Scriptures do not reveal when and to what extent He was allowed to know of His past existence and even to see God, we would have to conclude that it was not during the time when He was growing in wisdom and learning obedience. Such supernatural knowledge would have negated the fact that He was to be made in all things like His brethren.

The divine revelations must have come after His baptism, after He was given the Spirit without measure. Still, He functioned as a man for His daily existence, but in His developing work as Saviour He obviously had special needs. He, Himself, testified in John 5:19,20:

For Discussion:

4. In your own thinking about Jesus' agony in the garden, what would you say was the reason for His agony and tears? _____

5. We see instruments of war as symbols of strength. Are personal conviction and tears indications of strength or weakness? _____

Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but *what He sees the Father do*; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and *shows Him all things that He Himself does*; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.*

In John 6:46, He declared:

Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; *He has seen the Father.**

In John 8:14, He explained further:

Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for *I know where I came from and where I am going*; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.*

So in contrast to those early Christians who died for their faith, the Word had existed eternally, prior to His birth into the world as Jesus Christ. He had *seen* that place from which He had come and to which He *knew* He was going. He *knew* that death would not touch His spirit; He *knew* that His body would be resurrected in three days; He *knew* God and the power of life.

How, then, can we accuse Him of such weakness? How can we say that facing physical death was more agonizing for Him than for His followers?

What Caused His Agony?

So, if it was not physical pain and death that brought such a struggle to the soul of Christ, what did He face there in the garden? What crossroad did He reach that was, in actuality, His greatest challenge? Why do we see agony there that was replaced, even at His trial and on the cross, by His earlier attitude of complete control?

The Effects of the Cross

The cross would affect Jesus in two ways: physically, in His death; and spiritually, in His “**being made sin**” (2 Corinthians 5:21) for man. If His dread in the garden was not of physical

Attitude Taught by Christ

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

“Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed” (Peter 1:21-24).

For Discussion:

6. Was it Jesus’ goal to force the world to believe in Him as God’s Son? _____
7. What knowledge did Jesus have of His existence with God that fortified Him at the trial and crucifixion?
8. From your study of Scripture, what besides pain could explain His agony?

death, it must necessarily have been of the spiritual consequences His sacrifice was about to bring. What were the consequences of being made sin?

Sin

As humans, we are surrounded by sin and have grown so accustomed to it that it may pain us little. Therefore, we cannot begin to understand the feelings of Christ on this question. Sin is so diametrically in opposition to the nature of God that it cannot be tolerated in His presence. This is why man without his Saviour, stained through and through by the sins he has committed, is absolutely separated from God. The penalties of sin are separation from God and spiritual death in hell.

We can understand, just a little, the power and the awfulness of sin when we realize that even one sin means the eternal loss of that God-breathed immortal part of man: the soul. God would not have lightly endowed the physical body with a priceless dual nature, only to have the priceless part cast into hell because of sin. There had to be an alternative.

I have walked along a certain road. On one side of that road is a huge garbage dump, a growing mountain of every sort of human refuse. It is decaying, reeking of stench, working with flies, with maggots, and with vermin. I can think of nothing more totally revolting to my whole being than to be buried alive in that place.

Yet my physical horror would be as nothing compared to what it would have meant spiritually for that Holy One of God to have been “made sin”.

Sin, with its power over man, is the absolute antithesis of God. What we see in these scenes in the garden is that One, who was eternally pure, coming face to face with the final commitment, with the moment of reality of taking upon Himself all of the sins of all mankind for all time, as though He had committed every one of them.

We, personally, might not be bothered by ‘white’ lies and ‘little’ sins, but even we would writhe inside if the heinous crimes and perverted behavior of all the criminals on death row were suddenly charged against our names and we were to be held responsible for paying the ultimate penalty for them.

Being Made Sin

This was the confrontation in the garden, this actuality of being “made sin”. This was the approaching cup from which He had to drink and from which He shrank in horror, because to drink from that cup meant eternal consequences.

For Discussion:

9. What are the penalties of sin?

A. _____

B. _____

From eternity, and even during the thirty-three years of habitation in a physical body, the Word had been pure. No sin had touched Him. At any point He could have shed the trappings of humanity and returned to His rightful glory of equality in the Godhead. To have done so would have sealed man's condemnation for his own sins, not one adult human being spared; but the Word had that option; He could have made that choice. Without that possibility being open to Him, there would have been no struggle, no need for the prayer, no need for the statements of submission. Later, He Himself said,

...do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? (Matthew 26:53).

Deliverance was there; He had only to choose it.

So, Gethsemane was the struggle, not so much against Satan as within Himself. It was the crossroads: Do I return to what I am and to all that is rightfully and inherently Mine? or do I go forward on this road of commitment to man, taking sin and all of its consequences as My own indebtedness?

Thank God, thank God, love prevailed and the end of the struggle was,

O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done (Matthew 26:42).

The struggle in the Garden shows that Jesus had a choice, about whether or not He would take the sins of the world as His own, and suffer the penalties. Did He have a choice?

Later, He asked His apostles, **"...do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?"** (Matthew 26:53).

So He had a choice. It was by His own free will that He submitted to death. He said, **"O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done"** (Matthew 26:42).

Definition:
Savior: One who rescues a helpless victim from some problem or trouble, often at great cost to himself. In the case of our spiritual Savior, Jesus died to rescue us from spiritual death.

For Discussion:

- 10. Which is the only religion that has a Savior? _____
- 11. Is there a savior in Islam? _____ In Hinduism? _____ In Buddhism? _____
- 12. How can a person be saved, according to these religions? _____
- 13. What was the cause of Jesus' anguish in the Garden?
- 14. What are the two penalties of sin for humans? _____

The Death

Chapter Seven

Since Adam's first sin and the first shedding of blood in sacrificial apology for sin, every sacrifice had been like a promissory statement that full atoning payment would one day be made. The time for redeeming those pledges had come, and Jesus Christ had committed Himself in Gethsemane to making the payment for sin.

The struggle was over and the final workings of the redeeming process were set in motion.

The Arrest and Trial

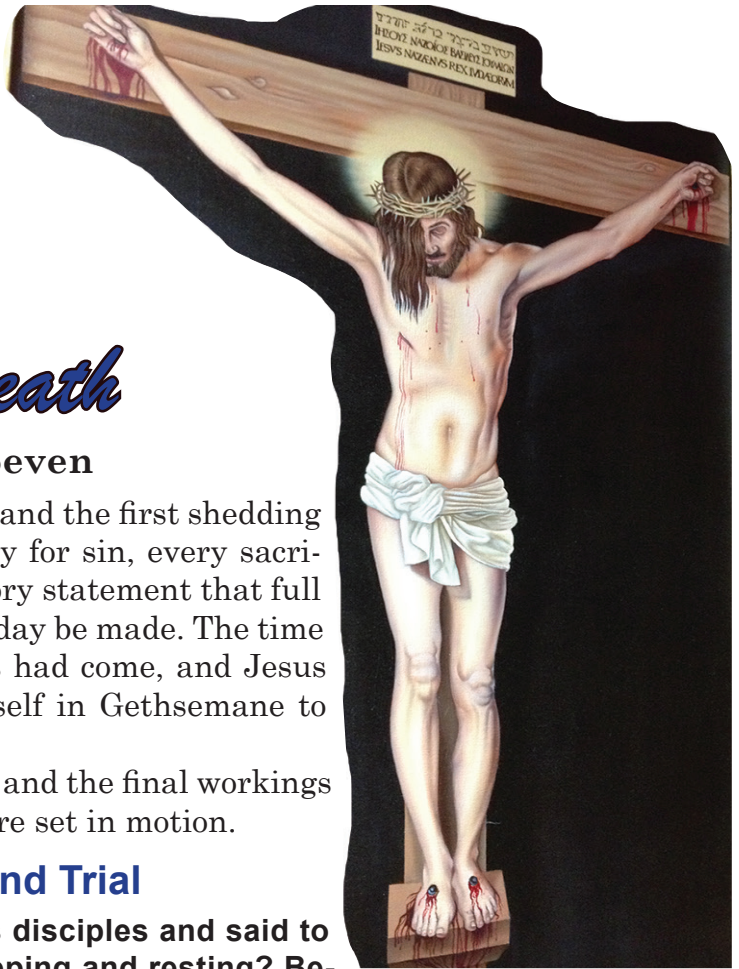
Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand...." (Matthew 26:45).

And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:47,48).

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them [the detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees...with lanterns, torches, and weapons], "Whom are you seeking?"

They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Jesus said to them, "I am He." ...and then — when He said to them, "I am He," — they drew back and fell to the ground. Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way" (John 18:4-8).



Then, having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house... (Luke 22:54).

Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck You?" And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him (Luke 22:63-65).

Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and build it in three days.'"

And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What is it that these men testify against You?" But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God that You tell us if You are the Christ the Son of God."

Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?"

Since Adam and Eve first sinned, animal sacrifices had been made by humans, seeking forgiveness from God.

Though animal blood could not take away sin, God respected those sincere offerings, looking toward the time when the death of 'the Lamb of God' would bring forgiveness to the obedient.



Even today animal — and, sometimes, human — sacrifices are made in pagan religions. This goat is about to be sacrificed to Durga, the Hindu goddess of destruction.

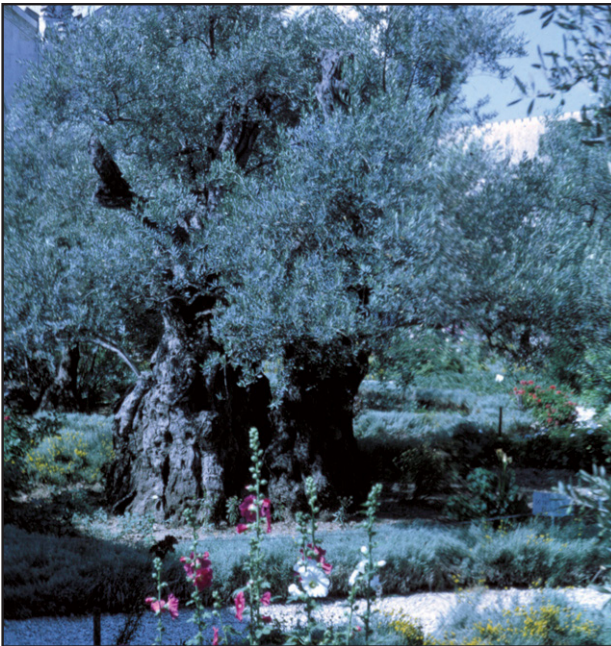
For Discussion:

1. Are there slaves in the world today? _____ Where? _____
What do you know about this terrible plight of some humans? _____

2. Which is worse, physical slavery or spiritual slavery? _____

Children are so accustomed to hearing “fairy tales” that they are often very surprised to be told that even today you can go to a country called “Israel”, you can walk on the streets of a city called “Jerusalem”, you can look across the “Sea of Galilee”, and can travel down to “Jericho”.

One can also walk in the Garden of Gethsemane, beneath the ancient olive trees. In that setting, it is easy to imagine the suffering of Jesus, and almost to be able to hear the coming of the temple guard.....



Ancient olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane

They answered and said, “He is deserving of death.”

Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, “Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?” (Matthew 26:59-68).

About seven hundred years earlier, the Word had spoken through Isaiah of this night of injustice and physical abuse that would be done to “...the Lord...your Saviour, and Your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob”:

I gave My back to those who struck Me and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting (Isaiah 50:6).

The Crucial Question Asked

The trial of physical torment had begun. Following His arrest, throughout the night Jesus was held prisoner and questioned first by Annas and then by Caiaphas, the high priest of the Sanhedrin court of Israel. False charge after false charge was brought against Him, and Caiaphas challenged Him to defend Himself. His answer was silence, yet even in His silence

He was the one in control of the whole night’s proceedings.

For Discussion:

- 3. Who betrayed Jesus? _____**
- 4. How did he indicate which one Jesus was? _____. Does this suggest that Jesus looked like a typical Jewish man (no special “glow”, etc. to set Him apart)? _____**
- 5. When Jesus said to the soldiers, “I am He”, why do you think they drew back and fell to the ground? _____**

Read carefully. The high priest did not ask about any of the false charges spoken against Jesus; nor did he ask, “**Do you claim to be the Son of God?**” Instead, he put Jesus under oath to answer, “**Are you the Son of God?**”

Silence in answer to such a question would have been viewed as a denial. Jesus could not deny the truth of Who He is, so He answered the question, establishing the fact that He was not dying for false charges or for empty claims; He was dying because **HE WAS, AND IS, THE SON OF GOD.**

Finally, in evident exasperation with the failure of their efforts to prove any charge worthy of death, Caiaphas demanded, “**...tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God.**”

This was the question of the ages: not “Do you **claim** to be the Christ?” but “**Are You the Christ, the Son of God?**” The false accusations had provoked no response from Jesus, but now the crucial question had been asked. Men of all time must know the real reason He was being condemned; they must know the truth that was pronounced even in that midnight mockery of a trial: “**Are You the Christ?**” And He answered, “**I am.**” (Mark 14:61).

How strange it seems that those men who had studied the Scriptures, so that they knew the prophecies about the coming Messiah, seemingly did not even pause to consider if this One might indeed be the Saviour for whom they waited. They never questioned whether they were fighting against God Himself. In their close-mindedness they had already judged Jesus to be a charlatan. His answer, rather than stopping them in their tracks, merely confirmed their judgment that He was making blasphemous claims. And so they condemned Him to death.

Delivered to Pilate

And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor (Matthew 27:2). Pilate then went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?”

They answered and said to him, “If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to You.”

Then Pilate said to them, You take Him and judge Him according to your law.”

Therefore the Jews spoke to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death...” (John 18:29-32).

For Discussion:

- 6. Was Jesus condemned on the basis of lies and false charges? _____**
- 7. Jesus did not answer the high priest until what question was asked?
_____**
- 8. How is prophecy a proof of Jesus’ claims being true?” (Matthew 25:59-68).**

And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.”

So Pilate asked Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” (Luke 23:2,3).

Jesus answered him, “Are you speaking for yourself on this, or did others tell you this about Me?”

Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?”

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?”

Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all” (John 18:34-38).

Tried by Herod

But they were the more fierce, saying, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning at Galilee, to this place.”

When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing.

And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate (Luke 23:5-11).

For Discussion:

9. What did the Jewish leaders do to torture and punish Jesus? _____

10. Why would they be so determined to condemn Him? _____

The Choice of the Mob

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, ‘Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?’ For he knew that because of envy they had delivered Him....

...But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?”

They said, “Barabbas!”

Pilate said to them, “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?”

They all said to him, “Let Him be crucified!” (Matthew 27:15-22).

Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. But they shouted, saying, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!”

And he said to them the third time, “Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go.” But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified... (Luke 23:20-23).

Mockery by the Soldiers

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him.

The Roman Empire:

Augustus Caesar (31 B.C.-A.D. 14). Augustus ruled with as much practicality and goodwill as possible. He kept a standing army for use only in those areas where there was rebellion and conflict. He was followed on the throne by Tiberius, A.D. 14-37.

Judea:

Pilate was the procurator or governor of Judea during the trial of Christ. Judea was an imperial province. A procurator could increase his area’s political freedoms if he could demonstrate that the people were loyal to Rome. Pilate fell into disfavor with Tiberius because of his poor handling of the Jewish problems. He was called to Rome to give account of his governorship, and tradition says that he committed suicide.

Galilee:

The King of Galilee during the first century was, first, Herod the Great (at the time of Jesus’ birth), then Herod Antipas (who killed John the baptizer, and was the king who tried Jesus), and Herod Agrippa (the persecutor of Christians, Acts 12, who was smitten of the Lord and died), and Agrippa II (Acts 25:13) the king who heard Paul’s defense.

Jesus said that His kingdom is not of this world — that is, it is a spiritual kingdom, not a physical kingdom. Is a spiritual kingdom a *real* kingdom?

For Discussion:

11. What accusations did the Jewish leaders make against Jesus? _____

12. List three of the questions Pilate asked Jesus. A. _____
B. _____ C. _____

And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they spat on Him and took the reed and struck Him on the head (Matthew 27:27-30).

Pilate's Further Questioning

So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him... (John 19:1).

Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."

Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!"

Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"

Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him."

The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."

Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"

Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."

Characters:

Pilate: Since Rome was the foreign power over Israel, the Emperor had the authority to appoint a governor to rule the people. Pilate was the Roman governor over the area known as Judea.

Herod: Under the authority of Rome, Herod was king in the region of Israel called Galilee. Nazareth, the city of Jesus, was in Galilee.

Chief Priests: Jewish leaders and elders; members of the Sanhedrin Court which provided spiritual leadership and settled religious questions for the Jews.

Barabbas: A Jewish criminal who had been arrested by the Romans.

Caesar: the designation given the Emperor of Rome, derived from the family name of Julius Caesar. Augustus ruled at the time of Jesus' birth; Tiberius was Emperor during Jesus' adult life

Definitions:

Praetorium: the military headquarters or palace in Jerusalem for the Roman authorities.

Garrison: a military post in an occupied territory.

Scourge: to beat, whip, or flog; a typical scourge had numerous leather thongs, tipped with bone or steel, so that multiple deep cuts were made each time the whip fell.

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"

But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!"

Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?"

The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" (John 19:1-15)

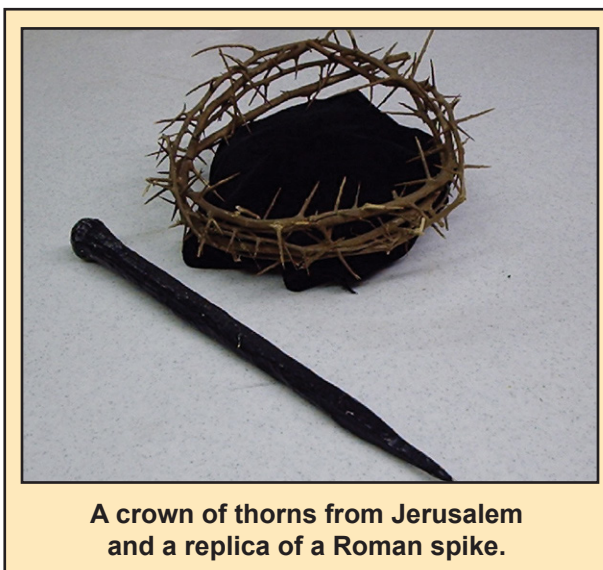
When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it."

And all the people answered and said His blood be on us and on our children" (Matthew 27:24-25).

Seven-Hundred-Year-Old Prophecy Fulfilled

Through inspiration, the prophet Isaiah had described these events, too:

He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten



A crown of thorns from Jerusalem and a replica of a Roman spike.

For Discussion:

13. What was the custom concerning one criminal during this time? _____

14. Pilate knew that the Jews had accused Jesus because of envy. Why would they have been envious of Him? _____

15. At what time of the year (which Jewish festival) did Jesus' trial and crucifixion take place? _____

by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of My people He was stricken (Isaiah 53:3-8).

LOOKING BACK AT THE TRIAL

Jesus was surely near exhaustion from the night of questioning by the Sanhedrin Court and the beating by their guards. Isaiah (52:14) had described him in these words: “...His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men....”

He was brought to the Roman governor, Pilate. At first the charges made against Him were evasive, and Pilate’s intention was to free Jesus because he realized that envy was the real reason behind the arrest. Backed into a corner by Pilate’s efforts, the Jewish leaders finally admitted the truth: Jesus had to die because He made Himself the Son of God.

Visage: the face, countenance, or appearance of a person

The pagan governor was affected more strongly by the statement of Jesus’ parentage than the ‘God-fearing’ Sanhedrin had been. He renewed his questioning, demanding, “Where are you from?”

So, again, the record of Jesus’ trial states clearly that **the crime for which He was tried and condemned was that He was the Son of God.** In the court proceedings, the pretenses toward other charges failed completely. Pilate’s efforts to free Jesus were futile in the face of the strong determination of the Jewish leaders. Finally, he literally washed his hands of the whole matter and turned Jesus over to the Praetorium guard for scourging and then for the sentence of crucifixion, as the mob had demanded. By that time, Jesus

For Discussion:

16. When Pilate presented Jesus to the mob, saying, “Behold, the Man!” what did they cry in response? _____

17. When Pilate asked, “Where are you from?” what did Jesus answer? _____

18. Pilate said he had the power to do what? _____

had not slept for nearly 30 hours. He had been beaten during the night by the temple guard, and now He was given to the Roman soldiers. Humiliatingly, He was stripped of His clothes and bound to a whipping post for the scourging.

The weapon was a murderous thing in the hands of a trained soldier. Numerous steel-tipped leather strips were bound together to make the flagellum, so that each lash multiplied the deep cuts and bleeding welts covering His body. The whip rose and fell, and the prisoner became a mass of mutilated, quivering flesh.

Surely He must have been barely conscious when the scourging ended and the rough soldiers decided to act out as a joke the charge they had heard of His claiming to be the **“King of the Jews”**. They dressed Him in a robe of scarlet or purple, made a crown of thorns for His head, and put a ‘scepter’ in His hand. The whole garrison regaled in the mockery, bowing to Him, worshiping Him, crying **“Hail, King of the Jews.”** They slapped Him, spat in His face, and took the reed from His hand and hit Him on the head with it.

The hundreds of lacerations and the swollen, bleeding welts on Jesus’ body throbbed in pulsating agony. There was excruciating pain where the thorns pierced the thin flesh of His skull and pressed against the bones, and the blood flowed freely. Loss of blood and body fluids had robbed Him further of His strength, already near depletion from lack of sleep, food, and water during the long hours since His arrest.

By the time the crossbeam was laid on His shoulders, it was obvious even to the Roman centurion that He was not physically able to carry the weight the long distance to the hill outside Jerusalem’s walls where criminals were crucified.

TO GOLGOTHA

Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name [the father of Alexander and Rufus]. Him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: “They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.” Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there (Matthew 27:32-36).

Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34).

And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.



Golgotha, the Place of the Skull

And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, “You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

Likewise the chief priests also mocking with the scribes and elders,

said, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God’” (Matthew 27:37-43).

Casting lots: a method used in ancient times to determine a choice, similar to our drawing straws or throwing dice. The biblical use of lots was with the belief that God would determine how the lots fell, thereby governing the decision. Matthias (Acts 1:26) was chosen by lot.

Gall: a bitter and possibly poisonous extract from a plant or plants native to Palestine — the bitter juice of the poppy or colocynth gourd fruit. Jesus was given gall mixed with wine on the cross, to deaden His pain.

The Believing Thief

Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.”

But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when you come Into Your kingdom.”

And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me In Paradise” (Luke 23:39-43).

For Discussion:

19. What did Jesus ask of God? _____
20. What accusation was put above the cross? _____
21. What did the thief ask Jesus to do? _____

Final Words to Mary

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to the His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home (John 19:25-27).

"My God, My God..."

Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Some of those who stood there, when they heard that said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!"

Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, and filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and gave it to Him to drink. The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him (Matthew 27:45-49).

So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished! Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit." And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit (John 19:30; Luke 23:46 from Psalm 31:5).

And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Now when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!" (Matthew 27:51-54).

For Discussion:

22. What did Jesus mean when He said, "It is finished?" _____
23. What happened when Jesus died? _____
24. What did the centurion say? _____
25. What did the soldiers do to the thieves? _____

Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.

For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of his bones shall be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby (John 19:31-42).

LOOKING BACK AT THE CRUCIFIXION

Almost two thousand years removed from that pinnacle in time, and having been schooled all of our lives in the 'glory' of the cross, it would be difficult for us to reconstruct in our minds just what transpired from the hour Pilate pronounced the sentence of crucifixion until the rolling of the stone in front of the opening to Joseph's rock-hewn tomb, seeming to mark the end of Jesus' story.

But there was nothing glorious in the pathetic spectacle of the procession to Golgotha. Jesus had been on his feet for many hours, probably without food and water. He had been beaten by the Jews and then scourged by the Romans. The scourging, which was designed to inflict the greatest possible physical agony, yet to be stopped just short of death, had done its work. His face and body were so bruised, lacerated, and swollen He could hardly be recognized,

and the pain which had probably rendered Him unconscious before the scourging was over had become a throbbing agony all over His body. The blood had flowed freely from the wounds on His body, as well as from the places where the thorns had dug into His head. Now the drying and matted blood attracted flies and other insects.

At the 'Place of the Skull', Jesus' arms were stretched on the crossbeam and Roman spikes were driven through His flesh, fastening Him securely to the cross. Then, the customary procedure was to lift the crossbeam into place on the stationary upright, dragging the condemned man and lifting Him up, all of His body's weight hanging on the two nails at the base of His hands. His right foot was positioned over the left one, with his knees slightly buckled, and a single spike was driven through both feet.

Films depicting a crucifixion show the person in stillness, calmly and almost peacefully in a standing position on the cross, with his arms merely outstretched. But a little thought would re-write that scene.

The entire weight of a body hanging by two nails would pull down unbearably on the arms, causing excruciating cramps in all of the arm and chest muscles. Those muscles would become paralyzed so that the lungs would be unable to expel air. One cannot choose to quit breathing; the body will involuntarily do whatever is necessary to continue the life-sustaining rhythm of inhaling and exhaling, so the prisoner on a cross would push against the nail in his feet, lifting his body, and relaxing the muscles in his arms and chest. He would breathe in

Old Testament Prophecy:

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Psalm 22:1).

The significance of the veil of the temple being torn at Jesus' death:

The veil in the literal temple was hung to separate the "Holy Place" from the "Holy of Holies", the dwelling place of God between the two cherubim on the Mercy Seat.

Ordinary priests could go into the first room, but only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and that, only once a year at the time of the Passover, the Day of Atonement when he brought the blood of the sacrifice to be put on the Mercy Seat before God.

At Jesus' death, as our High Priest, He took His blood as the sacrificial offering to God for us (Hebrews 9:24). The temple veil being torn from top to bottom (no human could have done that) indicated that Jesus had taken away the veil that separated us from God, and that now all of us have access to Him through the blood of Christ.

For Discussion:

26. Give two reasons why they did not break Jesus' legs.

(1) _____ (2) _____

27. Who went to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body? _____

28. How did Joseph and Nicodemus prepare Jesus' body for burial? _____

short gasps, feeling overwhelming pain surge anew through every muscle in the upper part of his body. But as torn flesh was pushed by his entire weight against the iron spike, the agony in His feet would quickly become unendurable, and he would sag downward until he was again hanging by the nails in his hands.

For the hours that Jesus was on the cross, besides the throbbing pain all over His badly beaten body, besides the insects that would have added torment to His wounds, every minute of the time He was battling with unbearable, shooting pain from the muscle cramps and the weight of His body on the nail in His feet or those in His hands. He could only exchange one torture for the other; there was no relief.

The soldiers had gambled for Jesus' robe, just as God had foretold through David hundreds of years before. Then, in fulfillment of their assigned duty, they took up posts around the Place of the Skull and sat down to wait out the hours until death would end their work of executing the condemned.

The priests and most of the mob watched, too, but not in silence or remorse. Their taunts filled the air, challenging Jesus to use for Himself some of the power He claimed to have. If He really was the Son of God, surely this would have been the time to have miraculously come down from the cross before the eyes of the amazed mob. Surely, they would have believed Him then.

Even the two thieves took up the taunts, but then the words of one of them began to change. What opportunity he had had to learn of Jesus we are not told, but his words, spoken as they were in such circumstances, show an amazing amount of understanding.

Consider the setting: with the arrest of Jesus the apostles seemed to have lost sight of His work, His proofs of Deity, and His coming kingdom. They had been with Him and they should have known Him best, yet everything was being swallowed up in His death. Their own cowardice and fear and lack of faith caused all except John to run from the place of torment.

At such a time and from such an unexpected source, the bright glow of faith illuminates the scene. A man whose deeds had brought about his own

Characters:

Joseph of Arimathea: a wealthy Jew who was a secret disciple of Jesus. He asked Pilate for permission to bury Jesus.

Nicodemus: a teacher of Israel who came to Jesus by night, in John 3. He helped Joseph of Arimathea bury Jesus' body, bringing the costly gift of about one hundred pounds of aloes and myrrh.

Jewish Burial

Throughout the Middle East, bodies have been buried, typically, within 24 hours. Neither embalming nor cremation was allowed. The body was washed (Acts 9:37), wrapped in a cloth and often with costly spices (John 19:40), with a napkin placed over the face (John 20:7).

With the passing of time, the practice of exhuming the bones after decomposition and having a second burial was commonly practiced. Many tombs had numerous niches for the placement of these ossuaries. Perhaps the saying, "to be gathered to one's fathers", had reference to this burial practice.

A Medical Description of a Crucifixion

“The unnatural position made every movement painful; the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbed with incessant anguish; the wounds, inflamed by exposure, gradually gangrened; the arteries — especially at the head and stomach — became swollen and oppressed with surcharged blood; and while each variety of misery went on gradually increasing, there was added to them the intolerable pain of burning and raging thirst; and all these physical complications caused an internal excitement and anxiety, which made the prospect of death itself — of death, the awful unknown enemy, at whose approach man usually shudders most — bear the aspect of a delicious and exquisite release.” (Frederick Farrar, *The Life of Christ*, pg. 33)

“As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by His arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically He is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen....

“Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber, then another agony begins. A deep crushing pain in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

“It is now almost over — the loss of tissue fluid has reached a critical level — the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues — the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their flood of stimuli to the brain.” (“The Crucifixion of Jesus: The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View”, *Arizona Medicine*, vol. 22, no. 3, March 1965, pp. 183-187.)

condemnation to death on a cross turns to the beaten, blood-soaked, dying form of Jesus and says, “**Lord....**”

How, in the face of such contradictory appearances, could the thief have recognized in Jesus the Deity that he addressed as ‘Lord’? *What knowledge had he gained of Jesus, what experience had he had in his own life that had totally convinced him that Jesus was Lord?*

“...remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”

And how did he understand, even there on the cross, that death would pose no threat to the reality of Christ’s coming kingdom? From where did such faith and pure understanding come? His statements, considering the death he and Jesus were enduring, are some of the most astounding to be found in the Scriptures.

It is not at all surprising that, in response to such faith, Jesus said, **“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise.”**

From noon until three o’clock, the land [and according to historical records in other places, the whole world] was covered with darkness. During that time Jesus prayed, **“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”** He also spoke to His mother and to John, committing her to his care.

Nearing the end of His suffering, Jesus cried out in agony of soul, **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”**

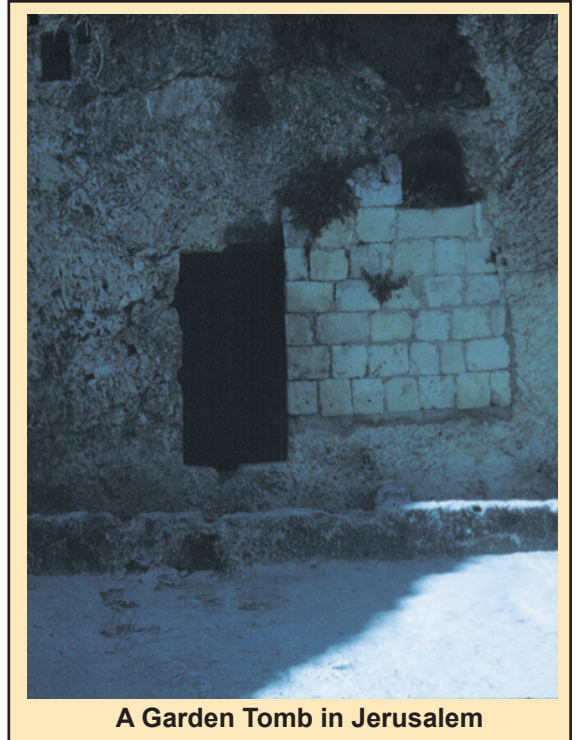
Psalm 22, a psalm of prophetic descriptions of the crucifixion, began with that pitiable cry. What did He mean? How did He feel forsaken? Everything that had happened in the trial and in the crucifixion had been according to the foreknowledge of God. All of it was a necessary part of the redemption plan that had been worked out before the foundation of the earth. (Revelation 13:4-8) So, how was He forsaken?

Perhaps these thoughts will help to answer the question: When a child of God is born into the Family of God, his body becomes the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). We are warned that our behavior can *grieve* the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30), *quench* the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19), and it is possible for us to so sin that the Spirit will *leave* us (Hebrews 10:25-29; 6:4-8; 2 Corinthians 13:5).

Jesus Christ was **“made in all things like unto His brethren.”** Throughout His life He faced temptation, as we do, yet He did not sin. As the Firstborn in God’s Family, He had been given the Spirit without measure. His miracles were done by God’s authority, through the Spirit. In His righteousness, His fellowship with the Godhead was real and complete. But in Jesus’ death, He was **“made sin”** — Not that He, Himself, was a sinner, but Isaiah 53:6 words clearly what took place:

All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

The time for the transfer had come, when the burden and the responsibility for our sins became His, and the Holy Spirit was driven from the Son of Man by that outpouring of sin upon Him. From the desolate aloneness of His soul, Jesus cried, **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”**



A Garden Tomb in Jerusalem

For Discussion:

29. Did Jesus have the power to come down from the cross, as He was challenged to do? _____
30. If He had saved Himself, could He have saved humanity? _____
31. Discuss the story of the thief who called Jesus “Lord”.

In this bitter moment, we see the Word, emptied of His own rights and powers of Deity, and forsaken by the indwelling Spirit of God. We see Him dying alone as the Son of Man for the sins of men. But, in addition to this realization, we need to consider this: with the Jewish by-standers' knowledge of the Psalms, **Jesus' cry would have brought to their minds the other verses of the prophetic Psalm that so graphically described what was happening at that very time before their eyes!** What a testimony to the truthfulness of His declaration to be the Son of God and the promised Messiah!

Verses from Psalm 22:

These are prophetic statements regarding the crucifixion of Christ:

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning?

“... But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people.

“All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, ‘He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!’

“... I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death.

“... They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots” (Psalm 22).

After a final plea of, **“I thirst,”** Jesus did what God had given Him the authority to do (John 10:18): He exercised His power over life. Preparing for His submission to death, He cried out, **“Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit,”** and then He pronounced an end to the work of redemption: **“It is finished.”** He bowed His head and willed His spirit to leave His body.

For Discussion:

1. What does it mean to redeem something?
2. The Sanhedrin condemned Jesus because He said He was the _____, the Son of _____.
3. Who had foretold details about Jesus' trial and death, seven hundred years before the events took place?
4. What was unusual about the knowledge and faith of the thief on the cross?
5. Jesus was made _____ for us, so that we might become the _____ of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).
6. Did Jesus become a sinner?
7. What was laid on Jesus?
8. What were Jesus' last words before His death? What was finished?

Was Physical Death the Only Cost?

Chapter Eight

Before Reading this Chapter, Please Note:

1. The study is *not* saying that Jesus became a sinner.
2. There is *no intention* to minimize the horror and the necessity of the crucifixion.
3. This is an effort to *put 2 and 2 together*, to understand the totality of the cost of our salvation.

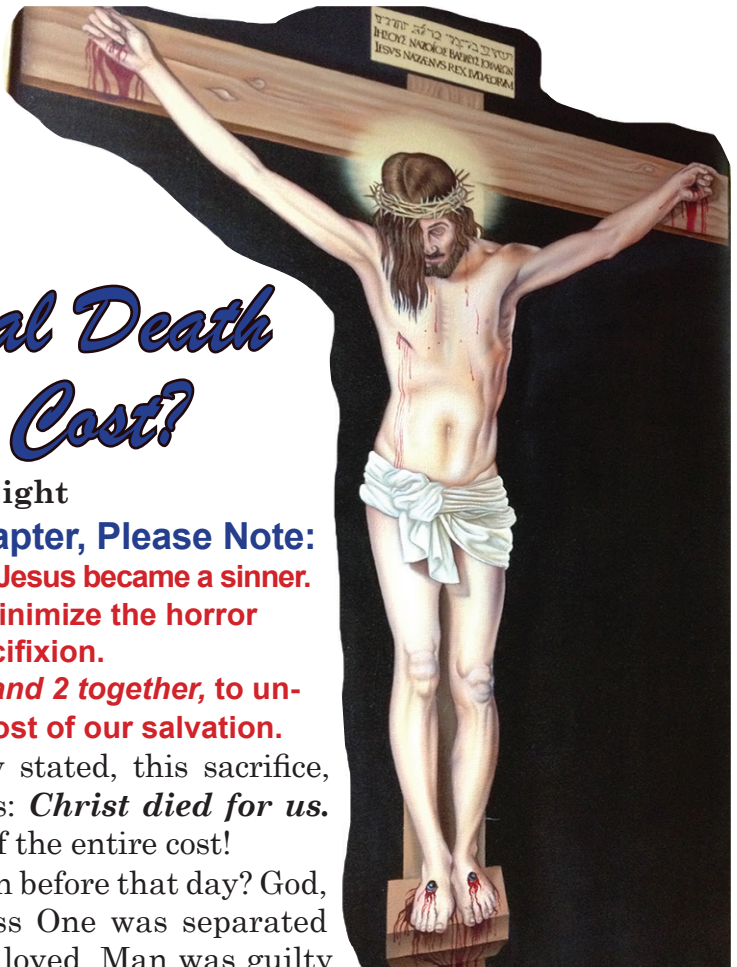
It has been so simply stated, this sacrifice, this achievement of the ages: *Christ died for us*. Yet, how little we calculate of the entire cost!

What was the situation before that day? God, the eternal, spiritual, sinless One was separated by sin from the creation He loved. Man was guilty of physical and spiritual transgressions committed against God, and he was helpless to remove those sins from his soul.

God's hands also seemed bound. In order for Him to have allowed the injustice of sin to remain unpunished, it would have been necessary for His very nature to have been changed. But God's nature is inherent and cannot be changed. His love longed to extend forgiveness; His justness required payment for violations made against Him by man. But since man had nothing to give that would match the value of his immortal soul, he was helpless. It was necessary, if forgiveness was to be offered, that God devise the way.

For Discussion:

1. In "rightly dividing" the Scriptures concerning Jesus Christ, where would be the dividing line between His existence as the Word and as the Son of God?
2. How would you describe the result of "emptying Himself"?
3. How many humans have been separated from God by their sins?



What Hindus Believe:

"Hindus believe that the individual atman (soul) passes through a long cycle of existence, occupying different bodies and experiencing repeated births, deaths and re-births.

"The sum total of an individual's desires, feelings, thoughts, and actions constitutes his/her karma. It is karma in a previous existence that determines the kind of body occupied by the soul in the next existence. It is possible to cut the ropes of karma and escape from the post of samsara (rebirth).

"The different paths that reduce the burden of karma are: the knowledge of Brahman, atman and the universe; selfless actions; deep and single-minded meditation and exercise; and total and complete surrender to God to receive divine grace, which will neutralize karma.

"Thus the law of karma, which adjusts debit and credit for good and evil actions, determines re-birth. It can be said that man is punished by his wicked actions, not for them." (**Teach Yourself Hinduism** by V.P. Kaniitkar and W. Owen Cole)

Problems:

- (1) What does a sinner have to offer as a sacrifice that is of any value to God?
- (2) How could repeated re-births (as Hindus teach) help to wipe away sins, since every re-birth would be another round of sins?
- (3) Is it possible for a human to live a perfect life?

God's Solution

So, a body was prepared for the Word. He was born as the Son of God, one with mankind, and He lived in the flesh for thirty-three years. Then that body suffered the death of crucifixion. The price had been paid, once and for all. Forgiveness was available for those who would accept it.

But, for the sake of better understanding, let us ask some questions:

The sin that contaminated man was both physical and spiritual. Its consequences meant *physical pain and death*, but sin also brought about eternal *spiritual death* through separation from God.

God's justness required a payment that would balance against sin.

Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death..."

1 Peter 2:24: "...who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree..."

2 Corinthians 5:21: "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Isaiah 53:6: "All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

The Word left the glory of heaven and lived thirty-three years in a physical body. Then He suffered the death of that body.

But the Word exists eternally. He has no beginning and no end. So, in reality, what was thirty-three years in a prepared body, compared to His eternal existence? And, as horrible as the crucifixion was, it was **the door of release from**

the very limiting confines of that human body. Do the Scriptures show that this

For Discussion:

4. How do the Scriptures say that sin separates us from God? _____
5. What is the "payment" for sin? _____
6. Who was "made sin" for us? _____

was **the total of the sacrifice**? If we pay attention, we will see that there is far more revealed in Scripture concerning the cost of our salvation.

Let's reflect: sin is so great it would have eternally separated man from His God. Even now, living under that banner of forgiveness, God asks of His children:

...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service (Romans 12:1).

God will, *today*, accept no less from us than the surrendering of our total spiritual and physical selves to Him. How, then, would it have been possible that a physical sacrifice, alone, be acceptable as the full payment for sin?

Some might reason, "But it was acceptable because Jesus was Deity dying for man." But *did* Deity die? [Remember, He was the eternal Word, housed in a physical body that had been prepared for Him.] Can Deity die? Impossible! So if it was not the Spirit of Christ that died, if the sacrifice was no more than a prepared physical body, how did that sacrifice compare with the eternal spiritual damnation for sin?

Could any offering made only in the physical realm cross over the lines and serve as atonement for spiritual sins? Can *physical* be given for *spiritual*? It doesn't seem possible, since temporary physical things can in no way be compared to the immortal nature of the spiritual.

Death, the Binding Factor

Throughout biblical history, it was the blood of a sacrifice that was counted as the atoning factor for man's sins, in anticipation of the time when the Lamb of God would be slain for the world. It is **His blood** that cleanses us (1 John 1:7). It was **"...with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption [for us]** (Hebrews 9:12).

"... if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:13,14).

We say that Christ died for us, and He did. When He uttered, **"It is finished,"** the salvation of the obedient souls of all time was secured. **The contract**

Sins of Disobedience

... if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...? (Hebrews 2:2,3)

Sins of the Mind

You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment."

But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment (Matthew 5:21,22).

Sins of the Body

Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).

Hell and Eternal Punishment

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God (Psalm 9:17).

The sinners in Zion are afraid; Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Isaiah 33:14).

Then He will also say to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13-15)

was written and sealed in His blood. He who knew no sin, according to 1 Peter 2:24

...bore our sins in His own body on the tree...

2 Corinthians 5:21 explains further:

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

...the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6).

These verses are familiar to Bible students, but just what do they mean? How were our sins 'laid on' Christ? How was He 'made sin' for us? How do we become 'righteousness' in Him?

Did Christ become a sinner? Or is the verse merely saying that He was sacrificed for us, in the like manner as the symbolic animal sacrifices of old?

No, the Scriptures do not say that Christ was a sinner. He never committed sin, as the word 'sinner' would imply. Yet He was more than a body offered in symbolic sacrifice.

A balance was struck in the exchange between Christ and man, The righteousness that we become in Him is real. The sin that He 'was made', *the iniquity that was laid on Him*, was equally real. Why was this so?

Because God's nature is such that only righteousness can live in His presence, and only sin can be punished by death. As fever is an indication of something wrong in our physical bodies, so Christ's death was the result of the deeper thing

that was happening within Himself. What was that?

Death is the wage of sin (Romans 6:23). A human, stained with sin, cannot go before God. How, then, can we be His children? **Through the righteousness of Christ, which He gives to us, and which becomes for us a purifying robe of blood to the eyes of God.** We enter His presence as sinless sons and daughters because we have **"become the righteousness of God in Him"**.

In the same line of reasoning, it would have been a violation of every aspect of justness if Christ had been sacrificed as the sinless Son of God. How did He die? How was justness satisfied? The Scriptures answer that question: **"On Him was laid the iniquity of us all...."** The iniquity for which He died was in God's way of reckoning, as truly Christ's as the righteousness through which

we are saved is truly ours. **Though He had not committed a single sin, our sin debts were laid on Him and He became the sacrifice for our cleansing.**

How Was Payment Made?

A simple illustration with which we are familiar might help us to begin to get a picture of what Christ's overall sacrifice entailed.

A man foolishly goes into great indebtedness which he cannot pay. He is brought before the judge and is about to be sentenced according to his crime: to death, in this case. Just before the blade of the guillotine drops, his Brother steps forward and says, "I will assume responsibility for his debts. Count these and any future debts as my responsibility to pay." So the judge agrees, the papers showing the transfer of the indebtedness are signed — in blood, according to the requirement of the law — and the debtor goes free.

Does the Brother go to the guillotine now? No. With His own blood, He has signed a contract to **pay the debt**, so He will **pay** — not die. He has a centillion dollars in his bank account, so he draws out a decillion and hands it over to the court clerk. The debt is cleared; he doesn't go to jail and there are no further consequences for anyone. Why does the Brother not die because of the indebtedness?

God's desire is not that *anyone* go to hell (suffer the consequences of owing a debt that cannot be paid); His desire is that **the debt be paid**. Man had nothing with which he could pay, but the sinless Word stepped forward on our behalf. **With His own blood, He signed a contract to pay the debt**, so He will **pay** — **not die spiritually in hell**. **He has a centillion spiritual dollars in his bank account of equality in the Godhead, so he draws out a decillion and hands it over to the "court clerk"**. The debt is cleared. The foolish brother is now not only free but he basks in the love and good will of his benevolent Brother. In fact, he is promised that, in time, his Brother's mansion will be his home forever. All of his needs are supplied, and whatever further indebtedness he incurs is covered by His Brother's continued pledge to pay as long as the previously wayward brother continues with Him in love and penitence.

You object: But Christ *did* die! Yes, **His physical body was crucified** — that was the signing in blood on the cross that transferred our debt to Christ's record. So we, as debtors, were clear.

But on the cross, Christ now had all that indebtedness — that burden of sin — laid on His record. The question would naturally follow: "Did He go to hell in our place? How did He clear Himself of our debt of sin?"

Let's look at the whole revelation concerning the Word — Jesus Christ — the Saviour. At the beginning **He was on a plane of equality in the Godhead**. Partaking of humanity required **an emptying of Himself**, being made in all things like His brethren. He was one with us, yet He did not sin. He died for our sins — and in the eternal picture He remains **one with His brethren! Why?**

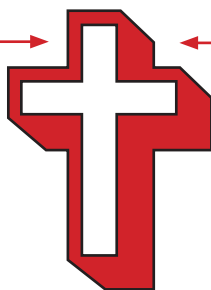
We might chart it in this way:

SIN SWALLOWED UP IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

In the beginning, God and the Word were on a plane of equality.

The Word emptied Himself
to partake of humanity.

The cross was the meeting
place of *sin* being swal-
lowed up in *righteousness*,
and of the binding of the
brotherhood of Christ
with humanity, being bound
together by His blood that
covers our sins.



On the cross,
Jesus was 'made sin',
but *not* a sinner.

Man was elevated by the cross to sonship with
God in Christ, being 'made righteousness' in Him.

Man, without Christ, was lost in sin.

The Mystery Explained

1 Timothy 3:16 talks of the great mystery of godliness:

God was manifested in the *flesh*, justified in the *Spirit*...

We understand that "God" in this passage is actually having reference to the Word, when He emptied Himself and partook of the flesh of humanity — to become Christ. But what does it mean, that *He was justified in the Spirit*?

Think carefully with me: On the cross we see the Brother of man dying for man's sins as if they had become His own. *Our* salvation cost the blood of Christ. It was in His death that our sins were taken from our record and placed on His. ***We were free; we were washed white in His blood!***

But our very cleansing caused the heaping of our sins on the Saviour's account. *Now our indebtedness to God was His!* How was He to pay for all the sins laid on Him? The price of *spiritual* atonement — of **justification** — was drawn from His *spiritual* equality in the Godhead.

The rights, the powers that were inherently the Word's had been laid aside in order that He might partake of oneness with His physical brethren, but now His actual reserves as an equal participant in the Godhead are required. Man's sins, taken upon Christ in His death, were laid against His Spirit

just as they had previously been reckoned against man's spirit. It was *in the Spirit* that He was *justified*.

Hebrews 9:14 further explains this important aspect of His sacrifice:

...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who *through the eternal Spirit* offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

It was through the Spirit that he made the spotless offering of Himself to God. Christ's eternal righteousness in the spiritual realm was sufficient for Him to pay for all the sins of mankind and still to be accounted pure before God as shown in Hebrews 2:10:

...the author of their salvation...bringing many sons to glory...

The binding factor of Christ with humanity was His blood, His signature on our debt. When the transfer of our sins to His account was made, He then had to clear His own indebtedness. Being 'made sin' for us, paying the cost of our indebtedness so that we can stand before God in the perfection of the blood of Christ means also that He cannot go back to His former position of equality. We are the merchandise he has bought with his blood, and the clearing of the debt from His own spiritual account means that He cannot take back the purchase price. This truth is borne out in every Scripture regarding His existence and His relationship to God since His ascension to Heaven.

This, then, was the eternal sacrifice — to remain the Son, subjected to the Father, so that mortals may be elevated from the damnation of sin to sonship with God! This was how salvation was achieved for us.

From this point the deed was done and there was no turning back. The seal had been fixed, on salvation as well as on its cost to God. We will see these truths clearly explained in Scripture in the next chapters of our study.

- (1) He emptied Himself, laying aside the right to use His own powers.**
- (2) He confined Himself to a human body, being made in all things like His human brothers.**
- (3) He took our sin indebtedness, and our physical and spiritual death, as His — binding Himself with humans on the cross. His blood was the atoning price He paid for us.**
- (4) As a result, the debt for our sins was counted against His record:**
 - **Our record had been cleared by His blood;**
 - **His record of indebtedness for our sins [His own spiritual justification] was cleared by the sacrifice of His eternal equality in the Godhead (1Corinthians 15:24-28).**

After Death

Chapter Nine

Jesus had said, “The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again” (Luke 24:7).

Many men have devised new systems of religion, and they have had disciples who believed in them. Some of those men have even died as martyrs for what they taught. One outstanding difference between them and Jesus Christ, though, is that they remain in the grave to this day, awaiting resurrection. But Jesus proved His statement, “**1 am the resurrection and the life...**” (John 11:25), by coming out of the tomb the third day, as He had said He would do.

The resurrection itself is a fact of history — a fact that no unbeliever or skeptic has been able to disprove. Our consideration in this study is not of the resurrection as an event, but of Jesus Christ as He existed and has continued to exist after His victory over death.

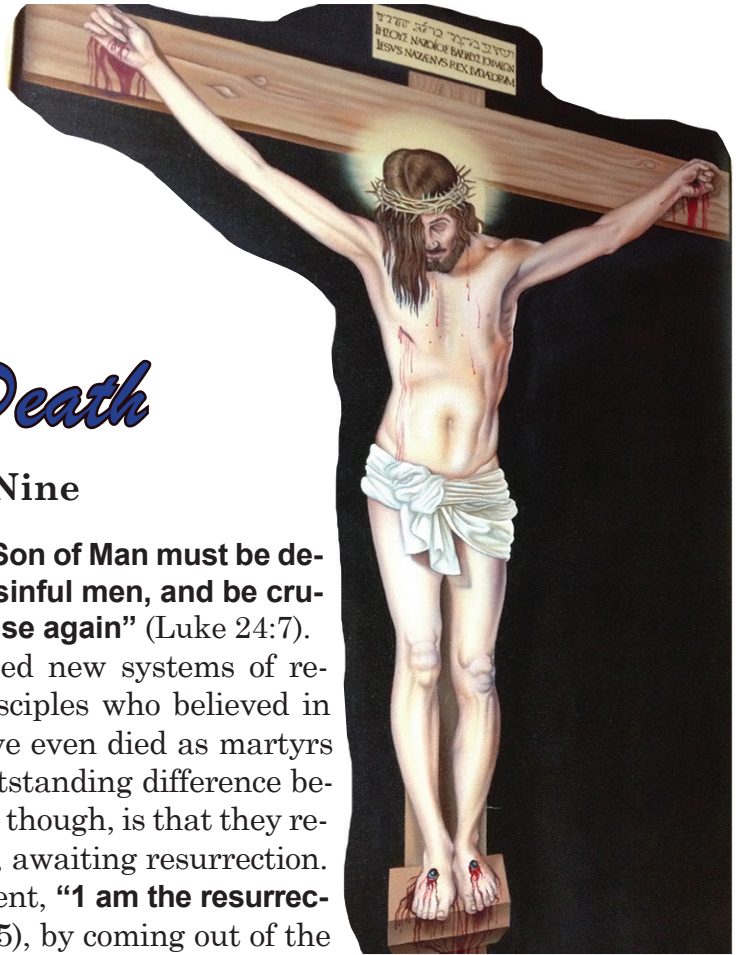
The Nature of Christ in the Resurrection

We know that from eternity, until He was born as the Son of Man, the Word partook solely of the nature of God.

God is Spirit... (John 4:24).

For Discussion:

1. What does “resurrection” mean? _____
2. How did the Jewish leaders try to make sure that the disciples would not be able to make “false” claims that Jesus had raised to life? (Matthew 27:62-66). _____



So the Word was Spirit. However, when He emptied Himself, He was born in the flesh, as man is flesh. (Hebrews 2:14) He died as a man.

How did He come forth from the grave? As the Word, as Spirit only? Or as a resurrected man? Luke 24:36-43 answers our question:

Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" So they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence.

So the Word lived as *a man*, He died as *a man*, and He was resurrected as *a man*.

1 John 3:2 adds to our knowledge:

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

We learn two things from this passage:

(1) that at Christ's second coming, the oneness between Himself and man will continue.

(2) that whatever He is now, we shall become, which is a reference to our state *and His* in that future world.

An observation can also be made about this promise of likeness with Him: *no verse in God's word says that we will be like God.*

Definition of "Resurrection": "to bring back to life". Lazarus and others were resurrected, according to the Scriptures, but they would eventually die again (John 11:43,44; Luke 7:11-15; Acts 9:32-41). Jesus was resurrected in an immortal body, never to die again.

Biblical description of resurrection to immortality: (1 Corinthians 15:50-55).

Births and Deaths of Founders of Religions:

Buddha: 560-480 B.C.

Mohammed: 570-632 A.D.

Confucius: 551-479 B.C.

Zoroaster: Possibly 1500 B.C. or 600 B.C.

There is no claim of RESURRECTION made for any of these men.

For Discussion:

3. How did their guard *confirm* the fact that Jesus actually had risen from the dead? (Matthew 28:11-15). _____

4. What does 1 John 3:2 say about the make-up of the bodies we will have when we are resurrected? _____

The Firstborn from the Dead

The surety of our own resurrection from the dead is bound up in Christ's resurrection:

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the *first fruits* of those who have fallen asleep* (1 Corinthians 15:20).

This is a parallel statement to Colossians 1:18, where Jesus is called "**the firstborn from the dead**". Just as Jesus was the "**firstborn Son of God**", opening the way of sonship to all who would obey God, He was also the firstborn from the dead, opening the doors of life to all of those who live and die in faithfulness to God. True, a few others had been raised from the dead prior to Jesus' resurrection, but they lived only to die again. Christ was the first to be resurrected as we shall be, to eternal life.

In 1 Corinthians 15:51,52 we are told:

...we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you (Romans 8:11).

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself (Philippians 3:20,21).

So, the promises of our own resurrection, as well as the substance of our bodies as they are transformed into an immortal state, are bound up in the reality of the resurrection of Christ. As He is, so we shall be. ***This means that His death did not end His oneness with man.***

By Whose Power Was He Raised?

What else do we learn of Christ, concerning His resurrection?

Romans 8:11 speaks of the One through whose power the resurrection took place:

But If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead....

Further light is shed on the subject in John 10:17,18:

Therefore My Father loves Me, because / lay down My life [a voluntary sacrifice by the Word] **that / may take it again. No one takes it from Me** [a prophetic statement regarding His power over life and the fact that He would "**...bow His head and give up His Spirit.**" John 19:30],

Definition:

Inherent: Within one's own make-up; of one's own self.

Derived: Something given to one by someone else.

Firstborn: The child born first to a family. Jesus is God's firstborn, opening the way for all others to become children of God.

Firstborn from the dead: The first one to be raised from the dead, never to die again. Jesus is the firstborn from the dead.

but / lay it down of Myself. / have power to lay it down, and / have power to take it again. ***This command I have received from My Father. ****

In the beginning, the Word had the power of life, *inherent* within Himself as One of the Godhead. As Jesus Christ, the Son, partaking of humanity, He also had the power of life, *because God had given it to Him* (John 5:26). Romans 8:11 and John 10:17 are not a contradiction concerning who raised Jesus back to life; Jesus Himself said that His power over His own resurrection was derived power:

This command I have received from My Father.*

JESUS' STATE AFTER THE RESURRECTION

Jesus Glorified By God

In John 17:5 Jesus had prayed,

...0 Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

This prayer was prayed the night of the betrayal. The immediate thought of many in response to this plea is that God surely granted Jesus' request, and that when He returned to heaven He returned to **the same equality and authority He had held before His birth in the flesh**. But the words 'glory' and 'equality' do not carry the same meaning. We need to look closely at this Scripture, along with others that shed light on the question.

It is true that the wording of the prayer is, **"...glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was."** The *glory* would be the same; the difference would be that this glory would be *given* to Him from God, rather than *inherent* as it had been before. That's major!

For Discussion:

5. Did the Word have the authority of the Godhead in the beginning? _____
6. Does Jesus Christ have the authority of the Godhead now? _____
7. The difference is that from eternity, the authority of the Word was _____, but, as Jesus Christ, His authority is _____ from the Father.
8. Was the glory of the Godhead restored to Jesus when He went to the Father? _____
9. Was it restored as His *inherent* right as God, or was it restored because God did it? _____

Made King of Kings

Jesus is called the “**King of kings and the Lord of lords**”. In Matthew 28:18, He had paid the penalty of death for man’s sins, and He had overcome death in the resurrection. He was about to ascend to the glory of heaven. Would all things with Him be as before the emptying? In this passage He said,

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*

This statement is clear concerning the scope of Jesus’ authority as the resurrected Lord: He reigns in heaven and on earth. But how does He reign? **By the authority given to Him by God!**

Exalted By God

Philippians 2 is a rich chapter. Following the description of the emptying of Christ and His taking the form of man and humbling Himself to death on the cross, we are told in verses 9-11:

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

So Jesus’ name is above every name, and before Him every knee will bow. Again, there is no question regarding His supremacy, but how does He occupy this position?

Philippians 2:5-8 In other translations:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God ... (NKJ).

*... though the divine nature was His from the beginning ... (20th Century N.T).

*... Who, though from the beginning He had the nature of God ... (N.T. in Modern English).

*... for He, who has always been God by nature ... (Phillips).

... did not consider it robbery to be equal with God ... (NKJ).

*... His nature is, from the first, divine ... (Knox).

*... counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped ... (American Standard).

*... did not reckon equality with God something to be forcibly retained ... (N.T. in Modern English).

*... did not cling to His prerogatives as God’s equal ... (Phillips).

... but made Himself of no reputation ... (NKJ).

*... yet He did not look upon equality with God as above all things to be clung to ... (20th Century N. T.).

*... but emptied Himself ... American Standard).

*... but laid it aside ... (Goodspeed).

*... but stripped Himself [of His glory] ... (Conybeare and Howson).

*... but stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity] ... (Amplified N. T.).

... taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men: And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (NKJ).

Because God has *exalted* Him and *given* Him the name which is above every name.

Given a Kingdom

In the first chapter of Acts the scene of the ascension is vividly described. The last view the apostles had of Jesus is recorded in verse 9:

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Daniel 7:13,14 allows us to see the heavenly view of this event:

I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.

- (1) His name is above every name.**
- (2) Every knee will bow to Him.**
- (3) Every tongue will confess that He is Lord.**

Matthew 28:18, Philippians 2:9-11, and Daniel 7:13,14 agree. All three passages speak of Christ as the King over His kingdom, having reference to His supremacy in the universe during the time between His ascension to heaven and His return at the end of the age. All three passages show also that this supreme power and authority, as well as the kingdom, were *given* to Jesus by God.

So the role which the Word accepted in emptying Himself of the rights and powers inherent in Deity, in taking the form of man as the Son of God and the Brother of man, in placing Himself in man's position of dependence on God, did not end with paying the penalty for sin through His death on the cross. Even now, as the triumphant resurrected Lord, as the King over His kingdom, He derives His power and authority from God. Even now, the Father-Son relationship continues:

Definition:

Mediator: ...one who serves as an intermediary between two estranged parties, to bring about reconciliation.

Kingdom: ...a domain ruled by a king. Jesus' kingdom, as He repeatedly explained, was not of this world but is a spiritual kingdom over which He reigns as sovereign king.

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus* (1 Timothy 2:5).

It was in His death that Jesus' blood was given as atonement for the sins of the obedient,

but as our own penalty would have been spiritual and eternal [the separation of ourselves from God in hell], so His sacrifice to rid *Himself* of the sins that “were laid on Him” is spiritual and eternal. Nowhere in the Scriptures is it stated or even inferred that after the resurrection He returned to His original position of *equality* in the Godhead. **Passage after passage tell us that He did not again take up the rights and powers inherent within Deity but, instead, all the power and authority now in His hands has been given to Him by God in response to His total obedience.**

To have returned to the equality He possessed as the Word, before His incarnation, would have been parallel to a man walking into a shop and choosing something he wanted, laying the purchase price on the counter, receiving his merchandise, and then picking up the money and walking out with both the money and the merchandise in his hands.

For Christ, the purchase price on the counter — death, and the eternal brotherhood with man and subjection to the Father that it necessitated — was not high-sounding words or an empty gesture; He left the full payment at the feet of God as total atonement for our sins.

For Discussion:

- 1. To what extent was Jesus obedient to God? _____**
- 2. Did He have a choice? If, in the Garden, He had decided that the cost of man’s salvation was not worth what it would cost Him, do you think God would have allowed Him to turn back? _____.**
- 3. What statement did Jesus make to Peter that proves this to be true?
_____**
- 4. How and by Whose power was Jesus exalted? _____**
- 5. Because Jesus’ name is above every name, the Scriptures say that every _____ will bow to Him, and every _____ will confess that He is Lord.**
- 6. How did Jesus receive His kingdom? _____**
- 7. There is only one mediator between God and man. What words are used to describe Him? _____**
- 8. How long will Jesus reign with all power and authority, according to 1 Corinthians 15:24-28?**
- 9. What will He do after the last enemy has been conquered?**
- 10. What does Romans 8:17 promise? What is said in this verse about Christ’s glory throughout eternity?**

Our Response

Chapter Ten

On the one hand we see the continual preparation, built layer on layer, providing finally the open way for man to be reconciled to God. The physical penalty for sin has been paid in the death of Jesus; the spiritual commitment has been made, binding Him with mankind and making possible our sonship with God through His Sonship.

It is all there, laid out before us and sufficient to cover our every need. But, on the other hand, the blanket of forgiveness doesn't cover every human. How do we appropriate it for ourselves? How do we, individually, respond to God?

John 6:45 says,

...everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.

Among the world's population, not all really learn from the Fathers message. 2 Thessalonians 2:14 teaches, **"He called you by our gospel...."**

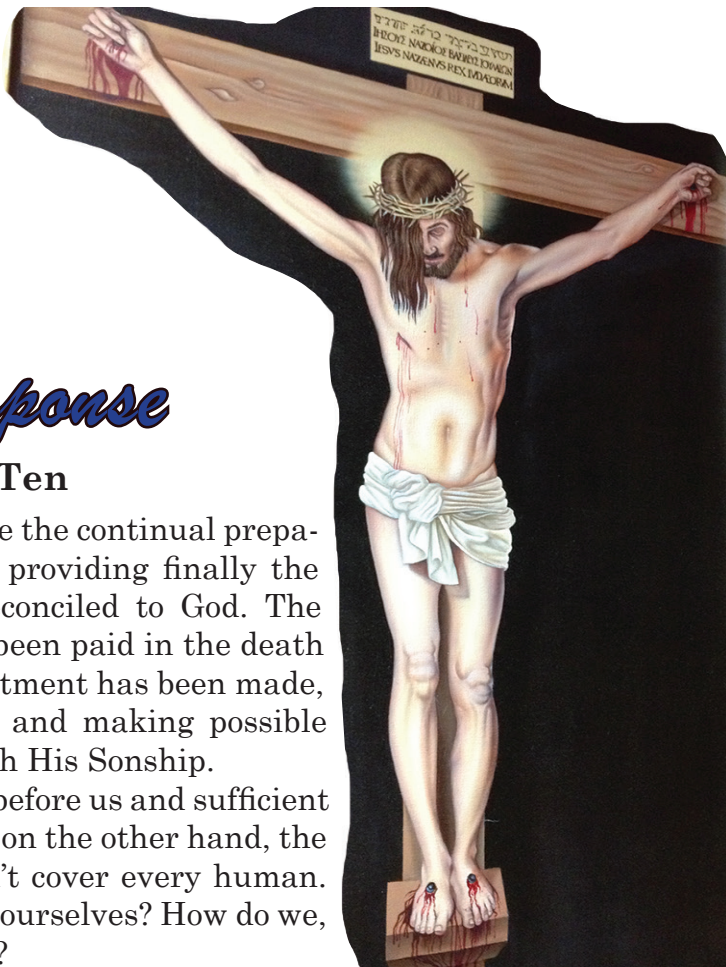
So, the Father's message, the Gospel, calls to our hearts. What is the Gospel? It is defined in 1 Corinthians 15:3,4 as:

...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....

For Discussion:

1. Has God made it possible for every soul to be saved through Jesus' death? _____

2. Who comes to Christ? _____ and _____

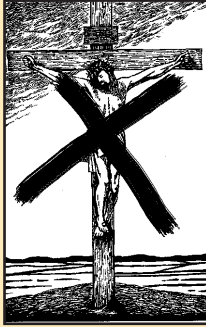


The Parallel

In Gethsemane Jesus struggled with the terrible price He was about to pay for the sins of mankind. In Matthew 26:42 we read of His final COMMITMENT, submitting to God's will.

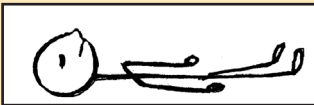


But, suppose the story had stopped there? What if there had been NO CROSS and NO RESURRECTION? Could anyone have been saved by Christ's mental acceptance alone?



With faith in Christ and God's plan (Hebrews 11:6), we must make a total **commitment** of submission to God's will. At this point, of mentally accepting Jesus as one's personal savior, most people feel "saved".

But where is the death???



Romans 6:3,4 says we are **BAPTIZED** into the **DEATH** of Christ, where His blood cleanses us from sin (Acts 22:16)

Without the **CROSS** there is no atoning blood; without **BAPTISM** we have not been washed in His blood!



What if Christ had not died?

What if you are not baptized?

The "Sinner's Prayer"?

The most prominent doctrine in the religious world today concerning the sinner's response to God is that he must believe in his heart that God is God, and then he must say "the Sinner's Prayer" or some similar commitment asking Jesus to come into his heart and to save him. The problem with this "plan for salvation" is that **it is nowhere found in Scripture**. There is **no record of any person being saved in this way**. There is **no Scripture stating "the Sinner's Prayer"**. This doctrine comes from men, not from God. How can any right-thinking, sincere person risk his eternal salvation by following a doctrine that is not from God?

The Commitment

Some people hear an erroneous message and follow it, believing that they have obeyed God. Others hear the message as it is recorded in Scripture and reject it.

Others hear, and its call cuts their hearts. Their response is an outpouring of emotional love toward God, accompanied by the desire to submit their will to His. They have reached a turning point in their lives, and they know it.

Sadly, because of a "faith only" doctrine they heard in the past, many mistakenly believe that their change of heart and the happiness they feel because of their new love for God are evidences that they have experienced forgiveness of their sins and have been born spiritually into the family of God.

No doubt, the turning point, the moment of commitment, is a crucial part of the process of salvation, but we need to

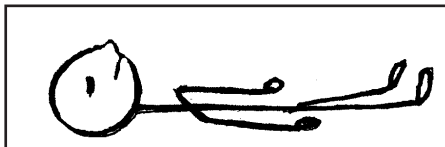
realize that it is not the entire process. *When*, in our study, have we considered a parallel event? Was it not in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus reached the point of ultimate commitment to man, when He struggled to submit to the will of God even though it meant the horror of being “**made sin**”?

Just as He had to face that decision, and either choose us or reject us, just as He had to submit completely to God’s will, each of us has to face that decision. We must choose God as our Father or reject Him. We must bring our human wills under submission to Him. As Christ chose to bear our sins, we must choose to allow Him to take them from us, with the desire not to serve sin any longer.

But, suppose Christ had stopped with the mental commitment in the garden. Reflect back to that time: His struggle was over; He was at peace with Himself. Does this not describe many hearts today when they turn to Him in love, with the desire to be a forgiven child of God? If *He* had stopped then, there would have been no cross, no shed blood, no atoning price paid for sin, no way made possible for us to become the children of God.

In the same manner, those who stop at the point of their own personal commitment never go through the process of dying to sin and being buried with Christ and then being resurrected with Him.

Sinners are spiritually DEAD *in* sin, but
in repentance they must DIE *to* sin.



How do we ESCAPE condemnation?
How can we BE SAVED from sin?
How can we be MADE ALIVE spiritually?

For Discussion:

3. Explain the doctrines of “faith only” and “the sinner’s prayer”.
4. Explain why faith and a mental commitment to Christ are not enough to save us.
5. What must we obey from the heart? _____
6. What form does the Gospel take in our own lives, as we obey a “form” of the Gospel? _____

Dying with Christ

How do we emulate Christ in His death for us? Romans 6:17,18 tells us:

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness* (KJV).

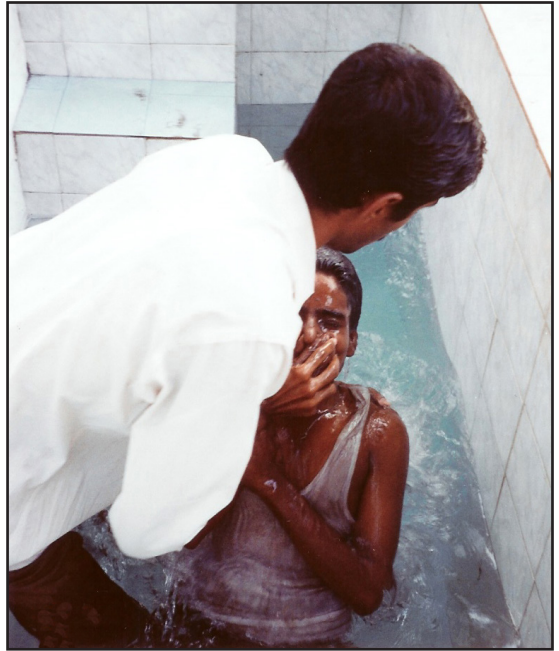
Thus, we hear God's message, which is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The power of His love calls to our hearts as we learn and understand its meaning, bringing us to turn away from sin and to commit our souls to Him. Then we obey from the heart a form of that doctrine. What

form does the Gospel — the death, burial, and resurrection — take in our own lives? Romans 6:3-11 answers this question:

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been



For Discussion:

7. If we die with Christ (through repenting of our sins) and are buried with Him (through baptism), we believe that we will also _____ with Him.
8. Can we be in the kingdom without the “new birth”? How would you explain the new birth? _____

raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, **He died to sin once for all**; but the life that He lives, **He lives to God**. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So, if we want to appropriate to our individual souls the sonship made possible through the death of Jesus, we must die to sin in a pattern of His death, be buried with Him in baptism and then be resurrected or raised from baptism to walk a new life as a new person in God's family. It is of paramount importance that we, as individuals before God, understand that *there can be no new life without this death and new birth*.

The Birth of the "New Man"

What has happened? In the death of the "old man" there has been a new birth. As Jesus taught,

...unless one is born [again] of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5).

*For as many of you
as were baptized into Christ
have put on Christ*

Galatians 3:27



Being born anew, a man is described in this way:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Why Is Baptism So Important?

Looking at the act of baptism, one might ask, "Why is baptism important? Is it only a ritual? and if it is a ritual, as it seems to be, why would God require us to submit to it before we are counted as His children?"

For Discussion:

9. Is baptism only a ritual? _____
10. What did Jesus say in Mark 16:16? _____
11. Baptism is a picture of what? _____
12. What is washed away in baptism? _____
13. When do we "put on" Christ? _____

These questions are worthy of our consideration, and understanding their answers will help to put into perspective this crucial point of doctrine.

It is true that there were many rituals under the Old Testament law, rituals imposed to help form an obedient life-pattern among God's people. It is also true that the New Testament law strikes to the core of truth and reality, requiring dedicated hearts and lives rather than the performance of ritualistic acts. So why does Mark 16:16 say that

...he who believes and is baptized will be saved....?

Why is such importance given to a seeming ritual?

The answer lies in the event for which baptism is the emulation. The binding point of Christ's commitment to man was His taking of our sins as He suffered death on the cross.

Infant baptism and the age of accountability:
In the religious world there is confusion and disagreement concerning these questions.

Early in the history of the church, belief in the necessity of baptism for the forgiveness of sins eventually led Christian parents to the false conclusion that, to be sure that their infants and small children would not go to hell if they died, they should baptize them soon after birth. This conclusion was based on human logic, not on Scripture. In the New Testament, belief in Christ always preceded baptism; therefore, only those mature enough to learn of Christ and have faith in Him are recognized by God as ready for scriptural baptism.

So the question arises: at what age are young people reckoned to be mature enough to understand God's laws, and to be held accountable for obeying Him? In other words, when do we become sinners, in need of being cleansed by the blood of Christ?

At what age are people counted as sinners?

The Scriptures give no set answer to this question. Jewish young boys went through the "Bar Mitzvah" ceremony at the age of thirteen, and were counted as "adults" in the community from that time. However, priests were not allowed to enter that service until they were 30 years of age, the same age when Jesus began His work. But in the New Testament, there is no fixed age for being baptized.

To help answer this question, parents should teach their children that **they are ready to answer to God** only when their concern for approval and acceptance is toward God, rather than toward their parents.

When young people are able to **study** and **think** for themselves, when they feel **happiness** because they are **obeying God** or **guilt** because they are **disobeying Him**, **then they can begin to be concerned about their sins and forgiveness for them. Then they can look toward faith in Christ, turning away from their wrongs and disobediences, and toward baptism into Christ.**

For Discussion:

14. What is our answer to Gethsemane? _____
15. What is our answer to Calvary? _____
16. Most denominational doctrines are in error on what subject? _____
17. Which things do not matter greatly to Satan? _____
18. What is his goal? _____

Before that hour, He was free; but from that time the binding with mankind was made. *All of eternity, for the Godhead and for the creation of God's hands, was affected and altered by what happened during those hours on the cross.*

We don't have to die physically in making our commitment to God, but there must be that point in our lives which separates "before" and "after". God has devised this way, so that as we emulate through baptism the commitment of Christ in His death, we are testifying anew to the world that He died for us and that we are giving ourselves to Him.

Clearly, baptism is far more than a ritual. As our mental commitment through repentance and the surrender of our will to God is our answer to Gethsemane, so baptism is our answer to Calvary. And just as there could be no salvation possible for the entirety of mankind without the cross, there can be no appropriation of salvation to the individual soul without the death of the "old man" and the birth of the "new creature" through baptism.

The Scriptures teach this truth very clearly. Yet, it is the one point over which most people stumble. Most denominational doctrines deny the importance of baptism; most preachers teach that baptism has nothing to do with salvation. Why has this confusion developed and why is there a denial of a very clear doctrine of Scripture?

God and Satan War for Man's Soul

The answer is obvious. There are two beings who would be lord over mankind: God and Satan. God desires our eternal salvation; Satan desires to separate us from God. God has made forgiveness possible through the death of His Son and through our response to His death. Hearing that truth, believing it, turning from a life of sin, and confessing before others our faith in Christ are parts of that response, but the culminating act, **the act that translates us from the kingdom of the world into the kingdom of His Son, is baptism.**

Satan doesn't care how much truth we accept, as long as it is not enough to save us. It doesn't matter to him that people believe in God, or that they love Him, or even that they follow His moral laws. But the critical point to Satan is **to prevent people from being born into God's Family.** By clouding the understanding of the new birth as it involves baptism, he can

Who Is Satan?

Satan is a created spirit-being, a "fallen angel". Since all things were created by God, and God pronounced His entire creation "good", Satan was good at the time of his beginning. Obviously, those created spirit-beings were given "free will", the freedom to choose to obey or to disobey God, just as man was allowed that freedom.

Perhaps Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 provide some background and explanation concerning the fall of Satan. The subject of these verses is described as "perfect", the "anointed cherub" and present in Eden. No man fits this description. Because of Satan's desire to be greater than God, he has made himself the enemy of God and of goodness.

keep good, well-intentioned people in his own kingdom. This is why he has concentrated so much of his effort on the distortion of this one truth.

Choice of Families

With our physical birth we had no choice about the family into which we would be born. After birth we were, literally, a part of that family and that one family only.

Spiritually, we do choose which family we will be a part of: God's or Satan's. But *choosing*, alone, doesn't make us a child of God. We must go through the process of *birth into His family*, being born of water and of the Spirit: baptism.

1 Peter 1:22,23 and 2:1,2 further clarify this spiritual birth:

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit...having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever... Therefore...as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.

But as many as received Him [Christ], to them He gave the right to become children of God even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12,13).

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise...and because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Galatians 3:26,27; 4:6,7).

The Family: the Church

The Family into which we are born at the time of our baptism is not a nebulous, unidentifiable spiritual entity. Just as you and I are physical human beings, so the church itself is visible and identifiable in this current world. When it had its beginning, in Acts 2 with the baptism of 3000 penitent believers, it

For Discussion:

19. Spiritually, we can choose to be in _____ family or in _____.
20. We are all sons of God through _____ in Christ Jesus.
21. But how do we "put on" Christ? _____
22. When did the church begin? Where? By Whom? Whose name does it wear? _____

Human Family Identification:

1. There is **ONE** bride and one bridegroom.
2. The bride wears **THE NAME** of the groom.
3. There was **A DATE** on which they were married.
4. There was **A PLACE** in which they were married.
5. The bride honors the **WILL** of the groom.
6. The groom takes the bride to his **DWELLING PLACE**.

16:16), etc. Most often in Scripture it is simply referred to as “the church” because there was only one.

The church still exists in congregations of fellowship scattered all over the world. Satan has confused people by creating many denominational churches, teaching doctrines that are contrary to Scripture and causing many honest seekers to miss the way. To simplify the effort to identify those who are committed to following the New Testament only and being the same body of Christians as we read about in the Scriptures, today the church is usually called the church of Christ.

Sometimes people say, “I was baptized so I am a member, even though I thought I was joining a _____ church.” In order to be added by God to the church for which Christ died, surely we must know its distinction from denominationalism, and we must be *choosing* to leave the world and to be baptized into

Christ and into the church. Would God add a person in ignorance to a church about which he had never heard and of which he was not choosing to belong?

The Continuation of Christ’s Brotherhood

Many biblical references show the continued Father-Son relationship between God and Christ, making possible through our brotherhood with Christ our own relationship as children to God:

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint

was made up of that congregation of people in Jerusalem. Not only had each one been baptized into Christ to become a new member of the Family, but the Family “...continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). Verse 47 goes on to explain, “... the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

This group of people is defined in a number of ways in the New Testament. It is called the **family of God**, with Christ being the First-born. It is called the **bride of Christ** (John 3:28-30; Ephesians 5:22-33), the **body of Christ** (Ephesians 1:22,23), the **church of the Firstborn** (Hebrews 12:23), the **church of God** (Acts 20:28), **churches of Christ** (Romans

The Family of Christ: (His church)

1. There is only **ONE FAMILY, ONE CHURCH**, mentioned in the New Testament.
2. It is called “**THE BODY OF CHRIST**”, “**CHURCHES OF CHRIST**”, “**THE CHURCH OF GOD**”, “**THE CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN**”.
3. The church had its beginning as Christ’s bride on **THE DAY OF PENTECOST, APPROXIMATELY A.D. 33**.
4. The church had its beginning in **JERUSALEM**.
5. The church is **GOVERNED** by the New Testament.
6. Christ will take His bride **TO LIVE WITH HIM ETERNALLY**.

heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together (Romans 8:16,17).

For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.... Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.... Therefore, in all things **He had to be made like His brethren**, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2:11,14,15,17).

...Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are...for we have become partakers of Christ... (Hebrews 3:6,14).

Just as Christ took on human nature in the emptying of Himself, His brothers become partakers of divine nature when they are filled with all the fullness of Christ!

...as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Peter 1:3,4).

...to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19).

God intends that those who love Him be

...conformed to the image of His Son... (Romans 8:29).

...Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?... He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.... (1 Corinthians 6:15,17).

So, the Lord Jesus has returned to heaven to continue His work of mediating for the church, for His Family. He is both the Son of God and the Son of man: our resurrected, transformed Redeemer. Spiritually, we are becoming “partakers of divine nature” in Him.

For Discussion:

23. How many families does Christ have? _____
24. Christians are heirs of God, and _____ with their Brother, Jesus Christ.
25. Through Jesus, spiritually we are becoming _____

The Memorial

Chapter Eleven

In the Christian life there is another thing that is often mistakenly classed as a ritual: the memorial Supper which constitutes one part of our worship.

The Scriptures say of first-century Christians

...when the disciples came together to break bread... (Acts 20:7).

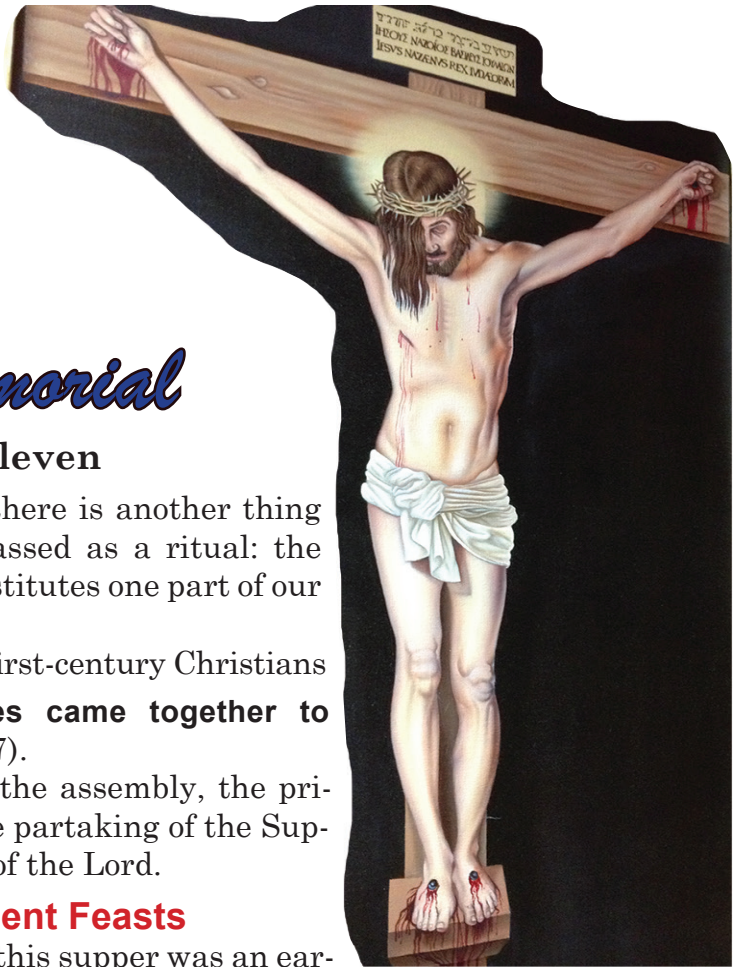
Thus, the purpose of the assembly, the primary act of worship, was the partaking of the Supper in memory of the death of the Lord.

The Old Testament Feasts

The foreshadowing of this supper was an earlier memorial in the Old Testament, the Passover Feast, which served as an annual reminder to the Jews of their exodus from Egypt. God had said to the Israelites through Moses:

On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father... Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year... the whole assembly of the congregation shall kill it at twilight.

And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it... And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the Lord.



Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. So this day shall be to you a memorial... (Exodus 12:1-14).

Facts Regarding the Sacrifices

Some particular facts were outstanding about the Passover sacrifice and the sin offerings of the Old Testament:

- (1) The sacrifice for sin was to be made outside their gates, at a place chosen by God (Deuteronomy 16:5,6).
- (2) No bone of the sacrifice was to be broken (Numbers 9:12).
- (3) Besides the regular burnt offering, they were to sacrifice “**...one goat as a sin offering, to make atonement for you**” (Numbers 28:22).
- (4) The sacrifice had to be without blemish (Numbers 28:19).
- (5) Precise care was to be taken in the preparation of the unleavened bread (Numbers 26:20).

The Foreshadowing Fulfilled in Christ

This foreshadowing in the history of Israel became reality in Christ. 1 Corinthians 5:7 says,

For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

- (1) Man had been in the bondage of sin, as Israel was enslaved in Egypt.
- (2) The blood of the sacrificial lamb of the Passover was replaced by the blood of the Son of God.
- (3) Anyone in the world who is covered by that blood will be spared when Judgment comes to mankind as it did to Egypt:

...to Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood... (Revelation 1:5).

- (4) Our sacrifice was made outside the gate:

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate (Hebrews 13:11,12).

For Discussion:

1. From the quotation in Acts 20:7, what can we conclude about the frequency of partaking of the Lord's supper?
2. How did the details of the Passover sacrifice parallel the details of the death of Christ?
3. How are we washed from our sins? How does baptism relate to this?

(5) As with the sacrificial lamb, none of Jesus' bones were broken:

But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs...For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken" (John 19:33,36).

(6) Christ was our sin offering, a spotless sacrifice for our sins:

...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 9:14).

The Purposes of the Feasts

So, the Passover Feast and the animal sacrifices for sin were not only reminders pointing backward to the exodus from Egypt and to the cleansing of the people by God; they were also prophetic re-statements of the coming Passover Lamb and the sin-sacrifice in the person of Jesus Christ.

The memorial feast that was given to the church as a commemoration of His death serves today in a manner much like those feasts of old: it points backward to the cross and forward to His return.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26).

The Introduction of the Lord's Supper

What was the beginning of this supper?

And when the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

And He took bread, gave thanks and broke It, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:14-16; 19,20).

Earlier, in a prophetic statement concerning this memorial supper, Jesus had said:

For Discussion:

- 4. Why is baptism more than a ritual? _____**
- 5. What is our once-in-a-lifetime commitment? _____**
- 6. What is our weekly renewal of that commitment? _____**
- 7. Catholic doctrine says that the bread and the fruit of the vine are the literal body and blood of Christ. Discuss what the Bible says about this.**

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.... Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:51-54).

Some might suggest that Jesus was speaking figuratively of spiritual food. Certainly His discussion of the bread of life (John 6:33,35) at the beginning of His lesson did have that meaning. Similar wording in John 4:10-14 also deals with the subject of spiritual nourishment, which Jesus called the water of life in this case. In both passages He applied the figure of speech to Himself, saying that He was the bread and the water of life.

But in this instance, Jesus moved from the concept of spiritual food, in which the fitting metaphor of bread [and water, elsewhere] was used, to wording that could not have been literal, and yet neither could it have been intended solely as a figure of speech. He said that His followers must eat His flesh and drink His blood if they were to live. Because there was no parallel, even figuratively, to such a cannibalistic-sounding statement, the listeners did not understand, and

...From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more (John 6:66).

Living in today's world, after two thousand years of weekly memorials of the sacrifice of His body on the cross, believers see His statement in perspective and can appreciate the fullness of what He was saying. He was introducing the concept of the spiritual feast which He would inaugurate as a memorial of His death. Only on this occasion and on the night of His betrayal did He speak of

There were misconceptions about the nature of Christ, His body, and His relationship in the Godhead during the early centuries of Christianity.

Two "denominations", called the Gnostics and the Docetists, believed that the physical elements are evil, so they taught that Jesus was not a real human but only appeared to be in the body of a man.

Even today the Roman Catholic church teaches the doctrine of "transubstantiation": that in partaking of the supper, which they call the "Eucharist", the bread actually becomes the physical body, and the fruit of the vine becomes the literal blood of Christ.

For Discussion:

7. What must each Christian do before eating the memorial feast? _____

8. What picture is drawn in the Scriptures of Christ and the church? _____

His **body** and His **blood** as something to be partaken of. Such parallel wording must have been deliberately chosen. But to listeners in His own day, accustomed to the Old Testament law which forbade the eating of blood, Jesus' statement must have sounded like nauseating heresy. He knew this, yet it was necessary that the introduction to those profound truths be made.

THE BREAD OF THE COVENANT

Taking the bread before His crucifixion, He explained,

Take, eat; this is My body...

(Matthew 26:26).

The concepts build, one upon another, to teach these lessons:

(1) Remember, through this memorial, the body which was given for you. (Luke 22:19).

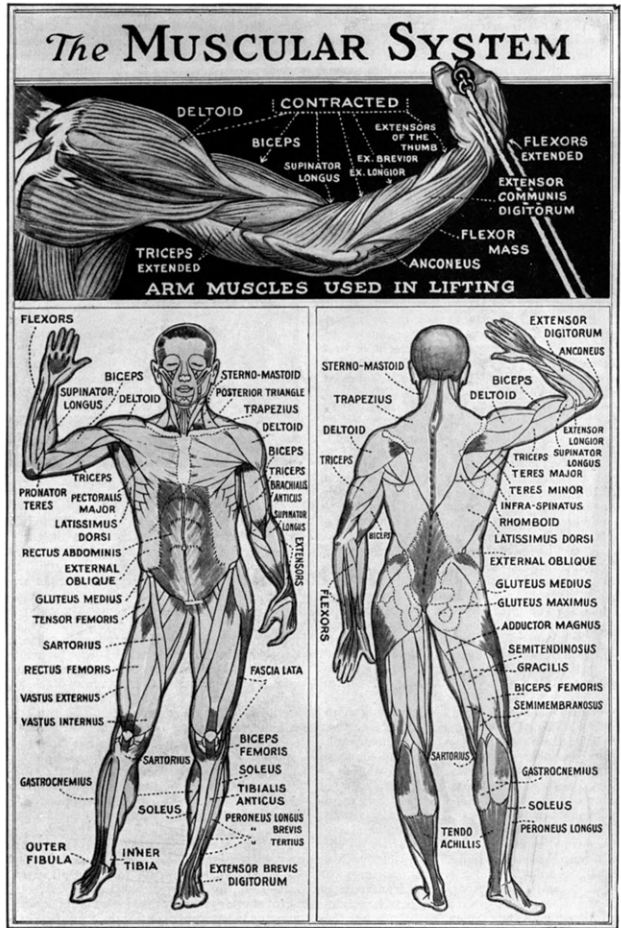
(2) As often as you eat this bread... (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Early Christians had two examples of memorial feasts: the shewbread of the Temple which was changed *weekly*, each Sabbath (Leviticus 24:5-9), and the Passover bread which was an *annual* supper. Often, today, members of denominational groups who believe in Christ partake of His memorial only quarterly or even once yearly, and it is not uncommon for the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine to be substituted with other things.

But those under the Old Testament law had no trouble distinguishing between the frequencies of their feasts or the elements involved in them. Christians of the first century were equally clear in their understanding of how often God wanted His Son's memorial to be observed and just what symbols were to be representative of His body and blood.

True Christians today follow the same pattern. *On the first day of each week*, their *purpose* in coming together is to partake of the *bread* and of the *cup*. (1 Corinthians 11:24-26)

(2) Let a man examine himself...for he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself...* (1 Corinthians 11:28,29).



(3) **Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life...*** (John 6:54).

(4) **As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me*** (John 6:57).

So our spiritual life, itself, is bound up in the regular participation in this supper. We live, because He died to give us life and because He lives through us.

The Head and His Body

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.... Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually... (1 Corinthians 12:12,27).

The verse does not say, “...so also is Christ’s body...”, that is, *one, united*. But it says, “...so also is Christ...”, identifying Himself as the head and the church as His body, such an integral unit that the whole is called *Christ*.

Do our minds follow the progression of His emptying of Himself, His self-imposed limitation of His inherent rights and attributes as Deity in order to rescue man from the condemnation of sin? It wasn’t enough for Him to lay aside His own eternal glory and to be born into the confines of a human body; it wasn’t even enough for Him to suffer the humiliation of death by crucifixion because of accepting our sins as His own. During these almost two thousand years since His resurrection, He has further confined Himself to the position as head over a body made up of humans.

Often, in seeing the maladies that can strike the physical body, we writhe inside at the horror of having a strong body chained to a broken or worn-out mind, or having a healthy, intellectual mind imprisoned in a paralyzed body. Even the encroaching limitations of old age can almost induce a state of panic. How frustrating and heart-breaking it would be to live, year after year, with such constraints!

Limitations Imposed by the Body

In a very real way, our resurrected Christ experiences daily the confining limitations of being our Head, for we are His sometimes active, sometimes enthusiastic, sometimes lazy, sometimes rebellious, sometimes paralyzed, sometimes near-dead body in this world.

For Discussion:

9. Have you known someone who was paralyzed so that his body did not respond to the directions of his mind? _____ Did you hurt for him in his inability and frustration? _____

10. What does Jesus want His body to do in the world? _____

What is the role of the head in relation to the body? It is the point of origin of thought, of voluntary and involuntary activities. The head sees, aspires, wills; but then it must depend on the coordinated working-together of all the members of the body to carry the dreams to fulfillment.

All that God has done since the beginning of time has been for the purpose of opening the way of salvation to man. Christ died to achieve that goal. But in order for God's work and Christ's death to benefit people, they must know what has been done. Does God speak directly to humans from heaven? Does Christ reach down to change hearts with a miracle? Do angels roam the world, teaching the Gospel?

No.

Then, in whose hands does this treasure rest? In the hands of His body. The Head sees the world; He longs after the lost; He wills that all should feel the love and compassion of the Gospel. The messages are sent out from the Brain to the eyes, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the heart. When there is coordinated response, what glorious joy He must feel that the plan of the ages is being effectively carried out!

But think, also, of the frustration and the anguish He must experience when the message goes out from the Head but the members of His body refuse to respond to His instructions. Think how often He is imprisoned by our laziness or paralysis. Think, too, of how grieved He must be when the members of His body betray Him, maligning His very Being by the shameful things we do. Would He, the essence of God, lie, cheat, live immorally, enjoy evil thoughts, use foul language, break up a home, ignore the needs of the helpless...? Yet, *whatever we do as His body, we do directly to Him.*

Weekly, we *partake* of His body so that we may live in Him. Daily, we *are* His body so that He may live in us.

THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying,

“Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:27,28).

Just as His body is life in us, so His blood also is life in us. In the physical world we see blood only when there is a malfunction. If the problem is severe

For Discussion:

11. Christians must remember that every day they walk in the world as _____

12. What is Jesus' blood in us? _____

13. What scientific fact did Genesis 9:4 teach, thousands of years before humans knew that fact? _____

enough, the person dies, so blood and death have become irrevocably joined together in our minds.

Yet, from the beginning God said,

You shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood
(Genesis 9:4).

What are the properties and functions of blood within the physical body? How is blood *the life of the body*?

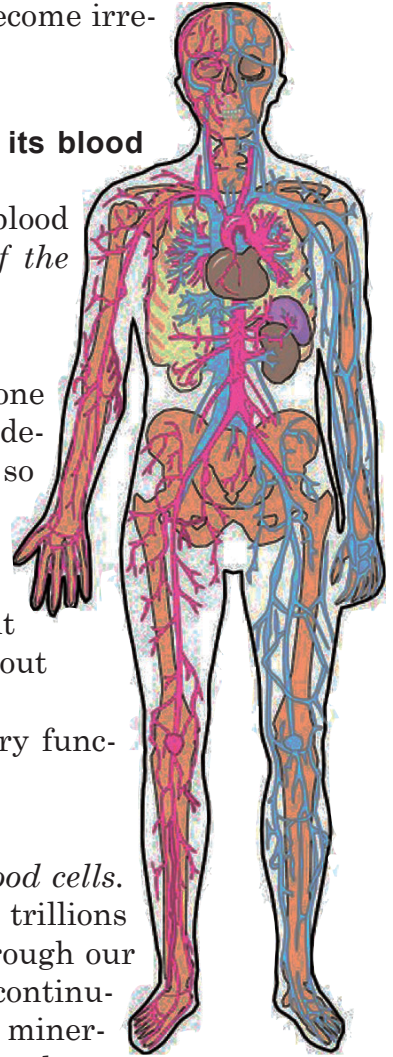
Blood: The Life of the Body

We are beings composed of approximately one hundred trillion living cells. Each of those cells is dependent on the flow of blood for continuity of life, so — amazingly — every single cell is within reaching distance of the network of 60,000 miles of arteries, vessels, and capillaries that make up this vital system. Like a tremendous river branching out and out to feed and water every particle of the earth without flooding it, so the blood services the body.

But what does it do? There are three primary functions: nourishing, cleansing, and protecting.

Blood Nourishes

One of the components of blood is the *red blood cells*. Their work is to *nourish* and to *cleanse* each of the trillions of cells within the body. In this river that flows through our bodies, the red blood cells might be compared to a continuous line of barges, loaded with the necessary food, minerals, and oxygen. Each cell is able to draw from this 24-hour supply whatever it needs for its own sustenance. The trip through the body's circulatory system takes about 20 seconds. As the barges are unloaded, they



For Discussion:

14. Within our bodies is a huge _____ of blood, _____ miles long.
15. What happens to a cell if its blood supply is cut off? _____
16. What do the red blood cells do? _____
17. What do the white blood cells do? _____
18. Can we live without the ability of the white blood cells to fight off invaders? _____

pick up waste materials from the cells and take their new burden to the kidneys. After being cleaned there, they return to the heart to begin another cycle of nourishing and cleansing the entire body.

As long as the body cells have access to the oxygen and nutrients they need, and as long as the waste materials are being continuously removed, the cells remain healthy and normal, carrying out their own work within the body's very complex system. But if the supply of blood is cut off, cells will immediately begin to feel the effect of the loss of oxygen and the build-up of toxins. Without oxygen, the body will die in a few minutes.

Blood 'Overcomes'

The *white blood cells* are our *defense* system. Since the body can be invaded from any point, it is necessary that every cell be guarded by warrior cells in the blood stream. *Protection from invaders* is the first work of these cells. When an enemy comes, they are the *defenders* of the body, fighting to overcome whatever threatens life.

In this age of near-miraculous medicines, we take antibiotics and then we mistakenly attribute our recovery to the drugs. But drugs only help to hold invaders at bay until a sufficient number of white blood cells can be programmed to overcome them. No drug, alone, without the white cells of the body's own immunity system, can destroy all of the viral or bacterial invaders. 'AIDS' confirms this truth in bold underscored lettering.

Blood Cleanses

The third work of white cells is the *clean-up* after the enemy has been destroyed. Continually, damaged and dead cells from all over the body must be removed in order that living cells may do their work unimpeded. Infection, redness, swelling, fever, and soreness are indicators telling us that our blood is effectively carrying out its responsibilities of defense and clean-up.

Yes, we couple blood with death because we usually see it only when it is being spilled from the body, but, second by second, blood is sustaining life within our bodies. Understanding this, it is easier for us to see why Jesus lifted the cup at the supper and said,

Drink from it...this is My blood... (Matthew 26:27,28).

We can also better understand why He said,

...whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life...

(John 6:54),

because *life* [nourishment, as well as the essence of life] is in the blood. We can see why we are taught,

...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin* (1 John 1:7), just as the blood removes toxins from the body; why the



The bread and the juice of communion.

Scriptures say,

...they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb* (Revelation 12:11), enabling us to overcome sin because His blood in us has already overcome. (John 16:33)

We partake of the fruit of the vine, the memorial of

His blood, so that His blood may do for our souls what our own flow of blood does for our bodies.

Recipe for making the bread

- 1 cup of plain flour
- 3 tablespoons of olive oil
- Dash of salt

With a fork, mix these ingredients together.

Add 2 to 3 tablespoons of cold water.

With fingers, mix lightly and form into a ball. Roll out on a baking sheet and cut with a knife or seamstress' wheel, to make indentions for individual pieces. Bake at 425 degrees until lightly brown.

Make the bread fresh each Lord's Day, so that the memorial feast will not be of stale bread. In the Old Testament ceremonies, the Shewbread had to be made fresh each week. Can we do less for our Lord?

THE MEANINGFUL MEMORIALS

So the two 'rituals' God has set into the Christian system are far more than rituals. They are beautiful and meaningful testimonies of His love for us and of our response of love toward Him.

(1) Baptism is our picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus; our re-statement to the world that, even as He committed Himself to mankind in taking our sins and dying in our stead, we are committing our lives to Him.

Baptism goes beyond death, though, and becomes the new birth (John 3:3,5). In the physical birth, water, blood, and the Spirit of life are involved. 1 John 5:8 brings out this striking parallel:

There are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and these three agree as one.

Baptism in water is the enactment of spiritual birth, the unseen elements being God's Spirit renewing the spiritual life within us, and the blood of Jesus cleansing us of

For Discussion:

19. What do the white blood cells do after an enemy has been destroyed?

20. How do Christians overcome the world? _____

21. How is this a parallel to the blood's ability to overcome? _____

past sins and coursing through our souls to nourish, defend, and continually cleanse the newly-formed life within us.

(2) The Supper is a weekly memorial of His death and life, and of our own life in Him, with the expectancy of His return and our transformation to immortal substance.

Obviously, God wants us to be constantly reminded of these all-important high-points in salvation. Otherwise, He would not have placed such emphasis on the two acts that superficial-thinking people would be inclined to label as rituals. Christians, themselves, need to be careful not to fall into the same error. Baptisms, too often seen, may become empty ceremonies. Let us not forget how privileged we are to witness the wonder of the ages: the overcoming of sin and the birth of a new being into God's Family.

Let us not minimize, either, the greatness and the power of the Lord's Supper. It is not a time-consuming, boring ritual. It is our weekly sharing in the death that has given us life, and a deep involvement in its observance is vital to our spiritual well-being.

Perhaps one reason it seems easy for Christians to slip into absent-minded participation in the Supper is a lack of proper preparation.

(a) We need to realize fully the meaning of the memorial, its significance being far beyond ritualistic form.

(b) We need to review its foreshadowing, in the feasts of the Old Testament. Were those observances done casually? No. Minute laws were given by God, and they were followed in exact detail. The shewbread, for instance, (Leviticus 24:5-8) was made fresh each week, by specific measurements. The bread of the Passover Feast was just as carefully prepared. Can you imagine the Jews in Egypt going out and buying from Egyptians some bread to use for that important meal?

Yet, today in most worship services, it is not Christian hands that have lovingly prepared the unleavened bread which we eat in memory of the body

For Discussion:

1. **What are the two things we do because Jesus died for us?**
2. **How does baptism picture the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ?**
3. **What is our once-in-a-lifetime commitment to Christ?**
4. **What is our weekly renewal of that commitment?**
5. **What does the bread represent?**
6. **What does the grape juice represent?**
7. **What is the Christian supposed to do before he eats the Supper?**
8. **Becoming a Christian means turning away from all other _____.**
9. **Who prepares the bread for the memorial supper where you worship?**

of our Lord. Many have allowed convenience to be the rule of the day. Boxes of unleavened crackers that are labeled plainly “Not to be used for the Passover”, are our memorial. This bread that does not even meet the standard and requirement for the shadowy Passover is accepted by nonchalant Christians as perfectly all right for the memorial bread of our Saviour. How often is it true that the matzos are bought, without much forethought, and served, without much forethought, to congregants who break and nibble them, without much forethought? Perhaps Paul’s statement to the Corinthians is also applicable today:

For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep (1 Corinthians 11:30).

No, I admit that there is no *law*, as such, on this question; it is more a matter of attitudes. But don’t our attitudes legislate much about our actual faithfulness in doctrinal questions? Maybe we would be more spiritual and more like the Biblical pattern of Christianity if our attitudes on these seemingly small but important details were not so lenient. **I cannot imagine Mary and Martha buying the bread from a common bakery; nor can I imagine them voicing such comments as, “Making the bread is too much trouble,” or “I don’t know how to make the bread. If I have to do that, I just won’t prepare the trays for communion. Somebody else can do it,” or “I get so tired of this.”**

Rather, I feel sure that the women who had known Jesus vied lovingly with each other for the privilege of using their hands in preparing those emblems so vital to the congregation’s worship. **I would think that it was not grudging and resentful thinking that filled their minds as they measured the flour and oil but, rather, that they indulged in a time of private worship as they worked.** Surely they must have felt a special sweet nearness to the Lord they had talked with, and cooked for, and washed for, and loved while He walked in the world. How much we are missing by using our ‘convenient’ method for preparing the Supper!

Since both bread and the fruit of the vine are used in the memorial, the question might be raised, “Why suggest that the bread be personally prepared but then allow the fruit of the vine to be purchased?” Of course it would be good if we could do both, but it would not always be possible (because of climate or lack of land) for each Christian to tend his own grapevine. If one can do so, wonderful! If not, God has nowhere required it. In reference to the bread, if we can make it at home, the benefits will be our own. If that is not possible, God surely would not require what we cannot do.

(c) We need, congregationally, to spend more time preparing our minds for participation in the feast. We are taught to examine ourselves. (1 Corinthians 11:28) Would this command not be obeyed more carefully if, prior to the Supper, prayer was engaged in, and followed by a time of

silent introspection? Opportunity should be given to make confession of faults, to ask forgiveness of those we have wronged, to actually prepare our hearts for engaging in the Supper.

(d) Then, it would be helpful if scriptures and relevant thoughts concerning the background, meaning, and purpose of the memorial could be given. We have become so ritual-conscious and time-conscious in our worship of God that, often, we have rendered void the very thing we pretend to be doing. Our purpose in coming together, remember, is to break bread. It is not to fulfill a conscience-duty between eleven and twelve o'clock so that we can go on our way, absolved, for another week.

We, personally, as Christians have sometimes found ourselves in isolated places on the Lord's day, away from other Christians with whom we could commune. Once we sat in the shade of the ruins of the ancient Forum of Rome. As we prepared for partaking of the bread and the wine, we were struck with the paradoxes around us and in our hands. Two thousand years ago, Rome seemed the might of the world. The Forum itself was architectural splendor laid out for men to marvel at. Rome's power stretched over much of the known world and, at that time, one of her primary goals seemed to be the death of Christianity.

Christians, on the other hand, had no armies, no central earthly organization, no 'permanent' memorials in stone to remind the world of the greatness of their Lord. Instead, they had been given the very simple — and perishable — memorial, made up of bread and wine. How enduring and influential in history's story could anyone have expected the memorial to be, especially with the passing of the centuries?

Yet, all around us was the testimony that 'permanent' memorials are seldom enduring, and man's might rises and falls. In contrast, the beliefs and practices of those first-century Christians continued in exactly the same way in us; and there we sat, in the middle of the rubble of Rome, with the bread that is His body and the cup that is His blood, the memorial that lives on after two thousand years in spite of its seeming impermanence.

The Reigning Lord

Chapter Twelve

Certainly, we recognize without doubt that God reigns in the spiritual world. Whether He reigns in this physical, sin-filled world is a debatable question in the minds of many. The Scriptures attest to the authority of God and they also exalt Jesus Christ as Lord, not only in heaven but in the earth as well:

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18).

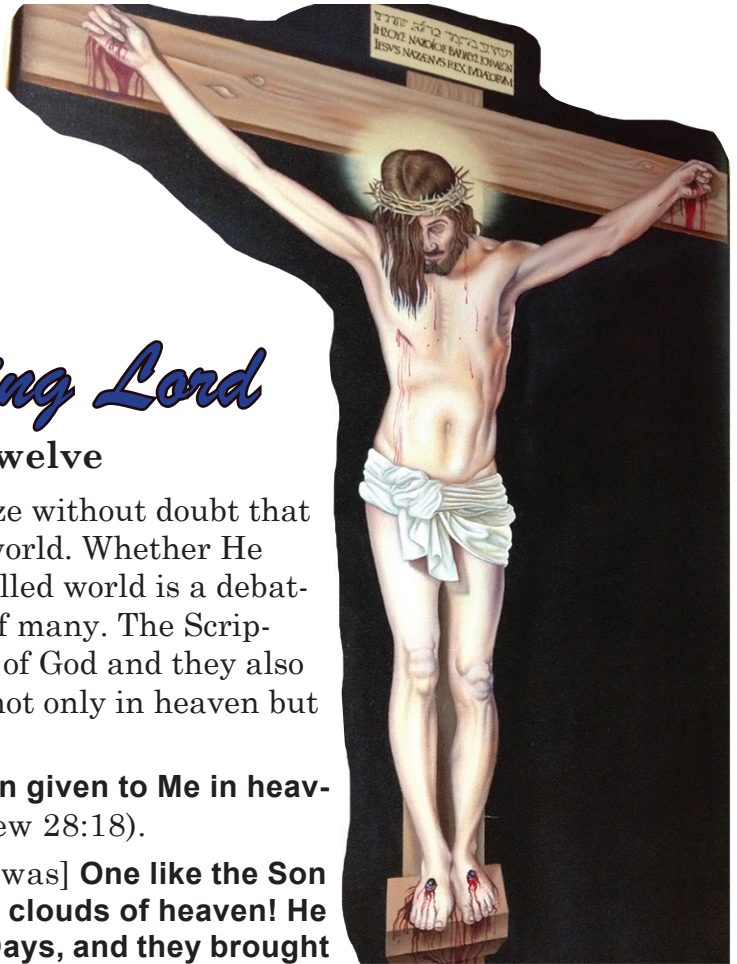
...and behold, [there was] One like the Son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:13,14).

...the Lamb...is Lord of lords and King of kings... (Revelation 17:14).

But Jesus had told His disciples while He lived in the flesh:

...narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it (Matthew 7:14).

It is so easy for Christians, living in the world and looking around at the religious groups whose members number hundreds of millions, to develop an inferiority complex. In comparison, we are so few; our strength seems so small. And, in measuring our own size, we tend to make the mistake of subconsciously measuring God's power. But the Scriptures teach clearly that it is not a weak or powerless or small Lord that we serve.



God Overrules in Nature

The Bible is the inspired history of God's dealings with the world. Although He allows man the choice of whom to love and obey — Himself or Satan — and although the majority of people have always chosen the gratification of their own desires in preference to listening to God, still God retains the authority as Lord over the universe. The laws of nature were created by Him and are sustained by Him. Illustrating His power, He declared in Job 38:8-11 that it was He who had fixed the boundary limits for the sea, saying,

This far you may come, but no further, and here your proud waves must stop!

Hebrews 1:1-3 teaches that, even now, the Son is

...upholding all things by the Word of His power....

God Overrules in Government

In the affairs of government, the inspired record shows that, though God does not overrule to form good leaders or bad leaders, He does overrule in world events to bring to power those whom He can use for good and those whose evil natures can be used for discipline and punishment when people need that. To Pharaoh in Egypt, while the Egyptians held the Israelites in slavery, He said,

...But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. As yet you exalt yourself against My people... (Exodus 9:16,17).

God had promised the Israelites at the beginning of their history as a nation:

Behold I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God [Elohim, plural: Godhead) which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods (Deuteronomy 11:26-28).

Israel practiced disobedience, however, and she suffered repeated correction at the hands of warring nations around her. Finally, God allowed the brutal empire of the Assyrians to rise in power to the point that Israel was conquered and the survivors were taken into exile. These words were written about Assyria:

Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff In whose hand is My indignation. I will send him against an ungodly nation, and against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, to seize the spoil, to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

Yet he [Assyria] does not mean so [to be a tool of God];... but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off not a few nations....

Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, that He will say, “I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks. For he says, ‘By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom....’ Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it?... As if a rod could wield itself against those who lift it up....” Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts: “O My people,... do not be afraid of the Assyrian. He shall strike you with a rod and lift up his staff against you, in the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while and the indignation will cease, as will My anger in their destruction.” And the Lord of hosts will stir up a scourge for him... (Isaiah 10:57,12,13,15,24-26).

From this text we can understand several things:

(1) God allows all people the freedom of choice. He promised to bless the obedient and to punish the disobedient.

(2) God’s responsive dealings toward humans are governed by their relationship with Him.

(a) Those who belong to His family are dealt with on a Father-child basis. The obedient child can depend on His blessings and care. The disobedient child (as with Israel) can expect to be chastened (Hebrews 12:5-7) so that he will correct his error; or if he doesn’t respond to the chastening, he will eventually be cut off from the Family.

(b) Those who are not in God’s Family may seemingly be ignored and allowed to go on according to their own will; or their power may actually be increased so that they may be used as instruments in God’s hands for the correction of His people. Always, though, when the cup of rebellion and evil runs over, God brings punishment to the ungodly nation.

(c) Regardless of the power a ruler or a nation may seem to have, God is the Ruler who allows, strengthens, or ends his authority. In another important period of history, the strength of the kingdom of Babylon had been increased so that it could be used to discipline the faithless remnant of God’s people in Judea and bring them back to Him. Nebuchadnezzar was the man raised up by God to accomplish this work, but in time Nebuchadnezzar’s own haughtiness prompted him to boast:

Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty? (Daniel 4:30).

God punished Nebuchadnezzar for his attitude and later he said,

... I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth

are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, “What have you done?” (Daniel 4:34,35).

At the trial of Jesus, Pilate had demanded,

Do You not know that I have the power to crucify You, and the power to release You? (John 19:10).

Jesus answered,

You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above (John 19:10,11).

Later in the world’s inspired historical account, we are told of the pride of Herod,

... So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, “The voice of a god and not of a man!” Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died (Acts 12:21-23).

Romans 13:1-7 explains the system God has set in motion, as he allows authority or denies it to the rulers of the nations of the world:

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

So, from the beginning, man has been allowed to rule in his own world, but only under the authority from God. Whether he chose to be under subjection in obedience, or whether in disobedience, he was used as a tool to help achieve God’s overall purpose. God, Himself, has been the One in actual control.

God Rules in the Spirit World

This has been true also of the parallel world we cannot see: the spiritual realm. It is populated with angelic beings and the souls who have been separated

from their physical bodies in death, both the righteous and the unrighteous.

The description is given of the angelic host of heaven:

... I heard the voice of many angels around the throne...and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands... (Revelation 5:11).

2 Peter 2:4 says, in contrast, of the disobedient angels:

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment....

Jesus painted the scene that follows the death of the human body in the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31:

...So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torment in Hades, he lifted up his eyes....

Revelation 6:9-11 shows more of the heavenly scene, as it involves the spirits of humans who have died:

...I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" And a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes... (Revelation 7:9).

Two Kingdoms in the World

Within the universe two kingdoms exist by the tolerance of God, which allows man the freedom of choice. One of these is Satan's domain. He has been the lord in his kingdom since the rebellious angels and, later, Adam and Eve chose disobedience instead of righteousness. This kingdom is made up of fallen angels, demons, the disobedient dead and the disobedient living.

The other kingdom belongs to God. It is comprised of the angels who worship at the feet of God and who do His bidding, and the righteous dead, as well as the righteous living. Abraham was, and is, a part of this kingdom. So were Enoch, Elijah, Daniel.

Jesus was born in the flesh to make it possible for the kingdom of heaven to flourish even in the world in the form of His church, Thus, when we are born into the Family, we enter the kingdom of heaven. We live in that kingdom now, having been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Light...the kingdom which is the body of Christ, the church of Christ. (Colossians 1:13,18; Romans 16:16) When our spirits leave this physical world we will enter the spirit world of the kingdom, in Paradise.

Philippians 2:5-9 explains that because Christ emptied Himself and humbled Himself in obedience,

...to the point of death, even the death of the cross...God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

As One of the Godhead, the Word has overruled in the world from the beginning. But, having emptied Himself and relinquished the inherent rights of authority as God, having subjected Himself by being born in the flesh and being “made sin” for man in His obedience unto death for our sins, now He is exalted by God. It is His name that is above all others. At His name — Jesus — every knee will bow someday.

Looking closely, we can see the changes that have come as the result of our Lord’s oneness with man. Even though He has overcome death and has returned to the heavenly glory He shared from the beginning [the glory that He requested that His brethren be allowed to share in the kingdom: **“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one...”** John 17:22], He doesn’t reclaim His inherent attributes and rights. Instead, He is glorified because God *gives Him that glory*; He is seated at God’s right hand because *God has placed Him there*; He has all power and authority on earth and in heaven (Matthew 28:18) because *God gives it to Him*; He is King of kings — the One who rules over the entire universe, both the physical realm and the heavenly realm — because the kingdom was *given to him* (Daniel 7:13,14). He is the Lamb...the Lord of lords and the King of kings (Revelation 17:14). He is Jesus Christ...the ruler of the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:5).

As the ruling Lord, this word picture is painted of His authority:

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His

coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For “He has put all things under His feet.” But when He says “all things are put under Him,” it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.(1 Corinthians 15:20-28).

And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matthew 24:31).

The host of His angels — ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands — as well as all the elect in heaven and on the earth are His to command. Only one power supersedes His now:

But when He says, All things are put under Him,” It is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted (1 Corinthians 15:27).

Jesus Christ rules today, by authority derived from God.

For Discussion:

1. Which are the two kingdoms that exist? _____
2. Which is the enduring, real world? _____
3. Who has all authority over both kingdoms? _____
4. Why was Jesus made King of kings? _____
5. Jesus said that _____ had been given to Him in _____ and on _____.
6. Who upholds all things by the word of His power? _____
7. Do the Scriptures say that God has used “enemy” kings and armies to correct the wrongs of His people? _____
8. According to Romans 13:1-7, the government authorities that exist are appointed by _____.
9. Who rules in the spirit world? _____
10. Do angels do anything in the world today? _____
11. Even though Jesus shares God’s glory now, and has been given all authority by God, He did not reclaim what? _____
12. Jesus rules today by _____ from _____.

The Eternal Son

Chapter Thirteen

Our study of the Scriptures has shown that in Jesus' resurrection He retained His relationship with humanity, that is, His Sonship with God and His brotherhood with man.

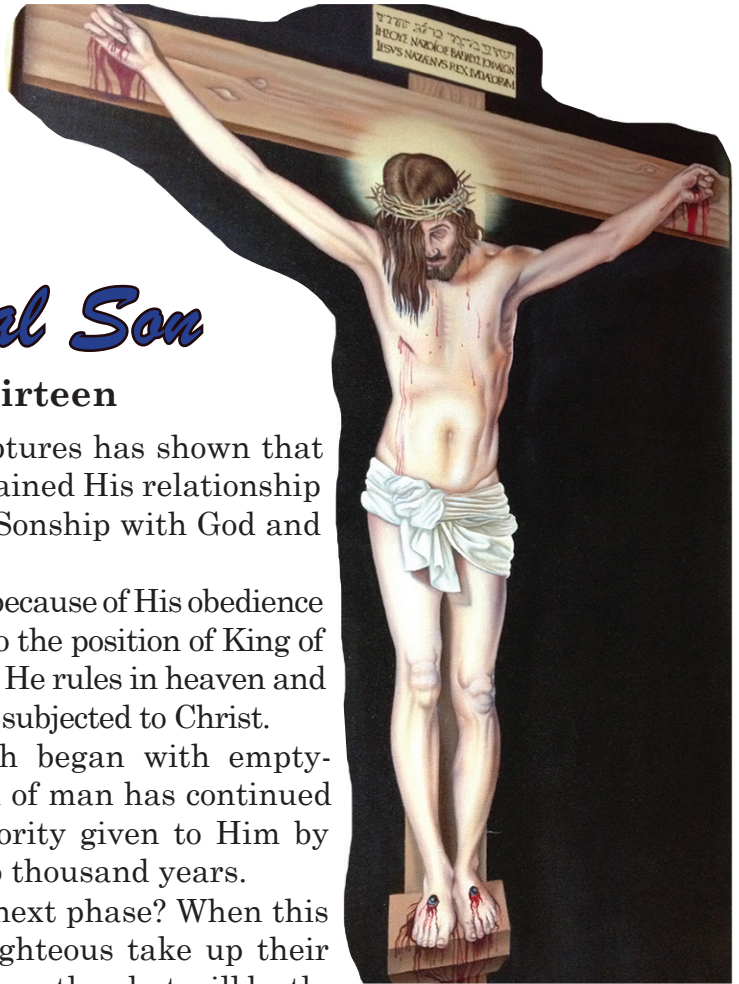
We have also seen that because of His obedience in all things, He was exalted to the position of King of kings and Lord of lords. Today He rules in heaven and on earth, and God alone is not subjected to Christ.

So the sacrifice which began with emptying Himself to take the form of man has continued through His ruling by authority given to Him by God during these almost two thousand years.

What happens in the next phase? When this earthly age ends and the righteous take up their abode in the new heaven and earth, what will be the relationship between Jesus and God the Father? **Will the sacrifice end and will the Word return to the position of equality in the Godhead which was His from eternity?** Revelation 19:11-16 describes the Word as He reigns and judges the earth:

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name was called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.



The Five Periods of the Word's Existence:

1. From eternity.

John 1:1
Hebrews 1:3
Philippians 2:6

2. The Old Testament Period.

John 1:3
Colossians 1:16
1 Corinthians 10:4
Exodus 3
John 8:58,59
1 Peter 1:11

3. The New Testament Period.

Philippians 2:5-7
Hebrews 1:5
Hebrews 2:14-17
Hebrews 5:8
Luke 2:52
Hebrews 4:15
John 1:4,5,26

4. Now — at God's right hand as our resurrected Lord and Brother, until the Day of Judgment.

Ephesians 1:20-23
Matthew 28:18
Acts 1:9
Daniel 7:13,14
Revelation 17:14
1 Corinthians 15:24

5. After the judgment, for eternity.

1 Timothy 2:5
Philippians 3:20,21
Romans 8:17
1 Corinthians 15:24-28, 49
Galatians 4:7
Romans 8:17
1 Timothy 3:16
Revelation 3:21

The end will be heralded,

...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:7,8).

I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books (Revelation 20:12).

For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son... (John 5:22).

And these [the disobedient, Matthew 25:41-45] will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25:46).

These passages reveal what will happen from this present point in time until the judgment of the world. But with the destruction of the last enemy — death — and the blessing of the righteous with eternal life, **the Word does not at last shed His immortalized human body which has bound Him to a brotherhood with man.** Instead, **He lays aside the authority given to Him by God** as King of kings and places Himself under a deeper subjection to God, **“...that God may be all in all.”** **These words set the scene for the future and define the relationship in the Godhead for eternity.**

To which periods of existence do these names refer?

1. The Word? _____
2. The Angel of the Lord? _____
3. Jesus Christ? _____
4. King of Kings? _____
5. Joint Heir and Brother? _____

Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

For He [God] has put all things under His [Christ's] feet. But when He says, "All things are put under Him," it is evident that He [God] who put all things under Him [Christ] is excepted.

Now when all things are made subject to Him, **then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all** (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

But if the righteous are born into God's Family while they live in the world, and if at death their inheritance of eternal life with God has already been granted, why does the change in the relationship of Deity continue?

Galatians 4:4-7 explains the basis for man's sonship to God:

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

The last word in this text is *Christ*. This is not the name of the pre-existent Person of the Godhead but *the title given to Him by God, the name of the Person He became: the Son of God, the Son of man*. It was this Person who came into being when the Word emptied Himself and took the form of humanity. It was this Person who died for man, who was resurrected, and who reigns today at God's right hand as the intercessor for His brethren.

For Discussion:

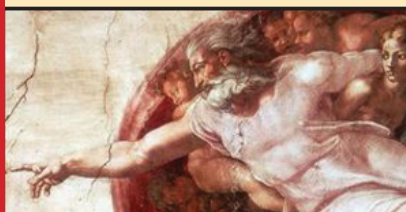
1. When Jesus comes again, it will be to receive the kingdom, but also to take vengeance on which two groups of people? _____
2. What will Jesus do with the kingdom? _____
3. What is the last enemy that will be destroyed? _____
4. At that time, after the judgment, the Son Himself will be subject to Whom? _____
5. Does Christ then become equal with God? _____
6. What significance would you think there is in the use of the name "Christ" in Galatians 4:7? _____

What statement does the text make concerning this new Person, this *Christ*? That something is done *through Him*; that ***an inheritance is channeled from God through Him***. Now, imagine: God is there, holding in His hands a magnificent inheritance; man is also there, longing to receive the inheritance. But the bridge between the two must be in place if the gift is to be given and received. Christ, as God's Son, as man's brother, provides that bridge, making the eternal inheritance a reality for obedient man.

Take Christ out of the picture. Return Him to His original position in the Godhead. As the Word, there is **no Sonship**; there is **no Firstborn**. So what happens to the Family relationship, to those who were born through His Sonship? ***If there is no Firstborn, can there be other sons and daughters?***



sin



**Between Man and God
is the barrier of sin.**



**Christ becomes the bridge between
God and man — the *ONLY* bridge.**

The text says that it is His Spirit in our hearts acknowledging the Father-Son relationship that makes us the children of God. It is through the continuation of that relationship that our own relationship continues to be possible. It is through the rights of our elder Brother that we are heirs.

Another passage speaks of the duration of the Sonship of Christ:

...but the word of the oath [God’s promise concerning the redemption that would come through Abraham’s seed] **appoints the Son who has been perfected forever** (Hebrews 7:28).

Hebrews 5:8,9 explains that the Son was perfected through His sufferings, a sacrifice that was made for sin once and for all. So the taking of man’s sins, the resulting suffering in death, and the perfection [the completion of the prerequisite requirements to qualify Him as man’s Saviour] were the actions of *the Son* — and the Son has thus been perfected *forever*, which is also saying that **the Sonship is a relationship that will be forever**.

The scriptures say of the Word, that all things were created *by* Him, *through* Him, and *for* Him (Colossians 1:16). Therefore, **the Word** was the possessor of all things, in position to *bestow* an inheritance but not to *receive* one. **As Christ, the brother of man, He becomes *the heir*:**

God...has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things...* (Hebrews 1:2).

Romans 8 is a chapter which deals largely with the Family relationship we enjoy. Verses 15-17 say,

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

For Discussion:

7. What enables us to have the Father-son relationship with God? _____
8. How are we heirs of God? _____
9. Can we ever be good enough to have a relationship with God, on our own? _____
10. How long will Jesus remain the Son, and our Brother? _____
11. Under the old law, were sacrifices made often for sin? _____
12. Jesus is the sacrifice made _____ and _____ for our sins.
13. Who created all things? _____
14. Who should have been in position to give the inheritance? _____
15. But Who is the heir of God and the joint-heir with humans? _____

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

This passage goes a step further than the one in Galatians 4:4-7. It not only says that we are heirs of God, but it also says that we are **joint heirs** with Christ.

**If Christ is the heir of God,
and His brothers are joint heirs with Him,
what will the inheritance be?**

(1) The new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21,22).

He [we, the redeemed] who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son (Revelation 21:7).

(2) The glorification promised in Romans 8:17:

...and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

(3) To sit with Christ on His throne:

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne (Revelation 3:21).

Who can really know what glories and positions of responsibility await the brothers of Christ? On this side of eternity, we cannot fathom what that world will be like, but we can understand the promise enfolded in these words: *whatever He is and has will be shared by those who overcome through Him.*

Conclusion

Think back over all that has transpired in the Godhead and in the history of working with man in order to bring about reconciliation. Such giving, such love cannot be doubted by anyone who understands these Scriptures.

Far back in our studies we asked the question: Could physical death alone atone for man's physical and spiritual alienation from God? We have learned that the immeasurably great sacrifice that was made by Christ was both physical and spiritual, and that the commitment to man is as lasting as the duration of his salvation. For eternity we will enjoy the blessings of being heirs of God because for eternity our Brother's blood flows between the Father and ourselves, making us the children of God.

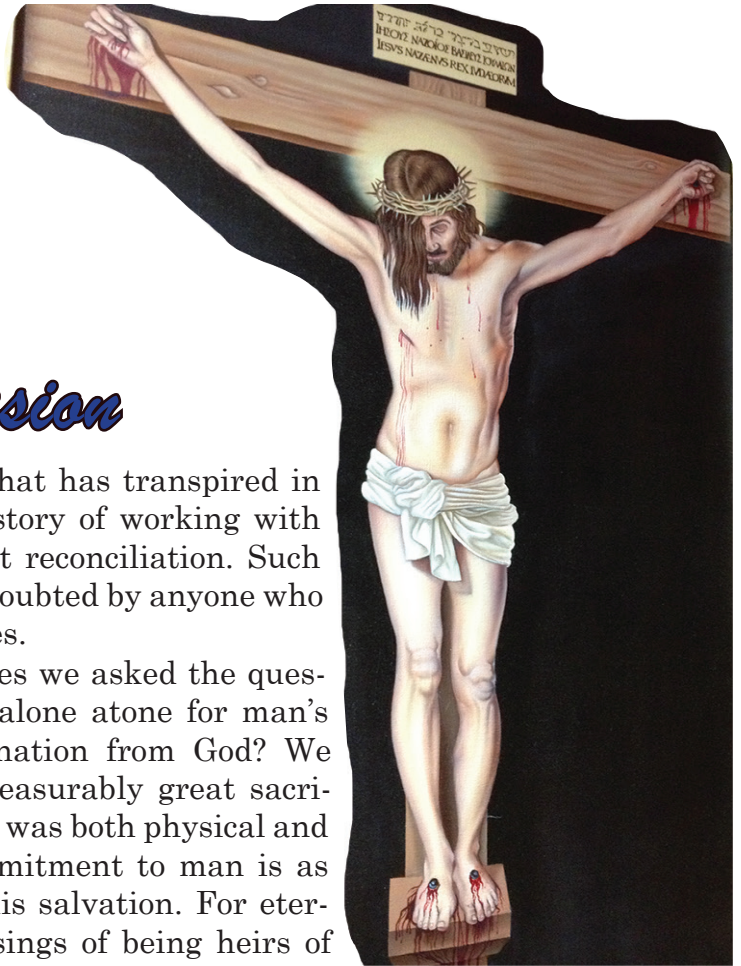
This is why, even now, as faithful members in God's family, we approach God boldly (Hebrews 4:16), confident of His love, sure of our acceptance with Him because our Brother's love speaks for us from the right hand of the Father. Our salvation is secured; His watchful care over us, day by day, is also secured.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.



Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:31-39).

And in response to such love, will not our own love grow to *complete surrender*, to a full maturity of giving ourselves, without reserve, to Him?

Will we not also want to share this sweetest love story with those of the world who do not know it yet?



Sweet Words of Love

Betty Burton Choate

Sweet words of love:

“I have *redeemed* thee...”

The Son of Heaven,

Weighing out my worth to Him

Against the bitter cup,

Laid down His life

And bought me for His own.

Sweet words of love:

“I have called thee by *My name*...”

Precious gift

That He would let me wear

— As though it were my own —

That name of His,

Unblemished from the dawn of time.

Sweet words of love:

“Thou art *Mine...*”

No human holds possessively
A worthless thing,
Nor does my Lord.
His words — declaring me His own —
Exclude all others’ claims
And seal my worth.

Sweet words of love:

“I have *redeemed* thee,
And called thee by *My name*;
Thou art *Mine...*”

Commitment — eternal —

Demanded my redemption,
Freedom from the slavery binding me...
Yet even that was not enough:
Love bought my soul
But a like love given back to Him
Was what He wanted
And so, with *His own name*
He honored my unworthiness,
And now, defiant of the forces that would call me,
Wresting from His care the one He loves,
He shields me from the world,
From all that would endanger,
And claims again the triumph of His love:
“Thou...art...*Mine!*”



Jesus Christ, the Eternal Sacrifice

Introduction: What was the purpose of Creation?

Before Time

- 2 Timothy 1:9
- Ephesians 1:4
- Revelation 13:8
- Matthew 25:34

Creation
 Adam Seth
 Noah Shem Ham Japheth
 Peleg Nahor Terah
 Sinal
 Covenant at

JESUS
 His Church
 Jerusalem
 Apostles
 All Christians
 You and Me
 The Trumpet;

Hebrews
 13:8

We don't want to miss the "big picture" by seeing only individual parts.

Galatians 3:19

The Promise: Genesis 3:15; 12:3

The Warning: No more sacrifice: Hebrews 10:26

Further Introduction: *There are many beliefs concerning the godhead.*

1. That there is only one God; **He manifests Himself in different forms at different times** — the Father, the Son, the Spirit.
2. That there are three in the Godhead — the Father, the Son, the Spirit; **in descending order of authority, importance and power.**
3. That Jesus is the **"Eternal Son"**.
4. Jehovah's Witnesses say Jesus was not God but was the **first creation of God.**
5. The most common thinking is that He was **the Son sitting at the right hand of God from eternity**, that He came to the world for a short time, then He resumed His position at the right hand of His Father.

Actually, neither of these understandings is biblically correct.

If we are to understand just what the Scriptures teach us about the Godhead, we must pay close attention; we must rightly divide the revelation concerning Christ, and we must not reach an understanding that conflicts with something taught in some other passage of Scripture. But it is important that we study and know because many false

things are being taught. Jehovah's Witnesses, for instance: they read Hebrews 1:5 (You are My Son; this day I have begotten You), and they say, "See, that verse proves that Jesus had a beginning; therefore, he is not deity." Are they right? How do we deal with their logic?

1. We must **rightly divide the word.**
2. We must pay strict attention to what is written.

I. WHO WAS JESUS, WHERE WAS JESUS, IN THE BEGINNING? (John 1:1;14)

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

1. **"In Him was life..." inherent life, not derived from another source** (John 1:4).
2. He **was** God, **equal with God** (Philippians 2:6).
"Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God."
3. Being God, He existed from eternity in the form and very essence of God (Hebrews 1:3).
"Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person..."
4. In the Old Testament there are about 500 refer-

ences to “EL”, the singular form of the word for “God”. There are about 3000 references to the plural form, “ELOHIM”, so usually when we read “GOD” in English and think “GOD THE FATHER”, the original Hebrew is actually saying “GODHEAD”. Usually, in the OT we cannot distinguish which one of the Godhead is speaking.

II. WE CAN SEE HIS ROLE AND HIS WORK IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. HE WAS NOT SIMPLY WAITING UNTIL TIME TO BE BORN INTO THE WORLD.

1. How do we see Him in the Old Testament? He is portrayed as “**the Word**”, not as “the Son”. John 1 shows that He existed eternally as the *Word*; Hebrews 1:5 shows that there was a point in time at which He was born as the *only begotten Son of God* — the same time when He was born into the world as the Son of Man. “You are My Son, TODAY I have begotten You.” And again, “I WILL be to Him a Father, and He SHALL be to Me a Son.” But when He again brings the FIRST-BORN into the world, He says, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” (Hebrews 1:5,6).

So, the Godhead is 3 Persons, all of the same essence; there was equality, not descending order of importance; and the One who became Jesus was not an eternal Son but was the Word — the Spokesperson for the Godhead — from the beginning.

2. He was the Word through Whom all things were created (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16). “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” (John 1:3).

“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created THROUGH Him and FOR Him.” (Colossians 1:16).

3. At least on certain occasions, as identified in the New Testament, He was the One who spoke and interacted with Man — the Mediator, even then. See 1 Corinthians 10:4 and 1 Peter 1:11.

“For they drank of that spiritual Rock that **followed them, and that Rock was Christ.**”
“...searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow.”

4. It would seem that He was the One identified as **“The Angel of the Lord”**: (Exodus 2:3; John 8: “I AM”; Exodus 14:19; Isaiah 63:7,9,10 (redeemed). Other references to “The Angel of the Lord”: Exodus 32:34; Judges 2:1; 13:6; Genesis 13:14; 15:28; 1 Samuel 3:21.

5. Many Old Testament prophecies which spoke of the Lord, of God, of Jehovah, were, in the New Testament, applied to Christ.

“Prepare the way of the Lord: make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isaiah 40:3).

“...the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

“Prepare the way of the Lord: make His paths straight” (Matthew 3:3).

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, HE SPOKE AND ACTED WITH THE SAME VOICE OF AUTHORITY THAT WE ASSOCIATE WITH GOD THE FATHER. THIS IS NOT THE WAY WE SEE JESUS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. WHAT CAUSED THIS DIFFERENCE?

III. THE CHANGE IN HIS ROLE — HE EMPTIED HIMSELF.

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation [emptied Himself], taking the form of a servant.

and coming in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:5-7).
1. What did the "emptying" mean? (Perfection? Love? Purity? Justness? — NO — but of **the rights and powers which were His inherently**.)

2. **But was He still deity?**

- A. He forgave sins, a power reserved for God only (Mark 2:7).
- B. He was worshiped as God (John 9:35-38).

[Yes, even in the flesh, He was God.]

IV. HE **BECAME** THE SON — THE **BROTHER** OF MAN.

"In all things He had to be made like His brethren" (Hebrews 2:17). HIS LIFE IS AN EXACT PARALLEL TO MAN.

1. **A body was prepared** for Him (Hebrews 2:14-17).
"Inasmuch as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same...."
"You are My Son, today I have begotten You...." (Hebrews 1:5,6).

2. The agency of the **Spirit, in His birth** as God's Son, and in ours (Matthew 1:20; John 3:5), though He was called "the Son of God".

3. The significance of the **"firstborn"** (Hebrews 1:6).
A. God fore-ordained that Jesus would be the firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29).
B. It is through receiving His Spirit in our hearts that we feel the sonship with God and cry, "Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:4-7).

4. Jesus **learned obedience** to the Father as a Son (Hebrews 5:8).

5. Having emptied Himself, He **grew** in wisdom, etc. (Luke 2:52).

6. He **faced temptation** — real temptation.
"...was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

"...In that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted" (4:15)

7. At His baptism, the **Holy Spirit was given** (Matthew 3:16). 100% GOD? 100% MAN? GOD given to GOD?

8. He **foreknew** things or He **asked information**, the Spirit supplied what He needed supernaturally for His work, but otherwise He functioned as a human, just as the disciples did and do.

9. Many instances are recorded of **physical and emotional response**. Looking at the young ruler in Mark 10:20, He loved him. In John 13:21, talking of His impending betrayal and death, He was troubled in spirit. John 4:6 says He was wearied.

V. HIS **SUBMISSION** TO THE FATHER.

- 1. Read especially the book of John to see the change in the way the Word speaks in the flesh from the way He spoke in the Old Testament.
- 2. John 1:4 contrasted with John 5:26; no contradiction; only a drastic change in His existence.

VI. THE COMMITMENT IN FINALITY IN THE GARDEN.

- 1. His agony. **Why?**
- 2. He was looking to the effects of the cross. This was the time when He was making His final commitment to man.
 - A. He was made to be sin (2 Corinthians 5:21).
 - B. He could have turned back.
 - "...do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 28:53).

- Spirit.
2. He was exalted — Matthew 28:18; Acts 1:9 with Daniel 7:13,14; Philippians 2:9-11. **Derived exaltation.**
“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name...”
 3. **He reigns** over heaven and earth as King of kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 17:14).
 4. All things are **put under Him** except God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:27).

X. THE ETERNAL SON.

1. After the judgment, **will He go back to His original relationship in the Godhead?** How lasting is the sacrifice for our sins?
2. He reigns at God’s right hand as **THE SON**. It is as **THE SON** that He mediates for us (1 Timothy 2:5).
3. We are promised that we will be like Him in our own resurrection — it is never promised that we will be like God. *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be transformed to His glorious body...”* (Philippians 3:20,21). Also 1 John 3:2; Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:49.
4. He must reign until He has conquered all things, **then He will turn the kingdom back to God** and will be newly subjected to God (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

5. The promise made to us is that we will be heirs of God through Christ (Galatians 4:7). CHRIST is not the same as THE WORD — His relationship has changed; it is through this changed relationship (HIS SONSHIP with God) that we are BORN and can feel the Spirit of the Son in our hearts crying, *“Abba, Father!”* Take away the BRIDGE of His Sonship and there is no way for us

VII. THE WORK OF REDEMPTION.

1. In tranquility of Spirit, He submitted to the mockery of a trial and to the crucifixion (Matthew 26:63,64).
2. **“My God, My God...”** (Matthew 27:46).
 - A. We are warned not to grieve the Spirit through sinning (Ephesians 4:30); not to quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19); that it is possible to so sin that the Spirit will leave us (Hebrews 10:25-29).
 - B. He died alone as the Son of man for the sins of man.

VIII. WHAT DID MY SALVATION COST? WAS PHYSICAL DEATH ENOUGH?

1. Can **“physical”** pay for **“spiritual”**?
 - A. God requires that we give ourselves as living sacrifices to Him (Romans 12:1) — not a token.
 - B. For Christ, what was 33 years in a borrowed body, and the release from that body?
2. He **really** took our sins; **death was the binding factor (just as baptism into His death is the binding factor for us in becoming the sons of God)**. From that time forward, He could not turn back; whatever was required to pay for our sins, He was committed to pay.
3. How was the payment made? 1 Timothy 3:16 shows it was from His spiritual account, not from the flesh: “God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit.”

IX. AFTER DEATH — THE CHANGES WE SEE.

1. It was His human body that was resurrected.
 - A. He became the firstborn from the dead (Colossians 1:18).
 - B. In Romans 6, we are assured that just as Christ’s mortal body was raised from the dead, **our bodies will be raised** by the same

to cross over to God.

6. God has appointed THE SON who has been perfected FOREVER (Hebrews 7:28) — the *duration* of the Sonship.

7. We will be **JOINT HEIRS** with Christ (Romans 8:17).

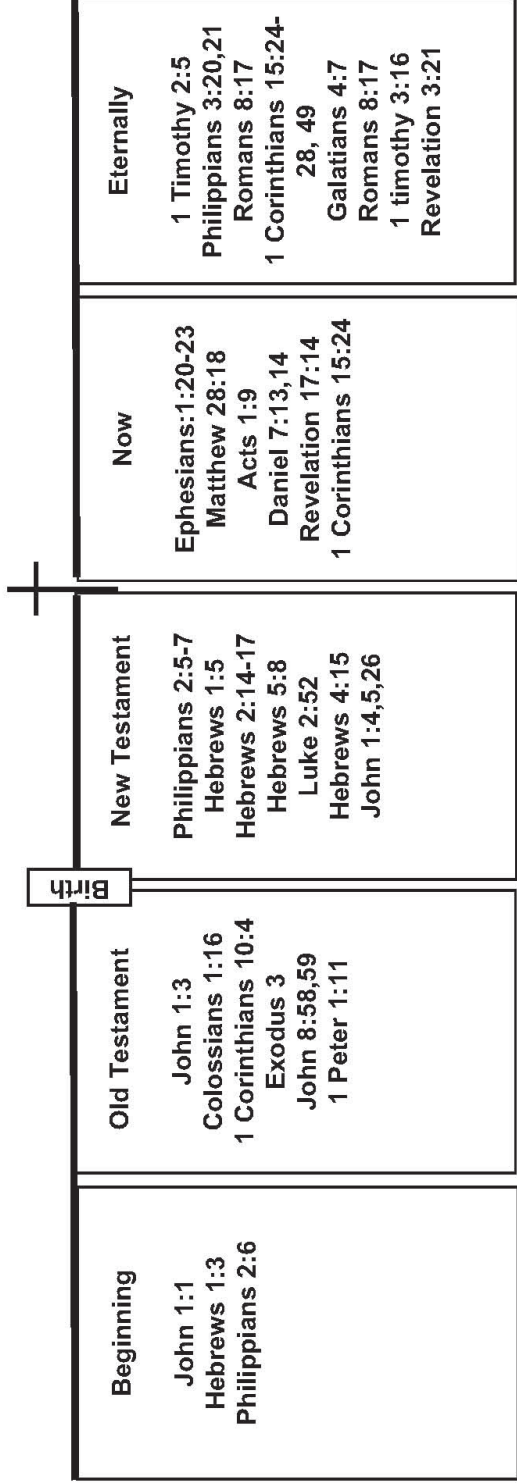
“...and if Children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.”

8. We will sit with Christ on His throne (Revelation 3:21).

CONCLUSION: We are promised that whatever glory and inheritance Christ has eternally, His brethren whom He has redeemed from the earth will share. The eternal picture is one of continued brotherhood with Christ, where He brings many sons to Glory!

This is the cost of our salvation — an eternal change from EQUALITY IN THE GODHEAD to ONENESS WITH HIS BRETHREN!

Five Distinct Periods of the Existence of “The Word”, Who Is Christ



I Don't Like Being an Alarmist or a Fatalist, but

Look Out!

We're Headed for Disaster!

We're busy people. We go along from week to week, minding our own business, and feeling that there's not much we can do about the rest of the world. We're not activists. We're not strongly political. We're not overly united behind some "cause".

Who are "we"? *Individual Christians. Churches of Christ.*

And what is happening while we are going about "business as usual"?

- ✿ Evangelism — outreach to the community — has almost ceased.
- ✿ We have lost 70% to 80% of two generations of our children.
- ✿ Many of our homes are just as "secular" as the rest of the world, with a token of "religion" on Sunday.
- ✿ This scenario has resulted in a grave lack of biblical knowledge among Christians in general, and particularly among the younger generations.
- ✿ The church in many places is in a state of apostasy.

"My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge," (Hosea 4:6) was God's lament in the days of Hosea, and the same tragic fact is the underlying cause of the crisis today.

"What crisis?" you ask.

✿ **That a liberal theology is sweeping through the church. Several of our Christian universities are unsound (It was through the leadership of the Christian colleges that the apostasy of 1906 was fueled.). Many of the larger congregations are unsound — *some are openly fellowshiping denominations, some have added instrumental music to the worship, some have dropped the Lord's name and are functioning as "community churches", some deny the necessity of baptism for remission of sins* — and many more are in the process of apostasy.**

✿ **Unless something is done, when the older generations are gone — in another 15 to 20 years — we will see history repeat itself with digression similar to that of 1906 when 85% of the church became the Christian Church and the Disciples of Christ.**

Can anything be done to avert this disaster?

After identifying the problem, the next question is, "How can it be solved? How can we reach the whole church?"

There are numerous tools among us that can provide some of the answers: faithful preachers, sound Bible colleges, Gospel papers, TV programs, sound doctrine seminars, programs such as "Lads to Leaders" for our children, good study books, etc.

The problem is that these things reach only small portions of the church. There is no sound Gospel paper to which most Christians subscribe; there is not any one thing through which most of the church can be reached on a sustained basis. But think about it! **The one thing that most congregations have in common is the use of graded Bible class literature!** No, there is no uniformity in the materials used. Some of the larger churches develop their own; some individuals have printed some materials; there are also limited lines that have been developed by reliable Christian printers.

By far the greater percentage of class materials used in the Lord's church were originally developed by denominational groups for interdenominational use, both for weekly classes and for Vacation Bible Schools!

Yes! By far the greater percentage of class materials used were originally developed by denominational groups for interdenominational use, both for weekly classes and

for Vacation Bible Schools! And then some of our brotherhood publishers buy the rights to reprint those materials under their own names, with very limited editing. Statistics say that perhaps 85% of the children's classes in the Lord's church are being educated with these materials.

Why are they so popular? First, because many buyers *don't know* that they were written by denominational people. Second, because they *look good!* They are colorful. **They supply all the manuals, visuals, and activities that the busy teacher will need for the class.** And so they are used, year after year, in the majority of congregations.

What is characteristic of these materials?

✿ **Much of the artwork is cartoon-type, subconsciously undermining the attitude of reverence and seriousness we should have toward spiritual matters.**

✿ **Interdenominational error is overlooked in the editing, which many of the younger teachers would not recognize as error, having been brought up on the materials themselves.**

The Number One problem with these materials is that THEY TEACH NO DEFINITIVE DOCTRINE!

Yes! The Number One problem with these interdenominational materials is that they are turning us into an INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH! Are you surprised? *We are what we ingest!*

So, if we want to turn away from the disaster that looms before us, we need to get serious about changing the spiritual diet of our children, and even of many of the teen and adult classes. Yes, denominational books, with their (sometimes, subtle; sometimes plainly written) doctrines of "salvation by faith only", "miraculous working of the Holy Spirit today", "once saved, always saved", etc., are being increasingly used in adult and ladies' classes. And the church is suffering because of these false teachings.

CHURCH, let's work together to produce our own literature!

Yes, CHURCH, let's work together to produce our own literature! That's what we propose doing. And here is how you can participate:

In this age of computers, we Christians can do the writing and layout work ourselves, greatly cutting the cost. Colored printing is not prohibitively expensive in China at this particular time. We can design and produce the best visuals imaginable, using Chinese companies to manufacture them.

EVERYBODY KNOWS WE NEED THIS!

Join the other volunteers who are already on board to do this work!

COME ON!

✿ CHURCHES: You can stand with us on this, helping with funds and leadership.

✿ CHRISTIANS, you can volunteer to help with the work.

✿ Fill out the form and mail it to us, or call, **662-283-1192.** †

Send us this information:

I volunteer to help in this (these) way(s):

- Writing teachers' manuals**
- Writing lesson books**
- Data entry in computer**
- Layout and design**
- Planning visuals**
- Developing visual memory verse cards**
- Writing new children's songs**
- Planning/drawing visuals**
- Participating in developing the "Time Line" for Wednesday classes**
- Raise funds for the printing**
- Help get word out to the church**
- Provide co-ordinating leadership.**

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

